

# “DISEMPOWERING” GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT IDEOLOGIES AND THE EXPRESSION OF ATTITUDES TOWARD TIMOR-LESTE’S LANGUAGE SITUATION



Dr. Melody Ann Ross  
Universität Duisburg-Essen  
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 @melodyaross

# Starting Point: Timor-Leste



1400s

Portuguese  
Colonialism



1974

Indonesian  
Invasion



1999

United Nations  
Administration



2001

Independent  
Nation

- 1400s – 1975 Portuguese Colony
- 1974 Indonesian Invasion
- 1999 United Nations Administration
- 2001 Independent Nation
- What is the linguistic legacy of all these foreign occupations?

# Language Legacies



- Indonesian “Gold shop and pawn shop”
- Tetun “Strong” + Indonesian “Diamond”
- English “Gold and Jewelery”
- Portuguese “Gold and precious stones”
- Portuguese/Tetun address of the shop\*

\*More details 16<sup>th</sup> July, with Hannah Sawall

# Relationship between Attitudes and Ideologies

## Ideologies

- “Commonsense” ways of understanding language
- Stereotypes, assumptions about languages and their users; not solely about language
- Societal, invisible, abstract, pervasive; index power relationships within a society
- Describable but perhaps not exactly measurable

## Attitudes

- Everyday behaviours of language users
- Individual reactions to, alignments with, or negotiations within the ideological environment
- Deployed and enacted with varying degrees of un/consciousness
- Definitely measurable

A close-up detail of Vincent van Gogh's painting "The Starry Night". The image focuses on the swirling, dynamic brushwork of the night sky. The strokes are thick and impasto, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors used are primarily shades of blue, green, and yellow, with some white highlights. The overall effect is one of a turbulent, star-filled night.

Attitudes are the choppy, chaotic, brightly-colored brush strokes

Ideologies are the picture that is created when all these brush strokes are viewed together as an organized system



# Development Ideologies: Classic Underlying Assumptions

- All humans have basically equal capacities and rights
- Inequalities within and between nations are unnatural and intolerable
- Governments faithfully represent their peoples' interests and aspirations, have central and primary roles in development
- Development itself is:
  - *fundamentally collective and therefore political*
  - *achievable through rationally organized effort and the use of modern, empirical knowledge*

Sutton, F. X., Kessinger, T. G., Grant, J. P., & Zeidenstein, G. (1989). Development Ideology: Its Emergence and Decline [with Comments]. *Daedalus*, 118(1), 35–60.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20025217>



