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Decolonizing Inclusive Education through Trauma-Informed Theories

REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Notwithstanding its noble orientations and social justice foundations, inclusion has been contested, interrogated, and subjected to multiple interpretations and enactments. Inclusive education has been, inter alia, characterized as a neo-colonial project that is embroiled in and reinforces geopolitical power asymmetries and oppressive regimes. The article suggests that the enduring legacy of colonial perspectives needs to be problematized and challenged through a trauma-responsive lens that captures the traumatizing effects of colonialism/ty on the 'lived' realities of disabled and other disenfranchised groups of students. Trauma is a constituent element of intersectional oppression stemming from and imbricated in conditions of colonial structures of power that conceal and legitimize social inequalities, extreme poverty, malnutrition, violence, substandard childcare, racism, and other 'cultural' traumas. This is an issue that highlights the imperative of developing theories of inclusion that acknowledge and address the intersections of colonialism/ty, disability and trauma and their impact on educational accessibility, participation, and achievement.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite its international policy and legal endorsements, inclusive education has been plagued by ideological ambiguity and reductionism, thereby confounding the processes and outcomes of inclusive education policymaking (Norwich 2014). The initial focus of inclusion on disability and mainstreaming has expanded to embrace the education of all children in the wider context of learner diversity, human rights and social justice, with a particular focus on students with disabilities (Ainscow et al. 2006; Thomas 2013). Extant understandings of inclusion are contingent on and aligned with understandings of disability and its intersections with gendered, raced and other minoritized statuses that coalesce to create idiosyncratic 'lived' experiences of disability (Corker and French 1999; Thomas 1999).

The social justice and human rights foundations and orientations of inclusive education coexist and antagonize with a firmly entrenched preoccupation with special education (Haug 2017). The ideological melange underpinning inclusion can be attributed to the fact that 'inclusive education did not spring to life de novo in response to egalitarian, desegregative concerns rooted in social justice. Rather, it emerged out of special education' (Thomas 2013: 475). The enduring legacy of special education is reified through discourses of inclusion that are predicated on assimilationist and deficit-oriented perspectives (Kozleski 2020; Slee 2019; Tomlinson 2012) that sustain and perpetuate dualisms of 'normal' and 'abnormal' ontologies (Campbell 2012).

The contentious nature of inclusion is made more pronounced by the ways in which inclusive education has become 'a traveling theory' that is 'tamed' and 'domesticated' across time and space (Slee 2006; 2018). Societies are shaped by histories and current realities of globalization and, as a result, notions such as inclusive education, disability and human rights are seen 'as contingent, geographically and temporarily situated concepts, rather than representing universal, shared values' (Barton and Armstrong 2007: 2). The dialectic of the global and local gives rise to hybrid discourses of inclusion that exacerbate conceptual ambiguities, distortions, and fallacies around the notion. The neologism of 'glocalization' (Robertson 1995, cited in Green 2002) encapsulates the ways in which local cultures, language and ideological dynamics 'mediate' and hybridize inclusive educational policies. The interactive dyad of global and local dynamics is further compounded by 'the intersection between colonial histories and post-colonial contexts of countries in the developed and developing world' (Armstrong et al. 2011: 7).

The omnipresence of colonialism—that transcends a chronologically defined period of oppression—has been termed as 'coloniality,' and is embodied in Eurocentric and whitened understandings of knowledge (Jupp et al. 2018; Zembylas 2020). Coloniality symbolizes 'the pervasive often hidden power structure that maintains and entrenches relations of domination, exploitation and oppression long after direct colonialism has been disrupted' (Muthukrishna. and Engelbrecht 2018: 1). The 'colonial(ism/ity)' couplet is thus a diachronic and transhistorical phenomenon that is reified through educational and social practices that masquerade, legitimize and perpetuate hierarchical social relations and power inequities across Southern and post-colonial Northern localities (Abdulrahman et al. 2021; Armstrong et al. 2011; Elder and Migliarini 2020; Sultana 2019; Puszka et al. 2022).

