Chapter 3

Challenges for Policy and Practice for Young Children's Community Building Identified in a Study of Young Children's Civic Action

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Introduction

This chapter is adapted from the final chapter of a recently published book[1] in which the authors reported on a study funded by the Spencer Foundation, Chicago, that explored young children's civic action. In this book, we explored the work of teachers, children, and families in two different settings. One was Gundoo Early Childhood Learning Centre, an Aboriginal Australian-governed early childhood care and education center in a small rural town in Queensland, Australia. The other was Katoa Kindergarten, a public kindergarten in Porirua, north of Wellington, New Zealand. Both of these settings were chosen because they were attended by Indigenous children and families, in the Australian case exclusively, and because the teachers were committed to honoring Indigenous perspectives and pedagogies.

We initially drew on notions of civic education to explore young children's sense of community membership, collective responsibility, and participation as follows:

Table 3.1 Four key concepts of communitarian citizenship

Civic concept	Concise definition
Civic identity	Who am I in this community?
Collective responsibility	How do I care for others?
Civic agency	What can I do to participate in this community?
Civic participation	How do I act collectively with those in this community?

We drew on a range of citizenship education theories, critical early childhood studies, kaupapa Māori, and other Indigenous onto-epistemologies. Our research methodology was ethnographic and collaborative, involving frequent extended periods of time visiting each of the two centers over one year in duration. We also employed a variation of Tobin's multi-vocal

video-cued ethnography (Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009). We worked closely with the teachers in both settings, respecting and learning from the deep wisdom that they employed in their work, and their close relationships and shared understandings with children and families. Through working collectively as a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues, we aimed to enhance awareness of the ongoing impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples and of settler descendant responsibility in relation to these lived experiences, by listening to and learning from Indigenous wisdom on negotiating coexistence.

Citizenship is a western construct that has actively excluded Indigenous peoples and children. Because we are informed by the emphasis on relationships in Aboriginal Australian and Māori ontologies, we have come to prefer the term "community building" in place of "citizenship." Community building in this view is the process of working out and practicing how to coexist with others, both human and more-than-human.[2] We came to view our study as highlighting "young children's community building;" identifying key cultural values and pedagogical practices that fostered this. In this chapter, we focus on some implications for policy and practice that emanate from our study. The format of this chapter is structured as a series of provocations. It begins with a critique of the hegemonic pervasiveness of the assumption of white superiority that has perpetrated the project of colonization and which continues to this day. Next, racism is highlighted as a key mechanism that reinscribes such oppressive relations on a daily basis, simultaneously reinforcing the ongoing impacts of longstanding intergenerational trauma. We then describe how working within collectives of children, families, Elders, teachers, and more-than-human entities challenge individualist western modes of operating. We consider how our learnings counter universalizing early childhood discourses, policies, and pedagogies. We highlight key pedagogical learnings in relation to foregrounding Indigenous wisdom, recognizing the power of silent pedagogies, valuing community contributions, and embracing relationality within the wider collective including the more-than-human realm. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how our study contributes to reconsiderations of notions of citizenship.

Challenging the Assumption of Western Superiority

"Civil," "civilized," and "civilization" are terms that have a history of association with the Western construct of citizenship. The word "civil" originated in the late 14th century "relating to civil law or life, pertaining to the internal affairs of a state," from the Old French word *civil* "relating to civil law" (circa the 13th century) and directly from the Latin word *civilis* "relating to a society, pertaining to public life, relating to the civic order, befitting a citizen" (Harper, 2019). From about the 1550s, the meaning of

civil as "not barbarous" emerged (Harper, 2019), aligning with the creation of the modern world through invasion and colonization, when European colonizers were measuring their versions of society and governance against what they read of the societies they colonized. This is the origin of the meaning of "civil" as courteous which emerged in the late 16th century.

The civil element of citizenship developed largely in the 18th century and is concerned with "the rights necessary for individual freedom, such as the right to freedom of speech and the right to own property" (Chesterman & Galligan, 2009, p. 5). In everyday English, reference to being civil or civilized indicates being courteous and polite framed by Victorian societal standards. Such a discourse lingers and dominates, whereas civil rights assert the right to freedom of speech and the right to have a voice on matters that affect you. These are quite contrasting meanings that are messily entangled in the citizenship project for Indigenous Peoples who have been defined by colonizers as "uncivilized," "primitive," or "savage races" where Aboriginal Australians were placed at the bottom of the scale of civilization with western societies monopolizing the highest position (Sabbioni, 1998). This biased ranking is of course performed by those who have allocated themselves the highest position, and categorization has been defined through comparison to self, noting differences by misguided, ill-informed perceptions as to what is missing or what is lacking, such as writing, religion, and agriculture (Kowal, 2015).