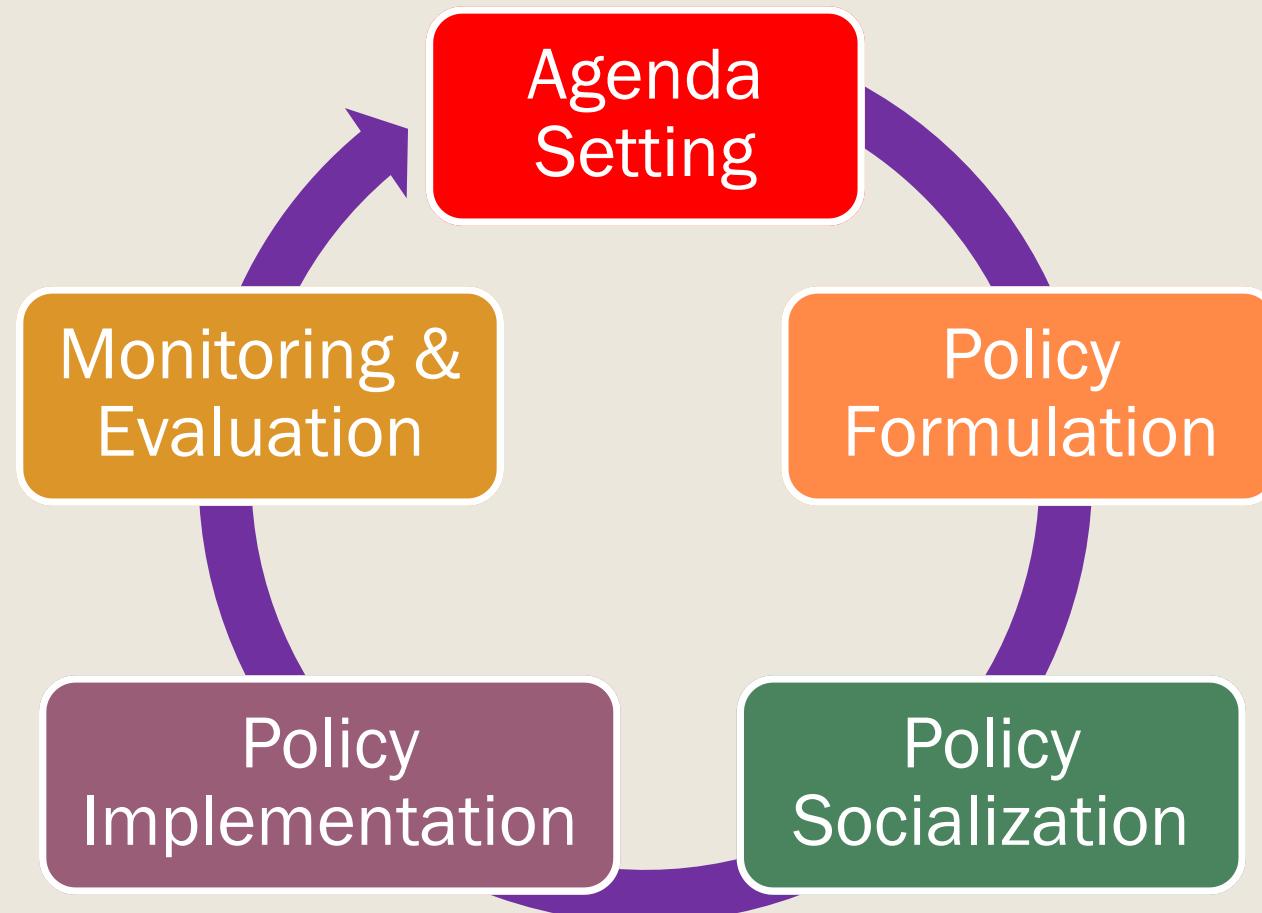
# Development Ideologies and Neoliberalism

- Re-framing of development-as-economic growth:
  - *Simplification of a complex social process*
  - *Introduced an agenda for action that could be pursued in the name of economic sovereignty*
- Development follows the trajectory of other neoliberal phenomena:
  - *Service delivery responsibility becomes increasingly privatized -> obfuscates responsibility & goals (when is 'development' done?)*
  - *The gradual reframing of citizens as consumers -> places burden of success on individuals instead of whole systems*
  - *Narrows view of what aspects of the nation-state require 'development' as a step toward economic success*