The process of decolonization is 'an open, on going project' that is driven by how the future is envisaged in specific socio-temporal contexts (Murris and Muller 2018: 152), in order to disrupt the power/knowledge grid that reproduces and sustains social injustices and human rights violations (Armstrong et al. 2011). Artiles (2020: 289) highlights the problematic nature of globalized inclusive education orthodoxies that have been monopolized by 'a technical standpoint to effect change' that is limited to teacher training and curricula and classroom accommodations. While acknowledging that teacher training and classroom interventions are particularly important in low-income countries that lack institutional and human resources to support inclusion (Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht 2018), a mono-dimensional focus on these parameters'disregards longstanding structural inequalities that perpetuate stratified educational systems' (Artiles 2020: 289). This is an epistemic omission that has

> unwittingly forged new inequalities and contributed to neocolonial developments in the global North and South. In the age of global norming, population displacements and cultural intermingling that simmers in deepening socioeconomic injustices, it is imperative to disrupt inclusion's common sense (Artiles 2020: 289).

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Decolonizing inclusive education necessitates a critical consideration of the historically and culturally bounded nature of inclusion and its 'social justice', 'equity' and 'human rights' foundations and orientations (Armstrong et al. 2009). The political and axiological character of inclusion transcends the North and South geopolitical dichotomy; Social injustices and human rights violations are legitimized, masqueraded and perpetuated through colonizing structures and ideologies that are endemic across Northern and Southern localities. Thus, the South/North bipolarization is more symbolic than geopolitical as national barriers are superseded by discursive spaces of privilege/underprivilege ensued by the complex interplay of racial/ethnic, social class, gender, cultural, demographic and so on characteristics (Kalyanpur 2020).

Globalization and the phenomenon of diaspora have given rise to what it has been 'described as "parallel societies" or "subsidized isolation" within developed nations that in turn, are deepening inequities for marginalized groups' (Artiles and Kozleski 2016: 12). 'Global migration' and the gradual blurring of national barriers necessitate 'more complex understandings of identity formation and the role of schooling in reproducing inequalities' (Gewirtz and Cribb 2009: 89–90). This is particularly the case for indigenous populations residing in Eurocentric and postcolonial contexts, who are entangled in an intersectional web of colonial structures, ableism, gendered inequality and racism, and are rendered objects of discriminatory and exclusionary regimes (Elder and Migliarin 2020: 1856; Puszka et al. 2022).

The advent of Critical Disability Studies alludes to 'a pluriversal ecology of knowledges' perspective (Elder and Migliarin 2020: 1855) to diversify and enrich understandings of the 'lived' experience of disability. 'Disabled identities' should be problematized and deconstructed in order to understand the historicized and socially grounded vectors of power that are played out in constituting and framing the 'lived' experience of disability. Without denouncing the value, rigour and sophistication of earlier theorizations of disability experience, Goodley et al. (2019: 979) pointed out the dynamic and evolving nature of Disability Theories that should be 'in concert with the local experiences of disabled people,' and as such 'Critical Disability Studies must remain expansive in its alliances.' This kind of theoretical openness, quoting Elder and Migliarin (2020: 1855) 'allows scholars and practitioners to focus on the issues that really impact the daily realities of disabled people's lives in the global South, including educational realities.' For example, Araneda-Urrutia and Infante (2020: 340) exemplify the ways in which a 'de-modelling' strategy informed by Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory can lay bare 'how power relations intertwine biosocial and geopolitical realms' to produce disabled identities as a means of decolonizing Disability Studies in the Global South as well as in the Global North. This pluralistic theorical lens needs to inform discussions about the social justice dimensions and implications of inclusive education reform agendas in the counties of the South and indigenous localities/populations in the North.

The article suggests that the continuing legacy and globalized force of colonial perspectives need to be problematized and challenged through an analytical perspective that captures the traumatizing effects of colonialism/ty on the constitution and interpellation of disenfranchised students' identities, including disability identities. This quest is aligned with and complements a radical human rights approach to inclusive education that is concerned with exposing and destabilizing power asymmetries and discriminatory regimes on the grounds of disability, as well as other markers of difference, with a view to creating a socially just and equitable world (Barton 2003). Central to this transformative process is recognizing the ways in which disability intersects with other sources of social disadvantage, thereby creating cumulative and overlapping layers of oppression; Trauma is at the epicenter of intersectional oppression stemming from and imbricated in conditions of colonial structures of power that conceal and legitimize social inequalities, extreme poverty, malnutrition, violence, substandard childcare, racism and other 'cultural' traumas that adversely affect learning and behavior (Tuchinda 2020; Winder 2015). As appositely pointed out by Underwood et al. (2019: 22): 'Colonialism continues to create social conditions of poverty, environmental risk, and trauma that also are causes of childhood disability.'