The Oxford dictionary defines *civilization* as "the stage of human social development and organization which is considered most advanced" (2019a, para 1). Indicators of "advancement" have been viewed from a western perspective which is detached from nature and is framed by materialistic, individualistic, and hierarchical measures, with white males at the top and insidiously embedded structures that protect these hierarchies of privilege. What needs to be questioned is: what are the indicators of advancement, for what goal, for what purpose, who is defining these, and who is benefitting from them? A society that writes has come to be understood as an advanced civilization, along with agricultural societies. The widely held perception is that pre-colonized Aboriginal Australians did not engage in agricultural practices. For example, Australia is left empty on the mapping of the centers of origin and spread of agriculture in Wikimedia Commons, and this is then cited in the Khan Academy (2019) webpage on early civilizations. So, the popular perception of Aboriginal Australians as "uncivilized" continues, even though there are vast bodies of evidence to prove otherwise" (e.g., see Pascoe, 2014). The Oxford dictionary further defines *uncivilized* as "not socially, culturally, or morally advanced," and gives as an example: *"children are basically uncivilized"* (2019b, para 1). Hence, both Indigenous peoples and children are placed on the lower ladders of a hierarchy of being (un)civilized as per the "Great Chain of Being" (Salmond, 2017).

The assimilationist project of the British colonials was intended to replace whatever had previously existed in the "new" country, both Indigenous peoples and biodiversity, with a replica of the "mother" country, grounded in an inherent assumption of the superiority of western, and British "civilization". Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) define settler colonialism as "the specific formation of colonialism in which the colonizer comes to stay, making himself the sovereign, and the arbiter of citizenship, civility, and knowing" (p. 73). However, as pointed out by Ritchie and Skerrett (2019):

> British settler colonization …has nothing to do with "civilization" (one of its fake narratives), but all to do with access to land or territory.
> (p. 70)

Wolfe (2006) describes this most succinctly: "Settler colonialism destroys to replace" (p. 388). As Aboriginal Australian lawman and elder Hobbles Danaiyarri often said, "Captain Cook was the real wild one. He failed to recognize law, destroyed people and country, lived by damage, and promoted cruelty" (Rose, 2004, p. 4).

The majority of white/Pākehā citizens in both countries remain largely oblivious of the history of their nations, of how this has been based on the erroneous assumption of white superiority, and of the multiplicitous entangled trajectories of economic marginalization, of intergenerational trauma, and of the obliteration of histories, knowledges, languages, and lives that continue to negatively impact the lives of Indigenous peoples in their countries and elsewhere. These limited understandings of colonization relieve the settler descendants of any sense of responsibility in relation to either historical or ongoing injustices:

> They think of colonization as ….unfortunate birthpangs of a new nation. They do not consider the fact that they live on land that has been stolen, or ceded through broken treaties, or to which Indigenous peoples claim a pre-existing ontological and cosmological relationship. They do not consider themselves to be implicated.
> (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014, p. 7)

New Zealand novelist Maurice Shadbolt (1999) identified a national syndrome of historical amnesia which he associated with deep-seated guilt or unwillingness to acknowledge the tensions and treachery of our past. This amnesia and concomitant lack of inclusion of historical and local Indigenous knowledges in our education systems contributes to an unspoken hegemonic complacency of the dominant culture, and thus to the lack of understanding or empathy toward Māori regarding the negative effects of colonization. In Australia, the amnesia or readiness to move and forget

is embedded in the "she'll be right" expression which moves to "amnesia and the illusion of progress" along with "a seduction…that somehow it is all going to be okay" (Rose, 2004, p. 46) as we "forget even to think about the places where uncomfortable things happen… forgetting the losses for which we are ultimately accountable, and insulating ourselves against the absences that surround us" (p. 47).

To counter this deliberate amnesia, white people need to interrogate their whiteness. As Mazzei (2011) has highlighted: "whiteness has historically gone unnamed and unnoticed as the hegemonic norm" (p. 659). White educators need to make that choice and feel uncomfortable and awaken the consciousness of our own historical amnesia and "desiring silence" (Mazzei, 2011) as that relates to the communities in which we live and work. Education offers a site for stirring awareness to foster intercultural relationality by privileging Indigenous voices, knowledge, and rights. Education systems should include such histories to avoid the ongoing amnesia and silencing that enables this assumption of superiority to persist.

Students at all levels, and in particular, teacher education students, require opportunities to study the history of their countries in order to contextualize their contemporary understandings (Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, 1999). Recently, the New Zealand Minister of Education has agreed that schools need more support with regard to strengthening the teaching of New Zealand history, stating that "New Zealand's history, extending back to the earliest Polynesian settlers, is of significant importance to us" (as cited in McLachlan, 2018, p. 1), yet the racist attitudes of teachers continue to obfuscate this objective.

Steps to mandate and assert the inclusion of Indigenous experiences of colonization and nation-building in Australia and New Zealand are never immune to counter assertions, reductions, and deletions by white superiority. One of the six guiding principles of the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care (ACECQA, 2020 is "Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued" (p. 10). The Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (Queensland Studies Authority, 2010) included foregrounding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and learning, yet the revised Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2018) removed such assertion and inclusion in response to white feedback that Aboriginal and Torres Islander cultures were being privileged.

