

## Security, conflict management and peacebuilding

Fontana, Giuditta

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# **Security, Conflict Management and Peacebuilding:**

## **Formal Education in Intra-State Political Agreements**

**1989-2016**

### **Abstract:**

The rhetoric of international donors and policymakers has established education reform as crucial to peacebuilding. However, three questions remain on the relationship between education reforms and peace processes: How often do intra-state political agreements (IPAs) prescribe reforms of formal education? Is the inclusion of reforms of formal education affected by the geopolitical context and by the broader contents of IPAs? How do IPAs frame reforms of formal education?

To tackle these gaps in existing research, I analyse the frequency, context and framing of education reforms in IPAs through a mixed methods analysis of FEPA, a novel dataset of education reform in all the 286 accords concluded between 1989 and 2016, providing the most extensive and fine-grained data on education in IPAs worldwide.

This analysis shows that IPAs circumscribe the peacebuilding potential of education in three respects: education is a rare component of accords; the geopolitical context and broader contents of agreements are not clearly associated with the inclusion of education reforms; and education reforms are primarily framed as contributing to security and conflict management rather than aiming at long-term peacebuilding. IPAs' focus on the promotion of negative peace rather than more ambitious positive peace is a fundamental obstacle to realising the peacebuilding potential of education in conflict-affected contexts.

### **Keywords:**

Political agreements; conflict; peace; security; conflict management; education; peacebuilding

# 1 Introduction

In 2011 UNESCO called for ‘education to become a priority in responding to conflict in all its phases’, including the negotiation and conclusion of political agreements (UNESCO 2011:223). In so doing, it echoed the public declarations of many international donors which identified education as key to peacebuilding in countries experiencing civil war (for example, UNESCO 2010; 2011; 2016a; World Bank 2011).

Despite growing awareness of the two-faced impact of education reform in war-to-peace transitions (Autesserre 2017; Menashy and Dryden-Peterson 2015; Mundy and Dryden-Peterson 2011; Williams 2014), and despite many studies shedding valuable light on the idiosyncrasies of specific conflict-affected societies, only three studies have considered education in peace accords and broader political agreements on a large-scale comparative basis (Dunlop and King 2021; Dupuy 2008; Wise 2019). Large-scale comparative studies cannot do justice to local nuances and context-specific factors, but can uncover regional and global patterns and trends, which may help evaluate and refine global policies but also identify questions for future research. Unfortunately, the three existing studies differ in their findings as to the frequency, context and framing of education reforms (as summarised in Table 1), suggesting the need for more research.

I address this gap by tackling three core questions:

1. How often do worldwide intra-state political agreements prescribe reforms of formal education?
2. Is the inclusion of reforms of formal education affected by the geopolitical context and by the broader contents of an intra-state political agreements?
3. How do intra-state political agreements frame reforms of formal education?

Political Agreements (hereafter, PAs) account for the vast majority of efforts to resolve wars globally because conflicts within state boundaries currently represent over 90 percent of

conflicts worldwide (Pettersson, Högladh, and Öberg 2019). Since the end of the Cold War, increasing proportions of conflicts ended in negotiations rather than military victory, including seemingly intractable wars in Colombia (2016 *Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflict y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera*) and Sierra Leone (1999 *Peace Agreement*). Similarly to inter-state accords, intra-state political agreements (hereafter, IPAs) typically sanction ‘negative peace’, the end of direct violence and ‘massive killing’ (Galtung and Fischer 2013). However, expert design of PAs may also contribute to peacebuilding, meant as ‘actions aimed at creating, strengthening, and solidifying [positive] peace’ (Autesserre 2017:115) by eroding both structural violence (‘the non-intended slow, massive suffering caused by economic and political structures in the form of massive exploitation and repression’) and cultural violence (‘that legitimizes direct and-or structural violence’) (Galtung and Fischer 2013).

Whilst PAs do not necessarily need to address education, reforms of education systems are often identified as a fundamental way to help peacebuilding. Education reforms may challenge direct violence by protecting students and teachers against physical harm and redress the structural and cultural violence perpetuated through unequal and biased education systems (Cardozo and Shah 2016). Yet, large-scale comparative studies of PAs have largely overlooked education policies (including Bell and Badanjak 2019; Högladh 2011; Pettersson, Högladh, and Öberg 2019). This is surprising because educational interventions that unintendedly exacerbate and reproduce the cleavages underpinning violence rather than eroding them have a detrimental long-term impact on conflict-affected societies (Bush and Saltarelli 2001; Bellino and Williams 2017).

To evaluate the place of formal education in intra-state PAs, I rely on quantitative and qualitative analysis of a novel dataset of education in all the 286 IPAs concluded worldwide between 1989 and 2016, the dataset of Formal Education in Political Agreements (hereafter,

FEPA). FEPA captures reforms of formal education, meant as ‘the structured education system that runs from primary... school to university, and includes specialised programmes for vocational, technical and professional training’ (Council of Europe, 2022). It provides the most extensive and fine-grained data on formal education in worldwide IPAs to date.

My mixed methods analysis suggests that IPAs circumscribe the peacebuilding potential of education reform in three respects. First, education reform is a rare component of contemporary IPAs. This may simply reflect the fact that negotiating parties and mediators in most conflict-affected contexts do not see education reform as a pressing concern in the context of widespread violence. However, it also suggests that, despite rhetorical emphasis to the contrary, IPAs prioritise measures aiming at short term negative peace over provisions aiming to tackle cultural and structural violence.

Second, there is no clear relationship between education reforms and the geopolitical context of the IPAs, corroborating wider calls for comprehensive conflict analysis to precede any educational intervention.

Third, intra-state IPAs appear to prioritise reforms of education system aiming at short-term security and medium-term conflict management rather than promoting peacebuilding. Most IPAs present education reforms through a ‘security frame’, supporting negative peace. In a less common approach, here termed ‘conflict management frame’, IPAs employ education reform to redistribute power away from the central state and towards conflict-affected and rebel-controlled regions. The ‘conflict management frame’ tackles some forms of structural violence, but ignores wider and intersecting injustices and inequalities. Only a minority of IPAs frame education through a ‘peacebuilding frame’, where education reforms address broader cultural and structural violence and build a more equal and fair society for all.