The historical domination of colonial and essentially Eurocentric, medicalized, individualistic and event-based perspectives on trauma (Petrone and Stanton 2021; Visser 2015) have silenced 'the sustained and long processes of the trauma of colonialism' (Visser 2015: 252) and 'its specific sociopolitical and economic roots, as well as its disproportionate impacts among marginalized populations' (Bowen and Murshid 2016: 224). A decolonial perspective on trauma

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makes visible the 'collective' and 'chronic' dimensions of trauma (Smallwood et al. 2021) in 'specific cultural, political and historical contexts' (Visser 2015: 263), thereby acknowledging and acting upon the ways in which context and culture shape students' experiences (Petrone and Stanton 2021). Schools embody dominant cultural values and norms and constitute critical sites of exerting social control through the ways in which they regenerate and legitimize 'colonial, and inherently patriarchal, racist and ableist relations and institutions' (Hutcheon and Lashewicz 2020: 698). This highlights the imperative of developing theories of inclusive education that acknowledge and address the nexus of colonialism/ty, disability, trauma and intersectionality and their impact on educational accessibility, participation and achievement.

Incorporating a trauma-sensitive lens in disability inclusive theories can contribute to existing work on exploring the complex and collective 'ghosts of trauma' (Yoon 2019: 421) embroiled in colonial structures of power that are deeply inscribed in subjugated populations' psyche and memory (Yoon 2019). The cultural transmission and perpetuation of trauma is captured through Selma Fraiberg et al.'s (2018: 388) psychoanalytical work on the 'Ghosts in the Nursery' that encapsulate the ways in which '[the baby] is burdened by the oppressive past of his parents from the world.' These theorizations can be applied to understanding the emotional and intergenerational traumatizing effects of colonial oppression on subjugated populations (O' Loughlin 2009), which are, inter alia, embodied in and stemming from the nexus of disability/impairment, trauma, colonial structures of power, and identity. 'Trauma' is thus positioned as a sine qua non element in developing 'an informed assessment of impairment and disability' (Hollinsworth 2013: 607), a perspective that brings to the fore the importance of embedding trauma in discourses of inclusion. The following sections provide some insights into the role of 'trauma' in decolonizing inclusive education, while discussing some implications for inclusive education policy and practice.

DECOLONIZING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION THROUGH A TRAUMA-SENSITIVE LENS

Drawing on Jubb et al.'s (2018) notion of 'critical and decolonizing education sciences,' universal understandings of inclusion should be problematized through 'a pluriversal ecology of knowledges' lens that stands at odds with a Eurocentric and whitened perspective on inclusive education that 'further puts pressure on practitioners to imitate the Northern values of access, acceptance, participation, and academic achievement' (Elder and Migliarin 2020: 1852). Colonial understandings of inclusion as a universal and canonical concept—that is expected to be uniformly implemented across diverse socio-political contexts—fail to take into consideration the ways in which '[s]ignificant financial, social, and educational barriers, as well as colonial legacies perpetuate inequities around the world' (Elder and Migliarin 2020: 1853). Decontextualized understandings of inclusion are, according to Armstrong et al. (2011: 10), devoid of 'ethical thinking in the management of global social inequality' as they fail 'to disrupt colonial/apartheid hierarchies of value.....for a radical transformation of education systems to offer equitable access, participation, and success to all' (Abdulrahman et al. 2021: 26).