Respecting and re-invigorating Indigenous languages is key to challenging the hegemonic dominance of English, the language of the colonizers. Despite its recently recognized "superdiverse" status (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013), New Zealand, due to colonization, has been a nation steadfastly monolingual in English (Waite, 1992) and the Māori language is severely endangered. Fewer than a quarter (21.3%) of Māori people and only 3.7% of the total population of Aotearoa speak enough

te reo Māori to hold a conversation in that language. The commitment of the Katoa teachers to the inclusion of te reo Māori and tikanga (values and cultural practices) as per the Ministry of Education and Teaching Council documents, and of Pacific Islands' languages and dispositions (see, for example, Luafutu-Simpson, 2011) was constantly visible, integrated throughout their pedagogies and documentation. Gundoo educators also sought ways to revitalize remaining fragments of Wakka Wakka and Gubbi Gubbi languages through songs, naming games, and wall charts, along with speaking in the community language of Aboriginal English. Cultural knowledges are foregrounded and embedded into daily practices. The introduction of the Queensland *Foundations for Success* (The State of Queensland Department of Education, 2016) curriculum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children now offers resources to further support foregrounding cultural pride, relationality, and freedom.

Western superiority has a long legacy of silencing and ignoring Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and relating with regard to citizenship (coexistence with others), civil rights, and civilization. Through this chapter, we invite readers to notice the wisdom that Indigenous cultures and children bring to the construction of concepts and practices that facilitate coexistence with others, which we refer to as community building. From the Gundoo community, we learned the following:

- Pride in community membership is foundational
- Kinship ties run deep – you relate to others as they are a part of you
- Everyone looks out for each other
- Elders are respected and young are cared for
- Collectivist ontology is felt and communicated through embodied knowledge
- Coexistence with others is with all entities (humans, fauna, flora, geoforms)
- By seeing others as they are a part of you, enact empathic and inclusive relations
- Physical restraints are worked around, through, and under
- Aboriginal lore of kinship relations and responsibilities imbue all-knowing, being, and relating

From the Katoa community, we learned about ways in which a collective of teachers can work from a deeply embedded ethic of respect for children, families, and the environment, an ethic of relationality, which enabled them to inclusively reflect core Māori values throughout their planning, teaching, and ongoing reflection. As Jickling (2005) has pointed out: "our epistemologies, our systems of knowledge, rest on ethical choices whether these are made consciously or not" (p. 239). He critiques western cultural frameworks for organizing knowledge for "our tendency to separate ethical, emotional, and spiritual knowledge from "hard' science" (p. 40). We consider that teacher education programs should reflect this concern to

develop in future teachers a commitment to ongoing critique of the foundational ethical premises on which they base their praxis.

Challenging the Injustices of Racism, Intergenerational Trauma, and Social Class

Racism encourages a "blame the victim" attitude with regard to the disparities that result from long-term institutional discrimination. It perpetuates the invisibility of intergenerational trauma that scars and impedes the lives of Indigenous peoples (Pihama et al., 2014). This means that in order to intervene rather than perpetuate this situation, a constant awareness of racism and intergenerational trauma, as well as a sensitivity in relation to the implications, should be at the forefront of teachers' work.

Racism utilizes the imposition of labels that serve as carriers of racist discourses. These discourses also mask the hegemony of institutional policies and practices that are designed by and for the dominant cultural group, whereby the "norms" are normed to those of the colonizer, excluding the priorities and values of the colonized. Drawing on the work of Cannella and Viruru (2004), Urban explains that in both "colonial and neocolonial contexts, representation has been, and continues to be, employed as a powerful 'methodology of contemporary colonization'" (Urban, 2018, p. 9).
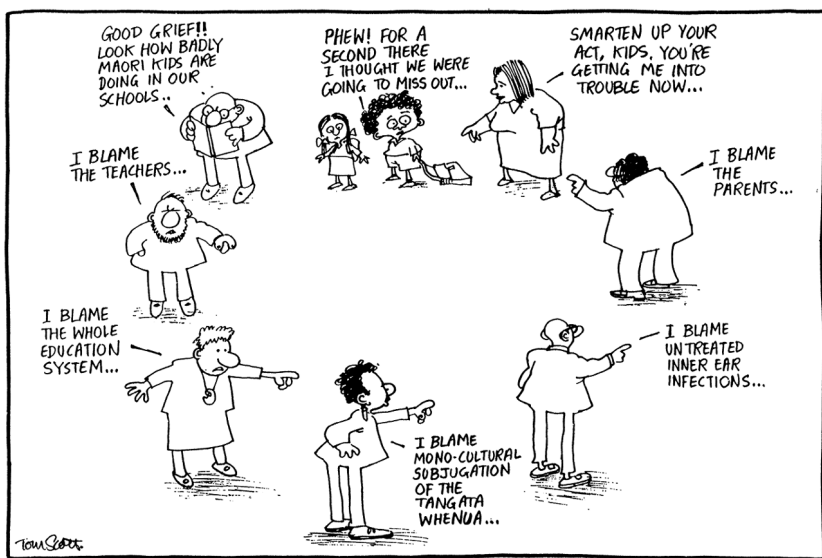

Figure 3.1 Tom Scott cartoon.