These findings have three major implications for scholarly and policy debates in comparative education and peacebuilding. First, they suggest that the design of IPAs should move away

from greed-based understandings of the causes of conflict (Collier et al, 2004) and emphasising reconciliation through long-term, structural reforms of both the context and content of education systems to benefit all previously marginalised groups and towards provisions to benefit all previously marginalised groups, not only individuals likely to join future rebellions. Second, context- and conflict-analysis should underpin the design of education reforms and broader IPAs to avoid reproducing in peacetime the inequalities and exclusions which caused violent conflict. Third, if regional precedents facilitate the inclusion of education reforms in IPAs more fundamentally than global peacebuilding norms, then regional forums may be useful sites for learning for best approaches to education reform in fragile contexts.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: Section 2 surveys the literature on education in peace agreements and broader political agreements and introduces the three research questions. Section 3 details the creation of the FEPA dataset, the methods employed to analyse it, and this study's limitations. Sections 4, 5 and 6 examine the frequency, the context, and the framing of formal education in IPAs, respectively. The final section concludes with implications for policymakers and suggestions for future research.

## **2 Formal Education in Political Agreements: Existing Evidence and Three Remaining Questions**

Education policies are framed and constrained by the broader political settlement, meant as the 'informal and formal processes, agreements, and practices in a society that help consolidate politics, rather than violence, as a means for dealing with disagreements about interests, ideas and the distribution and use of power' (Laws and Leftwich 2014). Political agreements constitute the formal element of any political settlement. Specifically, intra-state political agreements (hereafter, IPAs) are 'negotiated, written and publicly available accords

between two or more parties which seek to end political violence within a state through institutional reform' (Fontana et al. 2021). They differ from peace agreements because they do not require one of the warring parties to be a state government and do not necessarily prescribe the resolution of the core conflict incompatibility (cf (Högbladh 2006)). Therefore, PAs also encompass accords aiming to mitigate instances of diffused political violence, such as Kenya's 2007-2008 crisis, which are increasingly frequent. It is well established that by embedding collectively sanctioned institutional designs, policy priorities and 'rules of the game', IPAs constrain the scope of future education reform (Cardozo and Shah 2016; Fontana 2018).

Prominent studies have identified 'the assumption that more education leads to individuals that are more peaceful' as a core principle guiding international peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2017:122) and affecting also the negotiation of IPAs. International discourses on war-to-peace transitions also reiterate that 'better education is... central to preventing and mitigating conflicts and crises and to promoting peace' (UNESCO 2016:25; Mundy and Dryden-Peterson 2011; Williams 2014). Thus, whilst not all PAs need to include education reforms, it is reasonable to expect education to figure prominently in contemporary IPAs.

In fact, financial and technical assistance have not consistently followed the 'recognized need and the rhetorical prioritization of education in settings of conflict and fragility' (Menashy and Dryden-Peterson 2015; Turrent and Oketch 2009). Only three studies analyse education across large datasets of peace agreements (Dunlop and King 2021; Dupuy 2008) and PAs (Wise 2019) but, as Table 1 summarises, they generate conflicting findings on the frequency, context and framing of education.

## **2.1 Frequency**

Montjourides (2013) points at the failure to collect reliable data on worldwide education policy, including data on the frequency of education reforms in worldwide PAs, as a major failure of peacebuilding. Whilst not all accords necessarily need to mention education, it

would be interesting, and useful, to know how many do so in the context of global campaigns for Education for All. Unfortunately there is no agreed figure: as Table 1 summarises, Dupuy (2008) finds that education is mentioned in 55% of peace accords. More recently, Dunlop and King (2021) reported that 46% of African peace accords include education. However, Wise (2019) suggests that only 18% of worldwide PAs reform education. Lack of reliable data on the frequency of education reforms in PAs conceals the extent to which these documents employ education reform to tackle cultural and structural violence in conflict-affected



**Table 1: Large-N Comparative Studies of Education in Peace Agreements and Political Agreements**

ID	Sample				Concept	Methods	Findings		
<i>Author-Date</i>	<i>Type of Agreements</i>	<i>Number of Agreements</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Framing</i>
Dupuy 2008	<i>Peace Agreements:</i> Full and partial; Intra-state and inter-state	103	Worldwide	1989-2005	Formal and informal	Statistical analysis; Comparative content analysis	55%	Not examined	Security; Protection, Economic; Socio-political
Dunlop and King 2021	<i>Peace Agreements:</i> Full and partial; Intra-state and inter-state	85	Africa	1975-2017	Formal and informal	Statistical analysis; Comparative content analysis; Case study (Burundi)	46%	International involvement; power-sharing (ambiguous); DDR	Structure (access); Content (for democracy/civics; for national unity/peace; for demobilised soldiers, civil servants & security forces)
Wise 2019	<i>Political Agreements:</i> All full, partial, procedural Local, intra-state, inter-state	1915	Worldwide	1990-2016	Not specified	Not specified	18%	Not examined	Shared education
Present Study	<i>Political Agreements:</i> All substantial; Intra-state	286	Worldwide	1989-2016	Formal	Statistical analysis; Comparative content analysis	29.4%	Geographical location; DDR	Security; Conflict management; Peacebuilding

societies. This gap leads to my first research question: *How often do worldwide IPAs prescribe reforms of formal education?*

## **2.2 Context**

Both the studies summarised in Table 1, and a rich case-focused literature, leave many unanswered questions as to the relationship between the wider context and the choice to include education reform in IPAs. This relationship is idiosyncratic and context-specific, but previous comparative studies have identified some interesting patterns in the relationship between education reforms, their geopolitical context and the broader contents of IPAs. Some studies focus on the impact of the geopolitical environment (region, economic development and features of the conflict in question) (Smith and Ellinson 2015). They suggest that the geopolitical context may impact on decision to include education reforms in a PA in three respects. Some find that agreements addressing identity-based conflicts (such as Burundi's 2000 Arusha accords) may be more likely to reform schooling to accommodate the cultural grievances of conflict groups (Fontana et al. 2020; King and Samii 2020). Others present education reforms as 'key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication' in low-income states (UNESCO 2016:7). Still others suggest that global peacebuilding norms prescribe the inclusion of education reforms in war-to-peace transitions in the Global South (Autesserre 2017) regardless of the geopolitical idiosyncrasies of specific conflicts (Novelli, Lopes, and Smith 2017; Paulson 2008; Pherali 2013). Thus, questions remain as to the relationship between the inclusion of education reforms in an IPA and the geopolitical features of the conflict in question.

A different strand of literature explores the relationship between education reforms and the post-conflict institutional design embedded in PAs in three respects. First, Dunlop and King (2021) suggest that international involvement facilitates the inclusion of education reforms in African peace accords. Second, Dunlop and King (2021) and Dupuy (2008) detect an association between education reforms and provisions for the disarmament, demobilisation

and reintegration of former combatants (also known as DDR). For example, in Northern Ireland's 1998 *Agreement Reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations*, further education is part of the 'measures to facilitate the reintegration of prisoners into the community'. In this perspective, education reform is framed as contributing to security by providing an incentive for former combatants to lay down their weapons. Third, some suggest that IPAs employ education reforms to manage the root causes of conflict. Fontana (2021; 2018; 2016a) proposes that peace accords including power-sharing are more likely to also include education reforms in an effort to accommodate the diverse cultural backgrounds of conflict parties. For example, North Macedonia's *Ohrid Agreement* (2001) provides for 'state funding... for university level education in languages spoken by at least 20 percent of the population'. Similarly, Fontana (2017) suggests that education reforms are often employed in conjunction with decentralisation, autonomy and federalism (also known as territorial self-governance). This combination may entrench the redistribution of political power away from the central state and towards conflict-affected regions. For example, *The Bodoland Autonomous Council Act* (India, 1993) establishes a General Council for Bodoland and provides for the decentralisation of educational decision-making to this new body.