# Consequences for Language Development Ideologies

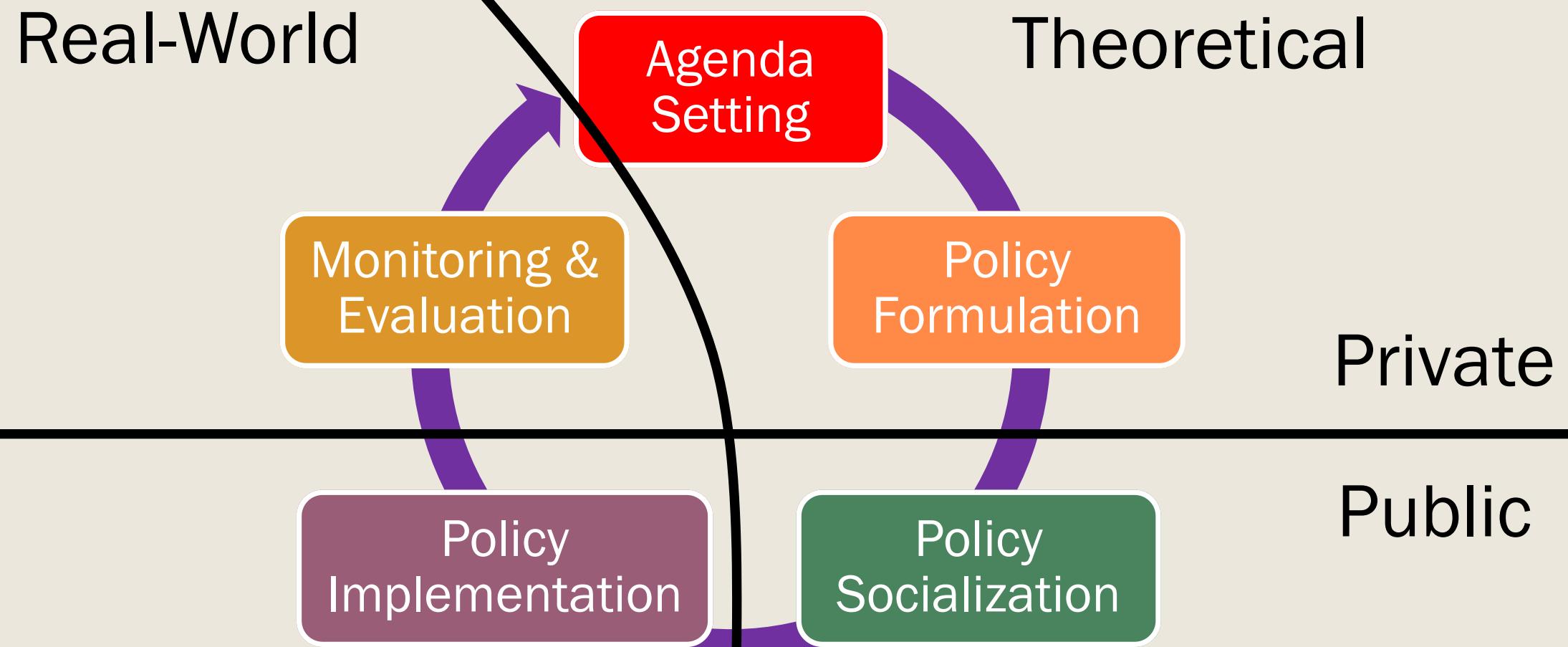
- New Underlying Assumptions:
  - *Language is a tool of economic growth (State and personal)*
  - *Certain languages do not serve the economic interests of the State; in order to be fully functional, deliberate intervention is necessary*
  - *This intervention will solve the ‘problem’; language users themselves were inadequately addressing it*
- The rise of economically-focused language policy
  - Ex. estimated 2% of German pop. can speak Turkish (~4M people of Turkish / Turkish-language-diaspora origin)
  - No support for Turkish language classes in compulsory education
  - Why? Turkish is not one of the 24 lgs of the EU (not in the 1+2 model)

# Life Cycle of Policy



1. A problem and desired solution are identified.
2. Legal frameworks and administrative provisions created.
3. The public are made aware of the problem, solutions, and structures.
4. The structures are enacted.
5. The policy's efficacy is evaluated, which may result in a review and re-structuring (Step 1).

# Reality and Visibility of Language Policy



# Synthesis in the literature

- Taylor-Leech (2008:174) Language and identity in East Timor
  - “*East Timor is obliged to find a path through the wider political ideologies represented by three dominant exogenous languages.*”
- da Conceição Savio et al. (2012:360) Fataluku Language and Literacy Uses and Attitudes in Timor-Leste
  - *Found “attitudes [...] are influenced by the historical phases of language policymaking that they themselves witnessed or that became entrenched in society in general in earlier phases of development”*
- Taylor-Leech (2013:11) Finding space for non-dominant languages in education: language policy and MOI in Timor-Leste 2000–2012
  - *Identifies “tension between globalised educational development aid discourses and localised struggles to define national identity”*

# The Study

- 57 interviews conducted in TL between 2015-2017
  - *20 in focus today (roughly half foreign/half Timorese)*
- Topics- participants experiences of:
  - *Learning languages throughout their lives*
  - *Traveling abroad*
  - *Working in TL and other countries*
  - *Overall impressions of TL's language situation.*
- Finally:
  - “Choose **five words** to describe the *language situation* of TL”

# Why this question?

- “Choose **five words** to describe the **language situation** in Timor”
- Deliberately vague
  - “*Situation*” could refer to *policy, history, multilingualism, etc.*
- Last question at the end of ~an hour of discussing language
  - *Gave participants a chance to synthesize concepts, beliefs, opinions (etc.) that may have been previously unconscious*
- To distill complex interactions between stereotypes and experiences into manageable, comparable, analyzable units
- Genuine interest