(Scott, 1991, p. 61) reproduced with permission from author.

Racism is enacted in the representations imposed by the colonizers:

> "Māori" is a construction of colonisation. Prior to contact with Europeans, "māori" meant simply "ordinary" and Māori individuals identified not as Māori, but with their hapū and iwi [sub-tribe and tribe] (Kawharu, 1992). It is ironic that as a result of colonization, to be "ordinary" or "normal" in this country now means to be part of the dominant Pākehā mainstream (Mead, 1996).
>
> (Ritchie, 2002, p. 24)

Mead (1996) called for being Māori to be repositioned as normal. An anti-racist, counter-colonial approach, therefore, involves the renormalization of Indigeneity.

Racism operates against respectful relationality, and in tandem with complex cumulative overlays of impacts of colonialism, class, and gender, negatively influences the identities and life experiences of Indigenous peoples on an ongoing daily basis (Poata-Smith, 2013). Colonialist policies having disenfranchised Indigenous peoples from exercising political influence, then proceeded to alienate them from their lands and thus their economic base, along with denying them equitable educational opportunities, resulting in the original peoples being relegated to marginalized corners of society in their own country. Meanwhile, Pākeha/white citizens who have benefitted from both colonization and the current socioeconomic and political arrangements live "in a bubble of blissful ignorance" of the ongoing impacts of racism, inadvertently (if not blatantly) perpetuating it and frequently denying its existence (McConnell, 2018, para. 10). For Pākehā/white citizens, acknowledging racism is optional. Maintaining a state of ignorance enables the avoidance of empathizing with the pain carried intergenerationally by Indigenous peoples arising from the trauma of seeing both human and more-than-human kin mistreated and massacred (Rose, 2008).

As a Gundoo Indigenous educator, Bena explained, the meaning and use of the label "Aboriginal" *is* abnormal. It is a generic term that has been imposed by the colonizers; it is not a term that comes from her own history, her own languages, or her own genealogical connectedness to her people and places. "Aboriginal" is an anthropological term that has been used to distinguish Indigenous Australians' otherness, as well as homogenize a diverse collection of hundreds of cultural groups who live across vastly variant landscapes (Kowal, 2015). Such classification has fuelled constructions of Australian First Nations Peoples as "less than" and produced intergenerational lived inequities and merged diverse identities. A better informed understanding of past and present Indigenous inequities is necessary before healing begins (Burridge, 1999) and mythologies of inequities dissipate. Bodkin-Andrews and Carlson (2016) argue that

the most substantial obstructions to overcoming the inequities suffered by Aboriginal Australians are the compounded assault of ignorance and racism and the continued personal attacks on identity. We need to recognize and name racism and the daily lived obstructions racism imposes on Australian First Nations Peoples to enable visibility of their strengths and wisdom (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016).

The recently refreshed Aotearoa New Zealand curriculum *Te Whāriki 2017* no longer contains the expectation that: "the early childhood curriculum actively contributes towards countering racism and other forms of prejudice" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 18). It does not mention racism at all and refers to challenging prejudice just once. Miles Ferris, as president of the Māori school principals' association Te Akatea, pointed out that "there's a high level of racial bias, discrimination throughout our system that's not often talked about. And it's not till we address those issues that I think we're going to see long-term and effective change" (as cited in Radio New Zealand News, 2 May, 2018). While white/Pākehā educators may be considered to "unconsciously" perpetuate racism, and when witnessing instances of racism can choose whether or not to confront it, Indigenous people have no option but to be on the receiving end of racist acts and aggressions on a daily basis. We believe that it is a core responsibility (response-ability) of all educators to challenge the ongoing prevalence of racism and a key challenge for teacher education providers to activate commitment toward this.

Co-researcher Kerryn explained how her experience as an Aboriginal Australian person is always political. And though we have policy mechanisms such as cultural capability frameworks to cultivate a better-informed citizenry (a strategy to reduce racism), racism is once again not named. In the politics and discourses of niceness (which has been a hallmark of early childhood education – see Stonehouse, 1994) and diplomacy, acknowledgment of racism is avoided in early childhood education and education policies generally in Australia and New Zealand. To wholly work toward the civic learning of coexistence with others in colonized nations, the violence and wounding in Indigenous peoples' lived daily reality of racism needs to be recognized, felt, and redressed. As Sims (2014) has advocated: "understanding that none of us is free of racism, and accepting the challenge to improve is the foundation for change. Early childhood professionals can make a difference. It is up to us to ensure that we do" (p. 93).