In sum, previous studies of education in peace agreements and broader IPAs hint at a number of patterns in how contextual factors (economic development; region; features of the conflict; and provisions for international involvement, power-sharing, DDR, and territorial self-governance) may be related with the inclusion of education reform in these documents.

However, the different temporal and geographical focus of existing studies generate contradicting findings, leading to my second research question: *Is the inclusion of reforms of formal education affected by the geopolitical context and by the broader contents of an IPA?*

## **2.3 Framing**

The three studies summarised in Table 1 find education is largely presented as 'a positive social good' (Dunlop and King 2021), despite its potential two-faced impact documented in

the academic and grey literature.<sup>i</sup> However, these three studies disagree on precisely how accords frame the relationship between education reform and the end of conflict.

First, existing studies identify what I call a ‘security frame’. Echoing UNESCO’s (2017) portrayal of education as a ‘security imperative for stability and lasting peace’, Dupuy (2008:158) reports that peace agreements approach education foremost as ‘a security issue’. Dunlop and King (2021) also identify education reforms that aim to increase the ‘opportunity costs to violence’. In this ‘security-first approach’ (Novelli and Higgins 2017) education reform is presented as foremost contributing to the end of violence (negative peace). Access to education and increasing literacy levels would provide peace dividends to former fighters and conflict-affected populations, and lead to them abandoning the violent struggle (Ishiyama and Breuning 2012; Matsumoto 2016; Thyne 2006).<sup>ii</sup> It would be especially effective when combined with provisions for DDR (Dupuy, 2008; Paulson, 2008). However, we lack systematic data on the relationship between education reform and DDR, and on the frequency of the security frame in worldwide IPAs.

Second, existing studies suggest that PAs present education reforms through a ‘conflict management frame’. In this perspective, education reform addresses the ‘real and perceived injustices that underlie violent conflict’ (UNESCO 2011:223),<sup>iii</sup> without tackling broader injustices and inequalities. Dunlop and King (2021) find that African peace agreements present education reform as ‘reducing ethnic, regional, and religious inequalities’. Dupuy (2008) argues that some peace accords portray education as ‘an economic issue’ and ‘a sociopolitical issue’. Whilst recognising the potentially ambiguous impact of specific education reforms in different contexts, the educational literature suggests that education reforms can help mitigate the grievances which directly led to violent conflict (Matsumoto 2016). For example, promoting access to schooling and education in the mother tongue for previously warring groups can help erode cultural violence (Novelli, Lopes, and Smith

2017; King and Samii 2020). Reforms of education systems can also challenge structural violence by redistributing education funding and governance away from the central state (Novelli, Lopes, and Smith 2017; Dunlop and King 2021) and promoting changes in educational decision-making (Thyne 2006; Rose 2011). Unfortunately, existing studies do not provide systematic evidence on the extent that PAs approach education reform through a ‘conflict management frame’.

Third, existing studies suggest that some PAs present education reforms through what I call a ‘peacebuilding frame’. In this perspective, education reform aims to erode all forms of cultural and structural violence in conflict-affected societies, beyond the inequalities that directly led to violent conflict (Novelli, Lopes, and Smith 2017; Ramírez-Barat and Duthie 2015). Education reform for peacebuilding challenges structural violence by providing safety and protection from harm for students and teachers (UNESCO 2010; Dupuy 2008; Safe Schools Declaration 2015). It promotes the equality and inclusion of all social groups, including women, people with disabilities and refugees (Dryden-Peterson 2012; 2016; UNESCO 2016a; GEM 2020; UNHCR 2016). It may also encourage positive inter-group contact (Smith and Ellinson 2015) through ‘shared education’ (Wise 2019). Comprehensive curricular reform may erode cultural violence through revisions of ‘national subjects’ (Smith 2011), such as history education (Bentrovato, Korostelina, and Schulze 2016; Cole 2007; Paulson 2017; McCully 2012; Cole and Barsalou 2006), citizenship education (Akar 2012; Shuayb 2012; Smith 2003; Quaynor 2012; Levine and Bishai 2010), peace education (Bekerman and McGlynn 2007; Salomon and Nevo 2012; McGlynn and Zembylas 2009), religious education (Zembylas et al. 2018; Fontana 2016b). To promote positive peace, education reform would embed transitional justice, ‘respect for peace and human rights’ and knowledge of international law into curricula (UNESCO 2010: 280; Bellino et al. 2017; Dunlop and King 2021; Levine and Bishai 2010; Paulson and Bellino 2021).

There is a substantial gap in evidence about whether PAs employ a ‘peacebuilding frame’ in their education reforms. However, we know that the failure to reform formal education so that it challenges broad structural and cultural inequalities risks reproducing the underlying causes of war after the conclusion of a PA (Bush and Saltarelli 2001). This leads to my third research question: *How do IPAs frame reforms of formal education?*

### **3 Methods**

In this study, I address gaps in our understanding of the frequency, context and framing of education reform in worldwide PAs by tackling three questions:

1. How often do worldwide IPAs prescribe reforms of formal education?
2. Is the inclusion of reforms of formal education affected by the geopolitical context and by the broader contents of an IPA?
3. How do IPAs frame reforms of formal education?

To do so, I compiled the most extensive dataset of education reforms in IPAs to date, the dataset of Formal Education in Political Agreements (hereafter, FEPA). I interrogated it through quantitative research methods (research questions 1 and 2) and qualitative methods (research question 3).

#### **3.1 Creating the FEPA Dataset**

This study draws on FEPA, a novel dataset of education reforms in worldwide PAs concluded between 1989 and 2016. I compiled the dataset by expanding the existing Dataset of Political Agreements in Internal Conflict (PAIC) (Fontana et al. 2021). As a starting point for the novel FEPA dataset, PAIC presented two main advantages: First, the universe of cases in PAIC is coherently defined, ensuring that the 286 PAs in PAIC are only compared with similar documents (Fontana et al, 2021). Second, PAIC captures reforms of cultural

institutions, as well as provisions for international involvement, power-sharing, territorial self-governance, and DDR.

