The hidden transcript of peace: Everyday Peace Indicators – a proposal

Dr Roger MacGinty

University of St Andrews
The one minute presentation

• Current peace-related indicators often technically correct but give an inaccurate impression of the locality. Often just see the public transcript.
• How do we access the hidden (or non-obvious) transcript?
• Propose a new bottom-up, local-level type of indicator
• Argue that these could be ‘indicators +’ by having a conflict transformation dimension, as well as information-gathering function
The picture from orthodox indicators: Sri Lanka HDI 1980-2010
Examples of locally-defined indicators

• The resumption of cultural practices that declined during conflict
• The health and adoption of stray dogs
• Storeowners painting their storefronts
• A decline in sectarian graffiti
• Cross-ethnic sales in the market
Peacebuilding’s ‘technocratic turn’

• Norms and practices from the business world find their way into the public and third sectors
• Statebuilding and peacebuilding interventions award opportunities for technocratic intrusion
• Conflict framed in technocratic ways by governments, IOs, INGOs. Technocratic analyses lead to technocratic prescriptions
• Peacebuilding develops a peculiar bureaucratic infrastructure and material culture
Criticisms of current peace-related indicators

- Don’t always measure peace
- Often restricted to measuring peacebuilding projects
- Top-down. Reflect wider power dynamics/epistemology
- Subaltern position of the subjects of research may be reinforced by the ways indicators are represented and disseminated
- Often unable to see the differences within and between communities
Everyday Peace Indicators – Guidelines

• Locally-based
• Non-prescriptive
• Ranked
• Open to change
• Safeguarded against elite capture
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Identification of locality for peace indicators: village, neighbourhood, valley</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Identification of bottom-up indicators. Crowd-sourced and ranked. Merge with externally-identified indicators? Conflict transformation opportunities?</td>
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<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Data collection. Possibly via focus groups, survey, questionnaire.</td>
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<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Collation and analysis of survey results. Possibly done locally.</td>
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<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Reporting findings - locally and elsewhere in ways that can be 'read' locally.</td>
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<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>Review, amend, repeat.</td>
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Advantages for local communities:
• Help convey a more accurate, time-sensitive and locally-nuanced picture of the community. This might help target assistance
• Conflict prevention potential; direct attention to areas that might benefit from peacebuilding
• Conflict transformation potential; constructing peace indicators encourages community members to engage constructively with each other

Advantages for donors, international organisations:
• More accurate
• Participative, local ownership
• Low cost
• Complement existing measures
indicators