Collectivist Challenges to Individualism

Aboriginal Australian and Māori worldviews are collectivist ontologies based on collective good rather than individualism (Martin, 2008). Kinship ties weave the threads for collective rights, responsibilities, and actions with all entities. To relate to another as if they are part of you, as Aunty Margaret Kemarre Turner (2010) expressed, is a resonant aphorism of Aboriginal

Australian ways of knowing, being, doing, and relating. In a Māori world-view, "a person is always relationally connected" (Salmond, 2017, p. 407). For Māori and Aboriginal Australian worldviews, this relationality includes the more-than-human and spiritual realms and is not hierarchically arranged. In Aotearoa, supernatural beings such as taniwhā that inhabit rivers and seas, are kaitiaki, or spiritual guardians, who look out for people and vice versa. As Salmond explains, "In this networked world, a person is constantly nego-tiating their relationships with others, striving to keep them in balance and good heart" (Salmond, 2017, p. 407). However, colonization has imposed hierarchical, gendered, and stratified social orderings, prioritizing the rights of the individual above that of the collective. For example, laws were passed that individualized collective land titles, thus making it easier for settlers to purchase lands from Māori. In te ao Māori (Māori worldview), the Earth Mother, Papatūānuku, and the whenua (land/placenta) were ancestral sources of nurture, not a commodity to be sold. Since the rapid introduction of neoliberal economic and social policies that have been embraced by New Zealand governments from the mid-1980s onward,

> the cost-benefit calculating individual has become commonplace, eroding shared values and collective institutions from families to the state. Such an understanding of the self runs contrary to ancestral Māori ideas of a person as defined by their relationships with others, past and present, and values such as utu (reciprocity and balanced exchange); aroha (fellow feeling), manaakitanga (hospitality, care for others) and tino rangatiratanga (chiefly leadership) in which mana is exhibited in acts of generosity.
>
> (Salmond, 2017, p. 409)

Thus, individual greed and profiteering have sought to replace Māori val-ues, threatening the capacity to maintain the sense of collective responsi-bility that enables care for both social and environmental well-being.

In our study, we saw young children's enactment of their sense of responsibility, held and done by, with, and for the benefit of the collec-tive. This was often not adult provoked or explicitly encouraged and was expressed through shared identity and communal and familial obliga-tions for collective interest or will. At Gundoo, children caring for each other was particularly resonant, with this being by far the most frequently observed practice contributing to young children's community building. Collective interests, rights, and responsibilities were readily demonstrated by the children, nurtured by the community cultural value of thinking of your "mob" (your kin and community). Recognition and pride in com-munity and tribal membership are foundational to identity building and now reinforced by the Foundations for Success learning area "being proud and strong," at Gundoo. From this base, collectivism is enacted through

a strong embodied ethos of everyone caring for each other and sharing. Knowledge of kinship relations and responsibilities catalyzes collective empathic and inclusive relations, actions, and responsibilities with all entities (humans, fauna, flora, and geoforms).

Collective responsibility is a core value in te ao Māori, the Māori worldview, and was evident at Katoa through expression of whanaungatanga (relationships), kotahitanga (collectivity), manaakitanga (caring, responsibility for others), and rangatiratanga (leadership in service of the collective). It was also evident in expression of tuakana/teina relationships, whereby older children support younger siblings/cousins. During the data collection period, there were ten pairs of siblings attending the kindergarten, and a further number were cousins. The encouragement of tuakana (older siblings) to enact their responsibilities to teina (younger siblings) was an expression of collective responsibility. This obligation to the collective was reinforced by the consistent articulation by the teachers of these core Māori values, which underpinned and informed their program planning and daily interactions. Teachers at Katoa recognized that they have a responsibility to support these bonds and enable young children to demonstrate and practice their roles as carers, nurturers, and responsible community members

Collectivist ontologies offer a very different frame from individualist, neoliberal, nuclear family ontologies on which western national education policies are based. Indigenous ways of thinking have sustained thousands of years, providing an extraordinary legacy of wisdom. Indigenous value systems provide a strong context for collectivist approaches to civic action. Not only can western policymakers pay greater heed to ensure that local Indigenous values are embedded within curriculum and pedagogies but they also need to ensure that teachers receive appropriate professional learning to enable the fostering of these values within their educational settings.

Challenges for Early Childhood Discourses and Policies

Following on from the previous section, we ask the following questions: to what extent do we, and our discourses, policies, and practices, position infants and young children as autonomous individuals, or alternatively, as embedded, contributing members of their extended families and communities? And, to what extent are we able to critique the normativizing, controlling, and inherently violent doctrines of developmentalism and behaviorism as promoted in the adultist patronization of children embedded in western discourses? (Cannella & Viruru, 2004). And how can we as a community of early childhood education teachers and scholars resist universalizing, normativizing globalized discourses that impose "generic" western standards and measurement on children from diverse communities?

Discourses create their own truths and thus normalize practices (Inglis & Thorpe, 2015), so if we conceive of children as egocentric, autonomous, incapable of sharing or empathizing, and if we fail to notice and affirm their acts of caring and concern for others, their efforts to "act in concert" with others on collaborative endeavors, then the latter dispositions will likely wither. Yet if we view children as capable of acting in concert to (re)create their social worlds and to deeply respect and care for their environment, we will see a different set of "outcomes." As early childhood teachers, scholars and researchers, we can critique the ways in which we are seduced by universalized values and aspirations for children and endeavor in order to explore the extent to which we have deeply engaged understandings of particular families' histories, values, and aspirations for their children and grandchildren. We can consider the ways in which we seek to come to know familial interests and dispositions. We can reflect on how, as a "caring" profession, we extend our care to the families and communities in which we work, and on the ways in which we model this caring and foster this with the infants and young children who attend our services.