I created FEPA by adding two sets of variables to PAIC:

- *Reforms of formal education:* Employing a deductive qualitative coding method (Adcock and Collier, 2001), I developed a list of categories based on a review of the literature (for example, history education, education funding, access to education etc.). All these categories are defined in the dataset Codebook.<sup>iv</sup> Subsequently, alongside a research assistant, I coded the full original text of the 286 PAs manually in NVivo. We worked in parallel to maximise the consistency, transparency, and replicability of the findings. Based on the empirical evidence, we added additional categories (such as beneficiaries and infrastructure). Based on the Nvivo file, I compiled a dataset denoting the presence (1) or absence (0) of each category in each agreement.
- *Context of education reform:* following the existing literature, I coded for three geopolitical factors: conflict type on the spectrum between ethnic conflict and civil conflict (on the basis of Marshall 2019); continent along the four categories of Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania; and income levels along the categories of Low Income, Lower-Middle Income, Upper-Middle Income and Upper Income, as recorded in the historical classifications in World Bank (2019).<sup>v</sup>

Table 1 summarises the differences between FEPA and the datasets employed in Dupuy (2008), Dunlop and King (2021) and Wise (2019). FEPA is freely available to download and use.<sup>vi</sup>

### **3.2 Analysis**

To tackle research questions 1 and 2, I employed descriptive statistics of FEPA. The limited amount of IPAs including reforms of formal education (n=84) does not allow for robust

statistical modelling. However, descriptive statistics (frequency, distribution, central tendency, dispersion) provide a useful snapshot of the frequency of education reforms and other provisions.

Descriptive statistics also underscore a substantial variation in the rate of inclusion of reforms of formal education across different types of conflict, regions and income levels. I therefore employed a series of cross-tabulations and Chi-square tests to detect potential relationships between the inclusion of education reform in IPAs, their geopolitical context and the broader content. These techniques confirm empirically correlations between these factors rather than generating robust causal inferences.

To investigate the framing of education in IPAs (research question 3), I employed a combination of descriptive statistics of fine-grained categories of education reform and comparative qualitative analysis of the specific clauses. Qualitative methods allowed me to interrogate FEPA and to capture the nuances and assumptions shaping education policy on a global scale. I also re-categorised all education clauses manually into the three core approaches to education for peace identified in the literature: security; conflict management; and peacebuilding. I explored these frames and their relative predominance to shed light on the assumptions and values guiding reform of formal education in conflict-affected contexts.

### **3.3 Limitations**

This study has three main limitations: First, similarly to other existing large-scale comparative studies of education in PAs, all my observations are based on correlations rather than robust causal inference, due to the small number of PAs including reforms of formal education. Second, I only test the relationship between the inclusion of education reforms in PAs and seven selected geopolitical and institutional factors. Whilst this selection is based on a thorough review of the existing literature, it does not account for all contextual variables which may determine whether a specific PA addresses education. For example, the inclusion



of provisions for universal free primary education in Sierra Leone's 1999 *Peace Accord* partly responded to decades of educational exclusion which arguably caused the civil war (Richards, 1996). Similarly, the presence of small, non-ethnic parties at the negotiating table led to a commitment to integrated education in Northern Ireland's 1998 *Agreement Reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations* (Fontana and Masiero, 2022). Third, FEPA focuses only on the text of IPAs. This choice makes the comparison of educational clauses more robust and coherent, but future work could broaden the analysis to inter-state PAs and code for their implementation. Due to these limitations, my study is meant only as the first step in a broader research agenda on education in war-to-peace transitions.

## **4 The Frequency of Reforms of Formal Education in IPAs**

Both the rhetoric of prominent international actors and the peacebuilding literature reiterate that 'good quality education systems can help transform societies, especially those affected by conflict' (UN Secretary General, qtd. in UN News Centre 2017) and recommend that 'peace interveners to devote resources to education programs' (Autesserre 2017:122).

However, it remains unclear whether these rhetorical statements are translated in practice.

Most apparently, it is unclear how frequently education reforms are embedded in IPAs, the first essential steps to build peace in war-torn societies. Whilst negotiators may choose not to address education reforms for a range of context-specific reasons, conflicting evidence on the proportion of IPAs mapping educational intervention (summarised in Table 1) leads to questions on whether reform of formal education is a common component of IPAs (research question 1).

Analysis of the 286 IPAs concluded between 1989 and 2016 worldwide shows unequivocally that, even in the formative moment of peace negotiations, attention to formal education remains sparse (Table 2). Only 84 IPAs (29.4% of the total) include reforms of formal education and this percentage has declined since 1989. Most IPAs make only passing

references to reforms of formal education (with an average of only 1.2 references to education in the IPAs mentioning education reforms).<sup>vii</sup> These figures provide a sobering reminder of the marginalisation of education reform from war-to-peace transitions, despite global UN campaigns including the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals (Mundy and Dryden-Peterson 2011; Williams and Cummings 2005; Williams 2004).

Thus, despite rhetorical emphasis on education as ‘a human right, vital for recovery, reconciliation and peace’ (UNESCO 2017), reform of formal education is not a common component of IPAs. In fact, education reform is much rarer than provisions typically associated with the establishment of security and the redistribution of political power. For example, 68.5% of the IPAs in FEPA map power-sharing and 44.1% provide for DDR, compared with only 29.4% including education reform. On the one hand, these figures may suggest that conflict parties typically prefer addressing education reforms in contexts different from those of formal peace negotiations for a range of context-specific reasons. On the other hand, the relative rarity of education reform in IPAs suggests that these documents prioritise security and the redistribution of political power over education reform. This focus is understandable in the context of widespread violence, but unreformed education systems risk reproducing the structural and cultural violence underpinning conflict, leaving ‘legacies that are more difficult to redress in later development phases’ (Smith 2011).

**Table 2: IPAs including...**

		A. All accords	B. By type of conflict		C. By region					D. By income level			
			<i>Civil conflict</i>	<i>Ethnic conflict</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Africa</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Oceania</i>	<i>America</i>	<i>Lower income</i>	<i>Lower-middle income</i>	<i>Upper-middle income</i>	<i>Higher income</i>
<i>Reform of Formal Education</i>	#	84	30	54	4	40	20	0	20	46	30	7	1
	%	29.4	23.1	34.6	20	25.8	35.7	0	41.7	26	31.9	53.8	50
<i>International Involvement</i>	#	185	94	91	13	109	28	4	31	123	56	4	2
	%	64.7	72.3	58.3	65	70.3	50	57.1	64.6	69.5	59.6	30.8	100
<i>Power- sharing</i>	#	196	88	108	11	115	39	5	26	129	57	8	2
	%	68.5	67.7	69.2	55	74.2	69.6	71.4	54.2	72.9	60.6	61.5	100
<i>DDR-SSR</i>	#	126	86	75	4	87	23	5	42	97	55	8	1
	%	44.1	66.2	48.1	20	56.1	41.1	71.4	87.5	54.8	58.5	61.5	50
<i>Territorial Self- Governance</i>	#	68	15	53	9	35	13	5	6	32	33	2	1
	%	23.8	11.5	34	45	22.6	23.2	71.4	12.5	18.1	35.1	15.4	50

## 5 The Context of Reforms of Formal Education in IPAs

The international discourse presents reform of education systems as helping to mitigate ethnic conflicts (King and Samii 2020), reduce poverty (UNESCO 2016) and build long-term peace in conflict-affected places (Autesserre 2017). However, it remains unclear whether IPAs deploy education reforms to tackle context-specific challenges or whether additional conflict analysis should be carried out to ensure that they better respond to the idiosyncrasies of specific conflicts (research question 2).