# Foreign Stakeholders: Overview

- 6 Men; 5 Women
- Working in diverse fields: law, political science, migration, education, sanitation, disaster response, IT
- Range in experience: first-timers, 3-4 stints, to several decades (pre-independence)
- Range in age from late-20s to mid-60s
- From 7 countries, speaking 3 L1/2s and 7+ L2s

# Foreign Stakeholders: Responses

M1	complex	confusing	politics	identity	
M2	diverse	unique	confusing at times	broad	difficult
M3	ad hoc	flexible	adaptable	beautiful	phonetic
M4	multilingual	richness	pride	heritage	freedom
M5	confusing	frustrating	organic	dynamic	interesting
M6	undefined	work in progress	Tetun literature	frustrating	shame
M7	disempowering	confused	intelligent	exclusive	retarding development
M8	very much less than optimal	excluding	disadvantaged	inappropriate language policy	difficult
M9	capable population		confused implementation		important
M10	complicated	unique	contentious, controversial	interesting	diverse
M11	diverse	politically charged	confusing	difficult	rich

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# Foreign Stakeholders: Takeaways

- Focus on complexity and difficulty arising from that complexity
- Some overt commentary on development and policy itself, including the stages
- Valorization of the importance of language, multilingualism, and diversity to heritage, identity, and pride
- Differences in hedging and stance-taking strategies
  - *“very much less than optimal”*
  - *“capable population” > “confused implementation”*
  - *“work in progress”*

# Timorese Stakeholders: Demographics

- 5 Men; 3 Women
- Working in diverse fields: education, advocacy, monitoring and analysis, labor consultation, psychology/trauma counseling
- Range in educational experiences: compulsory education during Indonesian and Independence eras; some secondary school abroad; some tertiary+ degrees abroad
- Range in age from early-20s to mid-60s
- From across T-L, speaking 3-6 different L1/2s and 10+ L2/3s (etc.)

# Timorese Stakeholders: Responses

T1	complicated	no inclusive policy	related	surprising	interesting
T2	complicated	confusing	barriers	learning	discussion
T3	rich	unequally developed	cousins	tradition	roots
T4	learning	exposure (to variation)	language appreciation	dilemma	diversity
T5	Tetun united all the Timorese				
T6	heritage	worth, asset	proud	culture	united
T7	complex	politics	invigorating	painful	solution
T8	<i>moris</i> (alive) mate (dead)	<i>kahur</i> (interaction)	<i>hatuir</i> (following, telling)	<i>hamutuk</i> (together - language is made in the market)	

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# Timorese Stakeholders: Takeaways

- Focus on diversity, connection, uniqueness
- Some discussion of confusion, complication
  - *But also ‘solution’*
- Emphasis on historical context and cultural importance; interaction
- Concerns for inequality
  - “*unequally developed*”
  - “*no inclusive policy*”
- Some overt commentary on development and policy itself, but not the specific stages

# Similarities/Differences

- Subtly different interpretations of the question
  - *Timorese center ‘language situation’ on lived experiences*
  - *Foreigners center ‘language situation’ on consequences*
- Differences in interaction with language policy
  - *Timorese focus on public, real-world aspects; commentary relates more to socialization, implementation, evaluation*
  - *Foreigners focus on private, theoretical aspects; commentary saturated with neoliberalism; agendas and formulations*
- Both groups acknowledge confusion, but with different evaluative consequences

# Takeaways

- Timorese stakeholders have a fundamentally different understanding than foreigners as to what language is *actually for*
- Development ideologies in TL with regard to language and language policy result from exogenous discourses, upheld and reproduced by resident exogenous population(s)
- At this stage, these assumptions not (or no longer) taken up wholesale by Timorese stakeholders

# Future Directions: Tip of the Crocodile's Tail

- Topics explored in the paper (forthcoming)
  - *Differences between foreign First-timers and Returners*
    - Unsurprisingly, difference in nuance, focus, and complexity of opinions
  - *Differences between Timorese generations*
    - Younger more internally-focused, older more externally-focused
- Still to come:
  - *Stance-taking strategies: hedges, person-voice (epistemic strategies)*
  - *Continue to add to the data (still at least 30 interviews to go!)*

References and  
Photo Licenses:



Thank you!