Universal policy implementation without recognition of community context and cultural values and practices works to denounce Indigeneity and enforce assimilation. Examples of such imposition include requirements separating children into age-delineated class groupings, fencing that separates these age groups in the outdoor areas, and individualized sleeping arrangements. These requirements are in conflict with cultural values and practices and do not take into account the community context. Gundoo implements pedagogy and delivery of practice that meets the national legislated early learning framework, regulations and standards, enduring historical and current government provisions, while recognizing and honoring the strengths and cultural agency of each child. This is not an easy path to tread and requires ongoing code-switching, negotiation, and sacrifices. The early childhood curriculum in Aotearoa, *Te Whāriki 2017*, encourages teachers to "weave" their own local curriculum with input from children and families and in line with community aspirations. Yet regulations may be in conflict with such aspirations, such as recent requirements from the New Zealand Ministry of Health designed to reduce choking incidents which also prohibit a wide range of foods that families may have previously provided for the children (Ministry of Health, 2020).

Challenges for Pedagogies

Pedagogies that support and enable children as citizens of the here and now – community builders of today, require educators to step back and down from their adultist positionings. To no longer see their classroom as the domain that they rule, but rather to flatten the hierarchy and be with the children, place, and community. This requires teachers to critically examine

such deeply embedded cultural constructs as their roles as teachers, their cultural values, and their priorities. This might include questioning our allegiances to western linearity of time, development, and of evolutionist and futurist orientation, including "stages of development," and hierarchies of knowledge. This in turn leads us to reject as inadequate child-centered individualistic pedagogies, which situate the child in isolation from their collective identities, places, histories, and genealogy. We identified five key pedagogical principles at play at Gundoo and Katoa that supported children's community building: foregrounding cultural identity; including cultural wisdom; pedagogies of silence; real community contributions; and land as pedagogy. These approaches challenge us to relinquish our sense of knowing and determining what is best for others, to see instead the complexity of children's reciprocally attuned embodied responses.

Foregrounding Cultural Identity and Wisdom

Cultural pride was a resonant theme in the pedagogical practices at Gundoo and Katoa. At Gundoo, this is evident in the practice of kinship relationality, the resources and materials selected and used, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's picture books, and posters, the use of Aboriginal English and languages, and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days of importance. From Katoa Kindergarten, we saw how overarching themes based on the core Māori values of kotahitanga, whanaungatanga and rangatiratanga, engendered recognizing, acknowledging, and affirming the entanglement of histories, colonization, identities, and complexities of cultural affiliations, the teachers' careful research, and responsiveness aimed at including home languages of every child. This is seen in the responsive and thoughtful learning stories that contribute to the overall planning story at Katoa, whereby "Figurations have agency, history, and a life of their own" (Lakind & Adsit-Morris, 2018, p. 32) rather than hegemonic treatment of universalized dispositions as has become common practice in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

At both Gundoo and Katoa Kindergarten, we saw the enactment of a deep respect for the knowledges and wisdom of Elders, and recognition of the importance of seeking permission from Elders. At Gundoo, the center location alongside an aged care home provided an ideal opportunity for daily intergenerational exchanges, valuing each other as treasured members of community. Community artists and Elders would visit the center, and children would visit the local museum to foreground Aboriginal knowledge sharing. The Katoa teachers consistently worked at building and maintaining a relationship with the local marae and elders associated with that community, and also arranged for the children to visit the national museum, Te Papa. The input of all attending families/whānau

was regularly sought and an integral part of the teachers' planning process was to research key Māori content to include in their daily teaching interactions, documentation, and pedagogical reflection. We advocate for the specificity of such knowledges to be at the forefront of teachers' work.

Pedagogies of Silence

A default western understanding of teachers is that they are obliged to talk, that they fill the classroom with talk, commanding silence from the children so that the teacher's voice prevails. The western construct of "teaching" is explicitly focused on the transmission of content and skills. At Gundoo, the educators were present, providing resources and comfort, and care as needed, but they rarely intervened with questions or commentary, only reminders of safety cautions, creating a reassuring space for the children to initiate, negotiate and act together. Others have observed this aspect of Aboriginal pedagogies, in which children are freely permitted to explore and engage with others and the learning environment, in real-life situations that involve risks (Fasoli, Wunungmurra, Ecenarro, & Fleet, 2010; Sumsion, Harrison, Letsch, Bradley, & Stapleton, 2018). We saw freedom to choose and move as a consistent principle that informed the pedagogies employed. This is enacted via pedagogies of silence. Through a western lens, this practice may be read as lazy or slack, but in fact the practice is intentional and is very much about being present. Physical watchful presence communicates encouragement and assurance. Choice of positionality in a room or outdoor area is intentional in the watchful presence. Relationality is nurtured through doing together, a practice not filled with words, but doing and being with children. As Kerryn shares, "words are special. Don't fill time with just words." Much is instead communicated through eyes, nods and gentle touch. Katoa educators noticed this quietness when they viewed the Gundoo day video.