The limited number of agreements including education reform in FEPA (n=84) does not allow for robust statistical modelling, but cross-tabulations and Chi-square tests help detect and evaluate possible correlational relationships between the inclusion of education reforms and the contextual factors identified in the literature (Table 3).

**Table 3: Chi-square tests of education reforms by geopolitical and institutional context of IPA**

	Presence of Education Reform	
	<i>Chi-square test</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Type of Conflict</i>	3.21	0.072998
<i>Region</i>	39.76	<0.01
<i>Income Level</i>	3.84	0.279525
<i>International Involvement</i>	0.58	0.446560838
<i>Power-sharing</i>	4.91	0.026736982
<i>DDR_SSR</i>	12.34	<0.01
<i>Territorial Self-Governance</i>	16.86	<0.01

I find that there is a limited association between the geopolitical context of a IPA and the inclusion of education reforms. The type of conflict (ethnic or civil) is not significantly associated with the inclusion of reforms of formal education in IPAs. Similarly, there is no significant association between income level and the inclusion of education reform in IPAs.

This suggests that education reforms may not be systematically employed to sustain economic development in low-income contexts, despite rhetorical commitment to education as ‘key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication’ (UNESCO 2016:7). However, I detect a robust and significant relationship between the inclusion of reform of formal education and geographical location of the country in question ( $X^2(4, N=286) = 39.76, p < .01$ ), with American and Asian agreements associated with more reforms of formal education. This suggests that regional precedents may affect the inclusion of education reform in IPAs, pointing at regional paradigms as more relevant than global peacebuilding norms (Selby 2013). Indeed, whilst previous studies argued that peace accords may include education reform to implement a liberal peacebuilding agenda (with provisions international involvement), I find no meaningful relationship between provisions for international involvement and the inclusion of education reform in IPAs. This suggests that international peacebuilding norms (and their rhetorical expressions) do not directly translate into robust education reform across conflict-affected contexts.

Others suggest that education reforms would feed into efforts to tackle security-related challenges (with provisions for DDR). I find that the inclusion of education reform is significantly associated with provisions for DDR ( $X^2(1, N=84) = 12.34, p < .01$ ). This association corroborates on a worldwide scale the previously hypothesised link between DDR and education reform (Dupuy 2008; Paulson 2008). It suggests that IPAs may employ education to complement wider measures to establish short-term security after violent conflicts. These measures may help establish negative peace but not necessarily challenge structural and cultural violence.

Yet others propose that education reforms help redistribute political power (with provisions for power-sharing) and/or to decentralise decision-making (with provisions for territorial self-governance). I do not detect a significant relationship with provisions for power-sharing, but

the presence of education reform is significantly associated with provisions for territorial self-governance ( $X^2(1, N=84) = 16.86, p < .01$ ). This suggests that IPAs may employ education to facilitate conflict management by complementing autonomy, decentralisation and federalism. Whilst tackling structural violence, this geographically focused approach does not necessarily erode broad social inequalities.

In sum, this cross-case analysis identifies three patterns: First, geopolitically, assumptions grounded in regional precedents appear associated with the inclusion of education reforms in IPAs. This questions the importance of global peacebuilding norms, and suggesting that local and regional precedents may affect IPA design more fundamentally. Second, education reform is associated with provisions for DDR in worldwide IPAs. This suggests that reform of formal education may be employed to establish short-term security in conflict-affected societies. Third, education reform is associated with provisions for territorial self-governance in IPAs, suggesting a possible contribution of education to managing the violent conflict by redistributing power away from the central state. These correlational patterns suggests that most worldwide IPAs may employ education reform to challenge both direct and structural violence. However, IPAs stop short of promoting positive peace because they do not challenge broader non-conflict-related inequalities.

## **6 The Framing of Reforms of Formal Education in IPAs**

A qualitative understanding of how IPAs frame reforms of formal education (question 3) can shed further light on the implicit goals of education reform in conflict-affected contexts and on their relationship with negative and positive peace.

Divergence in how education is framed in individual IPAs, underscored by a rich case literature, should be expected because education policy ‘is located within highly contested projects of state, nation and region building’ (Cardozo and Shah 2016). This divergence is evident in a frequency analysis of different types of reform of formal education in the 286

IPAs analysed (Table 4). However, some interesting patterns emerge from a large-scale comparative analysis. First, as suggested in existing studies, the vast majority of accords including education reforms present education as ‘a positive social good’ (Dunlop and King 2011). Most IPAs implicitly recognise that education may have contributed to the causes of conflict, but they overlook the potential of education to continue reproducing the cleavages underpinning violence even after (limited) reforms.<sup>viii</sup>

Second, in framing education reforms, IPAs adopt three main approaches: reform of formal education is often presented as an instrument to prevent individual participation in violent conflict (security). Sometimes education reform appears as a tool to redistribute power away from the central state and towards conflict-affected and rebel-controlled areas (conflict management). It is most rarely that education reform is framed as potentially contributing to positive peace (peacebuilding). I will examine each frame in turn, providing examples of the relevant clauses in the FEPA dataset.

