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Introduction to the special issue:

Indigenous education in urban settings: Critical examinations and meaningful responses

Around the world, colonial and post-colonial practices have systematically harmed Indigenous peoples' identities, knowledges, value systems, environments, and relationships (Nesterova & Jackson, 2019; Moore & Nesterova, 2020). Despite recent initiatives of state and non-state actors to rebuild and strengthen Indigenous identities and optimise education for Indigenous learners (such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007), Indigenous peoples continue to grapple with economic, social, cultural, and political challenges and barriers. Many remain trapped in the cycle of poverty. Indigenous peoples thus represent one of the most disadvantaged, marginalised, and vulnerable groups in the world today (IWGIA, 2020).

Due to the decline of traditional Indigenous communities, migration of Indigenous people to urban areas to pursue employment and education has intensified in the past few decades. As a result, more Indigenous learners are joining urban schools. However, such schools are traditionally tailored more to the needs of dominant settler populations than to those of Indigenous learners. For Indigenous learners in this context, few, if any, adjustments are made to better meet their needs, as urban Indigenous populations are often assumed to be assimilated into the dominant culture and accustomed to a life separated from their traditional cultures and communities (Bang et al., 2013). Urban education thus tends to overlook Indigenous ethnic, cultural, and linguistic ties. It typically dismisses or discounts Indigenous knowledge. Urban educators rarely appreciate the extent of socioeconomic diversity among Indigenous learners. Nor do they recognise how mainstream schooling and society can negatively affect Indigenous people. Thus, urban education usually fails to respond critically to the legacy of colonial history on Indigenous populations today. Rather than sustaining unjust structures shaped by colonisation, urban education should address discriminatory perceptions dominant groups have of Indigenous people and ameliorate the unequal and antagonistic relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

In this context, Indigenous learners are often viewed through a cultural deficit lens that blames them for their "difference" and aims to "correct" it (Bishop, 2003; Nelson & Hay, 2010). In the process Indigenous learners are exposed to culturally insensitive curricula, textbooks, and pedagogies (Snyder & Nieuwenhuysen, 2010). They also find themselves studying in a tense and taxing environment where they have complex, often hostile relationships with non-Indigenous peers and teachers (Martinez, 2011). In such cases, distrustful relationships between schools and Indigenous communities do not allow collaborations to improve education quality and relevance (De Plevitz, 2007). Indigenous learners feel isolated from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities (Graham & Van Zyl-Chavarro, 2016). Their urban education can imply losing their Indigenous identity and sense of belonging

(Kamwangamalu, 2016), intergenerational ties, and cultural continuity (McCarty, 2020). For many, such culturally and politically problematic education also restricts their academic progress, and can lead to poor outcomes (Kearney et al., 2014; Weinstein, 2014).

Nelson and Hay (2010) write that “to avoid isolating, threatening or marginalising Indigenous ... students within education systems, traditional educational pathways and trajectories need to be challenged” (p. 54). This special issue heeds this call by considering what it means to challenge harmful educational norms faced by Indigenous people in diverse urban settings. We thus bring together here a collection of varied case studies that explore how dominant educational spaces in urban areas can be challenged, reimaged, and rebuilt to recognise and value Indigenous identities, cultures, and knowledges, and better address and accommodate Indigenous needs.

A strengths-based model to transform in Aotearoa New Zealand

Martyn Reynolds takes us to Aotearoa where Pacific Island learners are not served well by the education system. Often their Indigeneity is not valued by the settler society, and their identity is perceived as a risk factor. In this context, Reynolds proposes a strengths-based, culturally referenced model of relational resilience to reframe and transform education for Pacific learners. This model developed through a collaboration between Pacific community members and a non-Indigenous teacher-researcher in an urban high school. It is thus informed by Pacific Indigenous knowledge systems, worldviews, and ways of knowing, doing, being, and relating. As Reynolds shows, this alternative model can support teachers’ relations with Pacific Island learners, parents, and communities, by preparing teachers to become ‘deliberate’ learners. Such learners reject deficit theorisation of their students, embrace Pacific concepts, take reciprocity seriously, adopt cultural humility, foster dialogue, and configure new relationships between Pacific communities and school staff. Ultimately, this model can help teachers align academic procedures with Pacific Indigenous ethics and knowledges to improve education for Pacific Island learners.