Words are not the only way of expressing wisdom, connection, empathy, and trust. Teachers at Katoa would often observe children struggling with an individual or collective task, not intervening to assist or suggest a resolution, trusting that the children would eventually work things out. There were also many instances observed of children's wordless community building, whereby even very young children assisted one another or attended to an injury in silence, their embodied physical presence resonating empathy and concern, the reading of another's feelings and needs not requiring verbal expression.

Real Community Contributions

Gundoo and Katoa were both recognized by family and community members as a community hub, whereby family and community members would

visit and contribute to the daily life of the children's centers without the need to be nudged or organized by educators. Intergenerational family membership was particularly visible in the frequent presence of family members of all ages (including school-age children), other visiting kin, community members cooking echidna to share, and community artists sharing stories and their arts. At Katoa, the grandfather of two attending sisters, Papa Barry, visited the kindergarten every day around lunchtime. Whānau members could use the kitchen to prepare food, such as when they cooked pork which had been supplied by Papa Barry. Strongly evident also was the deep connection and warm relationships of the teachers with families, teachers often taking considerable time just chatting and being alongside parents at the center. The process that was led by the Katoa Head Teacher Trinity required teachers' intentionality in building these relationships with families, backed by clear systems for planning and reflection, which required reaching out to whānau (families). The supportive nature of the teaching team involved modeling the teachers' own collaboration and shared values of whanaungatanga, kotahitanga, empathy, concern, and respect. In the 'Ko wai ahau?' (Who am I?) planning story displayed on the center wall there were multiple levels of focus which included individual and family/whānau identity as well as a sense of community, the center's relationship with the local tribe Ngāti Toa Rangatira, and regular visits to the marae (tribal meeting place), located on the same street. Trinity and the other teachers encouraged the children's seeing themselves as part of the community, the inward and outward flow included inviting various people in such as the regular visits by a local band, and also by a dancer, as well as going out into the community, walks to the marae, up to the bush out the back of the center, and down to the shop to get baking supplies or Easter eggs. Trinity spoke of how as a team they intentionally worked as a collective to bring in the values of the community. She mentioned as an example how another teacher Sonya had brought in from her relationships with the teachers of Toru Fetu, a nearby center that features three different Pacific Island cultures (Cook Island Māori, Tuvalu, and Niuean), a list of Samoan dispositions (Luafutu-Simpson, 2011) and these went up on the planning wall and were incorporated into the planning work. Community presence and contribution is highlighted here as integral to culturally responsive early childhood care and education.

More-than-Human Relational Pedagogy

The study highlighted the importance of pedagogies recognizing, respecting, and making connections to the Country upon which it is situated. Both Aboriginal Australian worldviews and Maori worldviews are

relational, inclusive of all entities of water, land, animals, flora, weather, sky, and spirits. As Aboriginal co-researcher Kerryn explains:

> It's about being embodied to connect to the country and living things from the stars to the earth, from horizon to horizon, not separating the people from land. The land is a part of our kin and even a small rock has its home and the language of country can sing its ancient songs if we listen.

The Aboriginal notion of connection to country and protocols of Welcome to Country and of the Acknowledgment of Country speak of this consciousness of being entangled with all other matters. Māori cosmologies view all entities within the biosphere as descendants of Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) and Ranginui (Sky Father). Māori ontology is underpinned by relational ethics, based on respect for mauri, the life force in both living and inanimate things, for wairuatanga, spiritual interconnectedness, and for hau, the spiritual power of obligatory reciprocity (Henare, 2001). In recent times, post-humanism and new-materialism have also proposed an awareness of being entangled with all other matters. Viewed from Indigenous ontological perspectives, this is not new but rather is ancient wisdom and deeply held spirituality. This requires attunement to the rhythms of other entities to align coexistence for the good of all.

   The children at Gundoo and Katoa were very much interested in building communities with all entities, which at various times included dogs, insects, cats, rocks, mud, puddles, trees, roots, plants, compost, and gardens. And the pedagogies applied at Gundoo and Katoa welcomed these broad communities. Pedagogically this requires acknowledgment and acceptance and a broadening of language to de-center humans from communities. To draw from Aboriginal lore and government, which according to Pascoe (2014) is the most democratic model of all the systems humans have devised, is to recognize and relate to another as if they are a part of you (Turner, 2010). As an effort to reconcile the troubled times we live in, this requires awareness of the responsibility to all others, "facing our responsibility to the infinitude of the other, welcoming the stranger whose very existence is the possibility of touching and being touched, who gifts us with both the ability to respond and the longing for justice-to-come" (Barad, 2012, p. 219). We acknowledge the work of the Common Worlds Research Collective (2019) in contributing to the recognition of more-than-human relations and pedagogies and argue that such pedagogies informed by Indigenous wisdom may offer hope "that response-ability to the infinitude of the other is contagious and spreads and heals the vast injuries of human privilege" (Phillips, 2020, p. 1636).