**Table 4: Reforms of Formal Education in IPAs**

	# accords	% with education	% total
<b>Context</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>85.7</b>	<b>25.2</b>
Access	43	51.2	15
Safety	2	2.4	0.7
School Capacity	12	14.3	4.2
School Infrastructure	23	27.4	8
Decision-Making & Governance	33	39.3	11.5
Funding	29	34.5	10.1
Inter-group contact	2	2.4	0.7
Training & Inspection	14	16.7	4.9
<b>Content</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>17.8</b>
Unspecified Curriculum	16	19	5.6
Qualifications	13	15.5	4.5
Citizenship education	5	6	1.7
Culture	7	8.3	2.4
Health	1	1.2	0.3
History education	3	3.6	1
Language	18	21.4	6.3
Literacy	15	17.9	5.2
Numeracy	3	3.6	1

Peace Education	7	8.3	2.4
Religious Education	7	8.3	2.4
Textbooks	10	11.9	3.5
Fundamental Freedoms and Human Rights	9	10.7	3.1
National Unity	7	8.3	2.4
Unspecified Values	10	11.9	3.5
<b><i>Beneficiaries</i></b>	<b>57</b>	<b>67.9</b>	<b>19.9</b>
Demobilised Soldiers and Children	19	22.6	6.6
Conflict-affected populations	28	33.3	9.8
Gender	10	11.9	3.5
People with disabilities	1	1.2	0.4
Refugees and IDPs	5	6	1.7
Conflict-affected regions	31	36.9	10.8
<b><i>Sectors</i></b>	<b>57</b>	<b>67.9</b>	<b>19.9</b>
Early Childhood	2	2.4	0.7
Primary education	33	39.3	11.5
Secondary Education	28	33.3	9.8
University	31	36.9	10.8
Vocational Education	23	27.4	8
Adult Education	12	14.3	4.2
Private Education	8	9.5	2.8

## 6.1 Security Frame

IPAs concluded between 1989 and 2016 frame reforms of formal education primarily as a security issue, reflecting the assumption that access to educational opportunities helps transition out of conflict (Collier 2004).

Most education reforms focus on providing short-term socio-economic incentives for former combatants to lay down their weapons and for potential recruits not to take part in future violence. Thus, 51.2% of the IPAs including education reform provide for the expansion of access to formal education, as in Guatemala (1996):

As part of integration subprogrammes, URNG members may, with the Government's cooperation benefit from grants, scholarships or any other mechanism to help them continue their education.



The framing of education as helping the redistribution of economic resources in the immediate post-conflict phase is also apparent in the promotion of literacy, embedded in 17.9% of IPAs. For example, Sudan's 2006 agreement establishes that:

The State shall ensure free and compulsory education at the primary level and work to eradicate illiteracy

IPAs often link provisions for access to formal education and literacy with the ambition to secure the future socio-economic status of the individuals most likely to join violence. As many as 22.6% of IPAs refer to demobilised soldiers and their families as the expected beneficiaries of education reforms, suggesting that education reform is key to the pacification of former fighters (Novelli and Higgins 2017). This pattern corroborates the robust and significant relationship between the inclusion of education reform and DDR provisions introduced in Section 5, and captured in Nepal's 2011 accord:

An alternative package of education, training and vocational opportunity will be provided to combatants opting for rehabilitation.

Education reforms in IPAs also reflect a concern with ensuring that the conflict-affected youth benefits directly from this redistribution of resources. The unemployed youth is frequently stereotyped as a security risk (Enria 2012), so a substantial proportion of IPAs map educational provision for adults, including universities (36.9%), vocational education (27.4%) and adult education (14.3%). Often, these provisions are explicitly linked with enhancing the socio-economic opportunities of residents of conflict-affected regions, as exemplified in Myanmar (2011):

The Union government agrees to help increase the opportunities for youths of national races in Special Region... to equip them with vocational education.

Thus, IPAs present education reforms first through a security frame: they employ education reform to redistribute educational resources and to promote socio-economic mobility among the groups most likely to take up arms. In line with opportunity-based accounts of the causes of civil war (Collier 2004), education reforms would promote peace by discouraging individual participation in violence.

Security-oriented approaches to education help contribute to negative peace by ‘provid[ing] the highly visible early peace dividends on which the survival of peace agreements may depend’ (UNESCO 2011, 14). However, they are unlikely to challenge the structural and cultural violence at the heart of violent conflict and may even feed individual frustration when expectations for jobs and social mobility remain unmet (Cardozo and Shah 2016; Kotite 2012). Thus, this dominant security frame constrains the potential contribution of education to wider peacebuilding processes.

## **6.2 Conflict Management Frame**

The second way in which IPAs frame education reform is as a tool to erode the inequalities which directly led to violent conflict. Qualitative analysis of the education clauses in 286 IPAs show that they typically do so through the recognition, representation and redistribution of educational resources to the groups directly involved in violence or directly affected by conflict.

First, IPAs map linguistic reforms to foster the recognition of relevant conflict-affected groups. Languages of instruction are crucial to accommodating the diversity of learners (Novelli, Lopes, and Smith 2017; Cardozo and Shah 2016), so 21.4% of the agreements including education reform amend language teaching. This may amount to teaching additional languages, particularly the mother tongue of the indigenous communities involved in armed struggle, as in Mexico (1996):

Promotion of the study and teaching of indigenous tongues in universities,  
particularly in the State of Chiapas

Reforms of language teaching may also lead to the introduction of the language of previously  
warring communities as the main language of instruction at different educational levels, as  
in Niger (1995):

Promote national languages and writing, especially Tamachek and Tifinar

Through reforms of language teaching, IPAs recognise, accommodate and legitimise the  
cultures and identities of the groups directly involved in armed struggle. It is only in rare  
cases that these benefits are extended to the wider population. Guatemala's 1995 agreement  
is an example of this approach:

Promote the use of all indigenous languages in the educational system, to enable  
children to read and write in their own tongue or in the language most commonly  
spoken in the community to which they belong.

Second, IPAs present education reforms as a tool to erode the inequalities between the central  
state and territories affected by violence. Section 5 detected a significant and positive  
association between education reform and wider provisions to redistribute power and  
resources to sub-state territorial units through territorial self-governance. Qualitative analysis  
of education provisions shows that 36.9% of the IPAs including education reform mention  
the regions traditionally controlled by rebel organisations as intended beneficiaries, including  
Sudan's 2006 agreement:

The GoS shall give priority to promote primary, intermediary and secondary, as  
well as, vocational education in Eastern Sudan, with the aim of bringing Eastern  
Sudan to parity in the national level of educational enrolment and achievement.

IPAs redistribute administrative and governance competences away from the central state to redress the regional inequalities underpinning conflict. This approach echoes the emphasis of international donors on decentralisation as key to promotion of ‘citizenship, social inclusion and cooperation, and also increase levels of accountability between educational service providers and communities’ (Cardozo and Shah 2016; Fontana 2017). Thus, it is unsurprising that 39.3% of IPAs including education reform decentralise educational governance and decision-making to the regional or municipal level, an approach exemplified in the Philippines’ 1996 accord:

The relationship of the Regional Autonomous Government educational body with the national educational system shall be that of a system and sub-system with emphasis on the autonomy of the sub-system.

To enhance the voice of formerly warring groups, IPAs also employ education reforms to entrench their representation in educational decision-making, or at least provide them with permanent seats at the decision-making table, as in the case of North Macedonia (2001):

Laws that directly affect... education... must receive a majority of votes, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives claiming to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia.