Ecological systems theory effects systemic change in Peru

The next article, by Kayla M. Johnson and Joseph Levitan, is based in urban Peru, where Indigenous students pursue higher education far from their home communities. In the context of unaddressed oppressive colonial legacies and hostile institutional environments, Indigenous people in Peru require incredible individual and collective resilience and a system of support to access and persist through higher education. Johnson and Levitan explore in this context how the ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner (1992) can effect systematic, sustainable change. In particular, they show that ecological systems theory can help education actors in Peru (1) develop more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the forces (e.g., personal, interpersonal, political, etc.) and systems that support or restrict Indigenous students and (2) uncover levers to transform education, leading to system-wide improvements and strengthened systems of support that can enhance educational experiences and outcomes and create the possibility of a multi-epistemic future.

Moana Thought to decolonise in Oceania

In their contribution to this collection, David Taufui Mikato Fa’avae, Betty Lealailuoto, Tim Baice, and Fire Fonua write from their diverse experiences and multiple approaches to urban education across the Indigenous diaspora (Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga) in Aotearoa New Zealand and Oceania, where Eurocentric education has side-lined Indigenous knowledge systems and practices. They turn to critical *talanoa* (conversational and narrative sharing) to investigate nuances and complexities related to (re)conceptualising and transforming urban Indigenous diasporic education. The *talanoa* method is part of a decolonial agenda grounded in Indigenous

Moana Thought that enables unpacking and reconceptualising place and space, making connections between people and sacred spaces and ideas, and representing and expressing Indigenous peoples' educational aspirations and practices. The authors posit that *talanoa* processes within the Vā Moana (Pacific Indigenous platform) can support the realisation of Indigenous education that honours and celebrates shared spaces of exploration, diversity, solidarity, service, and connection (e.g., to extended family, community, ancestors) and centres Pacific cultures, values, and beliefs.

Crit-Trans partnership for co-governance in Canada and Taiwan

Eun-Ji Kim and Eric Layman's article challenges the urban/rural dichotomy in Indigenous education. They argue that this binary is a dangerous by-product of settler colonialism that decontextualizes and distorts Indigenous experiences of education. In relation, drawing on their research and collaboration with Indigenous communities in Canada and Taiwan, Kim and Layman propose the Crit-Trans Partnership Framework to help understand and guide Indigenous education policy and curriculum development and implementation. At the core of the framework are partnerships between diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors. This includes three aspects: (1) building, sustaining, and strengthening relationships between people, (2) carefully considering locations of meetings for collaborative work to challenge dichotomies and imbalances, and (3) enacting reciprocity by making accountability circular, embracing learning and policymaking as two-way integration, and ensuring benefits from these processes for Indigenous people. Ultimately, Kim and Layman emphasise co-governance of and a land-based approach to education to better meet the wide-ranging needs of diverse Indigenous communities and honour their experiences, voices, and values.

Meaningful educational collaborations in Chile

In the final article in our collection, Rukmini Becerra-Lubies introduces us to urban Chile, where intercultural bilingual education was implemented in preschools to support the Mapuche people. As part of this initiative, the schools aimed to build collaborative relationships between non-Indigenous school staff and Indigenous communities, improve Indigenous students' experiences and outcomes through a culturally and linguistically sensitive education, and address colonial legacies in education. However, despite their worthy aims, the schools have largely failed in these goals. Becerra-Lubies explains why and how this is the case. As the article shows, instead of establishing partnerships to enable structural changes, Indigenous people have usually been expected to fit in to a hostile system and fulfil the roles prescribed to them as visitors and content providers. Blame has been placed on Indigenous communities in this context for not sharing their knowledge and culture, not conforming to prescribed roles, and ultimately disconnecting from the preschools. School staff, on the other hand, did not realise how their practices and implicit resistance to change effectively excluded Indigenous people and decreased opportunities for collaboration. In this case, Becerra-Lubies proposes directions in policy and practice to enable more meaningful interconnections for transformative change.

Taken together, this collection illustrates some of the diversity and complexity of Indigenous educational experiences and practices in urban areas around the world. Read together, these varied case studies indicate the importance of place and local history to Indigenous educational experiences. At the same time, reading these articles together enables us to critically reflect on political and historical continuities and commonalities across diverse world regions and peoples, given the globality of colonial experiences and their contemporary legacies. With theoretical and practical insights meaningfully integrated across diverse urban contexts, this special issue will be of interest to scholars in educational history, policy, and development; sociology, anthropology, and philosophy; and global curriculum studies. It will also be valuable

reading for schoolteachers and school leaders in both urban and rural areas, in settler communities (among others) around the globe. While not aiming to be comprehensive in scope, this special issue can also be foundational to further comparative, global, and international scholarship that seeks to better understand Indigenous educational experiences in diverse social and political contexts. In sum, we hope that this special issue provides a broadened view of Indigenous learners' needs among diverse stakeholders around the world, inspiring future educational interruptions and collaborations that respond to historic injustice Indigenous peoples continued to face.

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