Challenges to Conceptualizations and Practices of Citizenship

For the children in these Indigenous-centric communities, relationality with all others was foregrounded in their early childhood centers, where children enter into a polis – a more public sphere with un-(or less) familiar others. Moss (2014) explains that "early childhood centers are public spaces and public resources, open to all citizens as of right. They are places of realizing potentiality, the potentiality of citizens and of early childhood education" (p. 81). They offer a wealth of relationships and resource for those in the neighborhood, serving as:

> A place of infinite possibilities, giving constant rise to wonder and surprise, magic moments and goose bumps, and a source of hope and renewed belief in the world; a place, too, where freedom, democracy and solidarity are practiced and where the value of peace is promoted.
> (Moss, 2014, p. 82)

As a western construct, citizenship is about human relations, and yet children's and Indigenous worldviews see the necessity for relations beyond anthropocentrism – we are invited to conceptualize citizenship as coexisting with more-than-human others – with bees, with rocks, with trees, dirt and roots, with stick insects, with cats and dogs, with magpies, with fences, with mud and puddles.

We alert readers to the elitism of notions of citizenship as entitlement to property ownership, traced from the historical foundations of citizenship, and the resurgence of such elitism in neoliberal times where we witness the elite predominantly holding the reins of political and economic power while denying the majority access to this positioning. Rather than seeing land to be owned by the privileged few and giving further rights to those entitled by this ownership, we consider that land is one of the many entities with which we coexist. Building peaceful communities involves relations with all entities of the locale, so the connection to place runs deep. Views of citizenship conveyed in civic education curricula in which students learn about formal civic institutions, limit or deny children and young people's civic agency and ignore Indigenous wisdom. This mode of citizenship operates in denial of the inherent democracy of Indigenous models. In the communities of Gundoo and Katoa we witnessed community membership as foundational to civic identity. This shifts from western definitions of citizenship as nation state membership, to one of membership of cultural communities, of located communities (place/country), children's communities and communities of self-choosing.

Though we often translated the focus of the study to educators and community members as being about children's rights, as a means to make the ambiguous concept of citizenship more focused on our interests in active citizen participation, citizenship as rights possession did not come to the fore in our readings of children's actions. As noted by Yuval-Davis (1997), a rights focus comes from the construction of citizens as strangers to each other. So Indigenous Peoples' rights are viewed in relation to their coexistence and negotiations with colonizers. Amidst Aboriginal Australian and Maori societies, relationship to another is foregrounded, as we witnessed in children's enactment of kinship roles and responsibilities at Gundoo and at Katoa. Citizenship or community building is not something you think, it is something you do. It is embodied – it is felt, sensed, known, and lived – in Indigenous communities where cultural values are instilled before birth.

We recognize and argue for cultural agency and cultural identity as inherent sources of citizenship and sites for community building. Cultural agency and identity provide solid foundations of security and belonging to shield the daily onslaught of racism violating Indigenous peoples' civic agency. As Aboriginal co-researcher Kerryn explains: The notion of children's civic agency, in particular, first nations' children's engagement and rights relating to identity in Australian citizenship requires ongoing analysis to ensure its development within education systems.

This study highlighted the importance of ongoing analysis of curriculum decision-making to respectfully reflect the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori children in order that children can assert their identity with agency in their communities and nations. As both Australia and New Zealand engage in national conversations about the rights of children, and the priorities of our education systems, we ask: are we hearing children's voices in this conversation? How can we engage children in conversations that focus on enhancing their participation in civic rights? The Gundoo community demonstrated civil resilience to maintain strong community connections and social participation within a highly structured civic space.

We argue that there is much to learn (and much hope for sustainable peaceful communities) from citizenship conceptualized as embodied, emplaced, and relational with all entities.

Taking Up These Challenges

From our study, we hope to contribute to conversations challenging western notions of "civilization" and "citizenship". Alongside the authors of the other chapters in this book, we hope readers will

be encouraged to adopt an ongoing stance of critiquing the pervasive complacency regarding hegemonic discourses privileging western superiority, racism, and modernism. We particularly want to challenge how such discourses continue to exclude children from active participation in decision-making by the ongoing failure to recognize even young children as capable of citizenship enactment in the present, in their communities. Learning from local Indigenous knowledges, histories, ecologies, and relationalities requires building and sustaining committed, long-term relationships. Embracing these ways of knowing, being, doing, and relating as pedagogical frames enables recognition of children's community building as a relational, embodied, emplaced reciprocal engagement. As our planet faces the onslaught of Anthropogenic climate change and struggles to constrain the global COVID-19 pandemic, the wisdom of the sustainable philosophies of Indigenous peoples becomes even more salient.

Notes

1 This chapter is based on chapter seven of our book 'Young Children's Community Building in Action: Embodied, Emplaced and Relational Citizenship' © Phillips, L.G., Ritchie, J., Dynevor, L., Lambert, J., & Moroney, K., 2019. Reproduced by permission of Taylor and Francis Group, LLC, a division of Informa plc.
2 'More-than-human' is a term that seeks to counter anthropocentrism by recognizing human interdependence with and dependence on our environments, the biosphere, land, mountains, rivers and oceans and creatures with whom we co-inhabit these spaces (Abram, 1996).

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