Reforms entrenching the representation of formerly warring groups in educational decision-making provide an additional dimension of autonomy. Together with the association between education reform and provisions for territorial self-governance, this suggests that IPAs employ educational autonomy to redress the inequalities between culturally distinct groups. Moreover, 27.4% of the IPAs including education reform include provisions for rebuilding and expanding educational infrastructure into previously marginalised areas, as in Burundi’s 2000 pact:

Physical reconstruction shall be conducted, transparently and equitably, in such a way as to... Contribute to correcting the imbalances relating to public infrastructures, including school infrastructures.

Marginalised and rebel-controlled areas are also often mentioned as beneficiaries of reforms to educational funding (included in 34.5% of the IPAs including education reform), as in the Philippines (1996):

Funds for education constituting the share of the Regional Autonomous Government as contained in the General Appropriations Act should be given directly to the Autonomous Government.

IPAs' drive to reform education to provide additional resources, infrastructure and decision-making power to conflict-affected regions echo Rose's assertion that 'classrooms being built... are visible signs that a government is committed to showing its citizens that things have changed' (2011). It is only in a handful of agreements that reforms to educational budgets are designed to benefit the whole population, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2003):

Allocate at least 10% to 15% of the national budget to education.

In sum, IPAs frame education reform as helping to erode structural violence by redistributing power away from the central state and towards conflict-affected territories and people. In this conflict management frame, provisions for education reform help recognise and legitimise the cultures of previously warring groups, redistribute educational resources to rebel-controlled and conflict-affected areas, and represent the groups directly involved in conflict at the decision-making table. This approach, where fully implemented, is undoubtedly effective in tackling the structural violence leading to conflict. However, its almost exclusive focus on

conflict-affected and rebel-held territories may ‘exacerbate differential access to resources... lead to partisan decision-making influenced by local politics and... carry the potential for dominant groups to force their views at the local level’ (Cardozo and Shah 2016). In other words, it fails to promote positive peace, which ‘should ideally be fostered through fair representation (of all kinds and categories) at multiple (supra and sub) national scales of educational governance’ (Cardozo and Shah 2016).

### **6.3 Peacebuilding Frame**

The third approach to reforming formal education explicitly challenges structural and cultural violence to build more inclusive and fair societies. This peacebuilding frame is the least common, suggesting that IPAs rarely exploit the potential of education reform to contribute to building positive peace after civil war. The peacebuilding frame is most apparent in IPAs prescribing curricular reform of national subjects; those mapping universal access to primary education; and those introducing opportunities for contact between children from previously warring groups in formal education.

IPAs map reforms of national subject very rarely: only 3.6% of agreements mention History, only 6% mention Citizenship and Civic education, and only 8.3% mention Peace education and Religious education. This finding is surprising considering the fundamental role of curricula in exacerbating or mitigating inter-group conflicts (Bush and Saltarelli 2001).

However, most clauses reforming national subjects endorse a transformative approach to curricular policy, grounded in the promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and exemplified by Liberia’s 2003 pact:

Promote human rights education throughout the various sectors of Liberian society, including schools

Their prescription of curricular reform to promote freedom and human rights suggests that some IPAs frame education as a tool to challenge all cultural violence in the state. Indeed, only few, mostly dated, agreements (such as Lebanon's 1989 Taif Agreement) envisage employing curricula to formulate and disseminate unified and nationalistic narratives of identity, which risk excluding culturally and ethnically different groups (Levine and Bishai 2010).

Beyond presenting curricular reform as conducive to peacebuilding, some IPAs portray reform of primary education (in 39.3% of IPAs including education reform) and the expansion of access to schooling as cornerstones of peacebuilding, as in Sierra Leone's 1999 accord:

The Government shall provide free compulsory education for the first nine years of schooling.

Universal free primary education could contribute to eroding structural violence. However, IPAs typically overlook the hidden barriers to school attendance, especially for girls, refugees and children with disabilities (Burde et al. 2017; 2015; Dryden-Peterson 2009). For example, lack of safety in schools undermines access to education, but only Myanmar 2015 agreement and Nepal's 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord include provisions for the safety and protection of all children and teachers.

Indeed, IPAs tend to overlook the individuals who have not been directly involved in violence and those who are not expected to join future rebellions. Only 11.9% of IPAs including education reform promote formal education for girls and women. Only 6% of IPAs including education reform promote education for refugees and IDPs. Only Colombia's 2016 *Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera* refers to education for people with non-war-related disabilities. Thus, despite their

enormous potential to contribute to social inclusion, education reforms rarely benefit the most marginalised (UNHCR 2016).

The failure to challenge these broader inequalities circumscribes the potential contribution of education to positive peace. Persisting inequalities and pockets of marginalisation may even undermine negative peace because gender inequality and large refugee populations are correlated with higher chances of conflict recurrence (Datzberger and Le Mat 2018; Dryden-Peterson 2012; 2016).

Finally, IPAs rarely promote inter-group contact in formal education, despite extensive evidence on the potential of education to contribute to positive peace by building sustained and positive relationships between individuals from formerly warring groups (Gallagher 2016; Loader and Hughes 2017; Hayes, McAllister, and Dowds 2007; McGlynn et al. 2004). Only the UK's 1998 accord and Zimbabwe's 2008 *Agreement between the ZANU-PF and the two MDC Formations* promote shared or integrated education.

In sum, this qualitative analysis of reforms of formal education in 286 IPAs suggests that IPAs rarely frame education as an instrument for building positive peace by eroding all structural and cultural forms of violence. Some IPAs frame education reforms as contributing to peacebuilding through curricular reform, access to schooling and inter-group contact. However, they often overlook hidden barriers to educational access and intersecting forms of inequality and exclusion, thereby constraining the peacebuilding potential of formal education. Most frequently, education reforms address short-term security and the direct causes of conflict, perhaps contributing to negative peace but stopping short of the more ambitious goals of positive peace.

## **7 Conclusion**

This large-scale comparative study aimed to uncover broad patterns in how education is addressed in IPAs. An eagle's eye view overlooks the local nuances and idiosyncrasies of



individual conflict-affected countries, but can help address important questions on the role of education in war-to-peace transitions. As Table 1 **Error! Reference source not found.**

summarises, previous studies offered contrasting findings on three fundamental questions:

1. How often do worldwide IPAs prescribe reforms of formal education?
2. Is the inclusion of reforms of formal education affected by the geopolitical context and by the broader contents of an IPA?
3. How do IPAs frame reforms of formal education?

I addressed them by building the novel FEPA dataset, which captures reforms of formal education in 286 IPAs concluded worldwide between 1989 and 2016.

My analysis unveils three broad patterns in how IPAs tackle reforms of education systems on a global scale. First, FEPA suggests that formal education is a much rarer component of IPAs than previously hypothesised (Dunlop and King, 2021; Dupuy, 2008). Not all peace accords need to include education reforms because of a range of context-specific factors. However, despite rhetorical emphasis on the importance of education reform in the most fragile contexts, even in ripe moments such as peace negotiations, conflict parties and international mediators overlook provisions for education reform.

Second, in contrast to Dunlop and King (2021) I detect no association between the inclusion of reforms of formal education and the geopolitical context of IPAs. Regional precedents are associated with education reforms, but there is no association with the type of conflict and income level of the country in question. These correlational patterns question the international rhetoric on the role of education in mitigating poverty and preventing ethnic wars, and suggest that negotiators and mediators rely on regional experience rather than global peacebuilding norms when considering the inclusion of ducation reforms in IPAs.

Third, the framing of reforms of formal education in IPAs limits their peacebuilding potential. Most often, education reforms are presented through a ‘security frame’, where they

prevent individual participation in future violence by providing opportunities for the social mobility of former combatants and other constituencies perceived as potentially threatening stability. The relevance of this frame is corroborated by the association between reforms of formal education and provisions for DDR (previously hypothesised also by Dulop and King, 2021 and Dupuy, 2008). This approach embodies an important redistributive function of education policy in post-conflict contexts, but risks feeding the citizens' frustration if expectations for social mobility remain unmet. Its exclusive focus on former combatants also falls short of challenging broader structural and cultural violence and risks reproducing in peacetime the structural and cultural violence which led to war.

In an alternative and less frequent approach, IPAs employ a 'conflict management frame' where education reform redistributes symbolic and practical power away from the central state and towards conflict-affected and rebel-controlled regions. Indeed, there is an association between the inclusion of reforms of formal education and provisions for territorial self-governance in worldwide IPAs (which was not detected in African accords by Dunlop and King 2021). This 'conflict management frame' helps address the structural violence and horizontal inequalities that directly led to violent conflict. Its beneficial impact depends on the speed and visibility of educational interventions (Smith and Ellinson 2015), and on the ability of newly decentralised authorities to respond to public needs (UNESCO 2011). However, the almost exclusive emphasis on conflict-affected and rebel-held territories constrains education's potential to build a more inclusive and fair society even for those not directly affected by conflict.

In fact, it is most rarely that IPAs present formal education through a 'peacebuilding frame', by employing it to challenge multiple and intersecting forms of structural and cultural violence and to build positive peace in conflict-affected societies. This approach focuses on curricular reform and on expanding access to schooling, but often overlooks themes central to

building education back better in the aftermath of violence, such as school safety, inter-group contact and provisions to redress inequalities related to gender, citizenship status and disability.

Due to the small number of IPAs including reforms of formal education (n=84), these findings are based on correlational patterns rather than on robust causal inference, but they suggest that security and the redistribution of power to pacify constituencies directly involved in violence may be systematically prioritised over more transformative initiatives. In other words, this analysis suggests that the design of IPAs is primarily informed by greed-based understandings of the causes of conflict (Collier et al, 2004). This constrains the potential contributions of reforms of formal education (and of the broader IPAs) to the ambitious goals of positive peace.

Future research should test these findings more broadly to uncover robust causal pathways between the conflict context and education reforms. For example, in depth ethnographic studies would help evaluate more systematically the relationship between unobserved geopolitical and institutional factors and education reforms in specific IPAs. Small-n comparative studies may also help evaluate the relevance of the three education frames I identify (security, conflict management, and peacebuilding) for specific societies. Important questions also remain as to the relationship between the three education frames and the implementation of education reforms. International aid allocation can hamper the implementation of educational initiatives (Menashy and Dryden-Peterson 2015; Turrent and Oketch 2009) and the tendency to reproduce ‘past ideals and practices’ can obstruct transformative initiatives (Williams and Cummings 2005; Bellino and Williams 2017). To evaluate whether formal education reforms are implemented and their impact, larger datasets coding for implementation will be needed, alongside fine-grained systematic comparisons of case studies.

Despite these limitations, my findings have three implications for policymakers seeking to ensure that education contributes to positive peace in conflict-affected countries. First, for education to contribute to peacebuilding, more education reforms should adopt a ‘peacebuilding frame’, emphasising reconciliation through long-term, structural reforms of both the context and content of education systems to benefit all previously marginalised groups (including women, refugees and people with disabilities), not just the individuals most likely to join rebellion. In other words, IPAs should broaden current greed-based understandings of the causes of conflict (Collier et al, 2004). Second, thorough context- and conflict-analysis should underpin the design of education reforms in IPAs to ensure that education reforms do not reproduce the forms of structural and cultural violence which contributed to conflict in peacetime. Third, my analysis also suggests that regional precedents may affect IPAs’ design more fundamentally than global peacebuilding norms. Thus, regional forums may be a useful entry point for scholars and practitioners who wish to disseminate approaches and best practices to reform education in countries experiencing civil war and conflict.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Burundi's Arusha accord (2000) is a rare exception in identifying education as a direct cause of the civil war. An expanding literature considers the unintended consequences and adverse impacts of educational initiatives when they are not appropriately designed. For example, Bush and Saltarelli 2001; Bellino and Williams 2017; Davies 2003; Paulson 2008.

<sup>ii</sup> This frame is in line with greed-based explanations of civil war, which emphasise individuals' gains from engaging in violent conflict. (Collier 2004).

<sup>iii</sup> In other words, in the conflict management frame, education reform aims to redress horizontal inequalities (Stewart 2008).

<sup>iv</sup> The FEPA dataset and codebook can be downloaded from the University of Birmingham's Institutional Research Archive – eData Repository ([https://edata.bham.ac.uk/?\\_ga=2.123392907.1077200985.1669133551-1566643431.1506106845](https://edata.bham.ac.uk/?_ga=2.123392907.1077200985.1669133551-1566643431.1506106845) )

<sup>v</sup> I relied on PAIC expert coding for variables on international involvement, power-sharing, territorial self-governance, and DDR.

<sup>vi</sup> The FEPA dataset and codebook can be downloaded from the University of Birmingham's Institutional Research Archive – eData Repository ([https://edata.bham.ac.uk/?\\_ga=2.123392907.1077200985.1669133551-1566643431.1506106845](https://edata.bham.ac.uk/?_ga=2.123392907.1077200985.1669133551-1566643431.1506106845) )

<sup>vii</sup> With a standard deviation of 3.3. A notable exception is the Philippines' 1996 *Final agreement on the implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front*, which includes over 30 references to education reform.

<sup>viii</sup> Burundi's Arusha accord (2000) is a rare example of a peace agreement which explicitly establishes the roots of the civil war in educational inequalities and the teaching of history.