Education constitutes 'a significant instrument of neo-colonial influence' (Bray 1993: 334) embodied in what Nguyen et al., (2009: 109) refer to as 'educational neo-colonialism' whereby West-centric educational imperatives and colonial interests influence educational systems internationally. The globalizing discourse of inclusion has been characterized as a neo-colonial project whereby knowledge and practices from the North are indiscriminately transferred to the countries of the South, while ignoring the ways in which disability and human rights are conceptualized, experienced and responded to in contexts of the majority world (Grech 2011; Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht 2018; Walton 2018). Conceptualizations and enactments of inclusive education in low-income countries should not be confined to concerns about addressing 'exclusionary practices.' Rather, they should bring to focus the need to enhance accessibility to education for all learners, while ensuring the availability of adequate human and technical infrastructure to support students' education and literacy skills development. Simultaneously, theorizations of inclusive education should be reframed against the need to problematize and dismantle deeply entrenched structures of social hierarchization that legitimize and perpetuate the categorization of people into privileged and underprivileged groups (Muthukrishna and

Engelbrecht 2018). This process necessitates a more expansive understanding of the right-based dimensions of inclusive education, in order to make transparent and subvert existing and emerging colonial structures of power and social stratification.

'Neoliberal-ableism' has become a new form of colonial power, a globalized societal force that has created and legitimized ontological binaries of ideal/able-bodied and non-ideal/disabled subjectivities (Araneda-Urrutia and Infante 2020). Under the siege of neoliberal 'governmental technologies' (Ball and Olmedo 2013: 85), people with disabilities are positioned as being part of the poverty problem faced by countries of the South (Grech, 2011), not only because they are not expected to add positive value to profit-maximizing pursuits, but also because they are thought to require resources and continuous commitment, an investment that cannot yield immediate and quantifiable results (especially in terms of providing inclusive forms of educational provision). Ableism and colonialism converge and are mutually constitutive, given that ableism engenders and reinforces subjugating and individual pathology regimes that serve colonial interests (Hutcheon & Lashewicz 2020: 696).

Simultaneously, the unfettered quest for profit-maximizing and efficiency and effectiveness standards, driven by neoliberal policies of 'corporatisation and privatisation' (Ball 2021: 44), contributes to disablement. Cultural imperialism and the spiral of economic dependency of countries of the South on international donors that are developed and controlled by former colonizers (e.g., World Bank) (Armstrong et al. 2011; Ball 2021; Sultana 2019), has been characterized as a form of 'neo-colonialism' whereby relations of subordination and colonial control are sustained and perpetuated, albeit in subtle ways. For example, even though the privatization of water in countries of the South yields huge profits for foreign companies, the poorest people in these areas are prevented from having access to clean water and, as a corollary to this, they are in danger of acquiring impairments such as river blindness and other disabling conditions and ailments. Almost half of the population in countries of the South might develop disabling diseases due to their inability to access clean water (Grech 2011). Understandably, the introduction of universal primary education in these countries as a means of implementing inclusive education cannot singlehandedly address the trauma-producing effects of wider social injustices and human rights violations (Bowen et al. 2019) that sabotage the lives of 'those stricken by poverty' and other colonial structures of power (Armstrong et al. 2011: 10). These considerations raise serious questions about the ways in which western centric discourses of 'inclusion' can be applied in majority world countries, where people cannot even meet their basic needs to warrant their survival. The impact of neo-liberal ableism and its colonial antecedents has also become increasingly visible in the lives of disabled people who live in traditionally privileged contexts. Goodley and Lawthom (2019) provide a critical analysis of how neoliberal-ableism and its recent political manifestations in the United Kingdom and the United States reinforce ableism that nurtures and is concomitantly nurtured by disablism through idealistic portrayals of the 'adaptable, self-sufficient, autonomous labouring individual.' 'Ableist rehabilitation' is one example of the traumatization experienced by disabled people who are conceived of as 'the lacking subjects who might (if luck holds out) be made better' (p. 235–236). The political endorsement of neoliberal-ableist ideologies has strengthened the institutional and ideological bases of ableism and its exclusionary and discriminatory regimes (Goodley and Lawthom 2019). Despite rhetoric of inclusive education, the propagation of special educational needs and disability categories (Kozleski 2020) is an example of the social division and hierarchization abetted by neoliberal ableism. Categorical ascriptions and their ontological power to construct 'negative' social identities contribute to the (re)traumatization of disabled students through the process of stigmatization and marginalization (Williamson and Qureshi 2015; Thomas-Skaf and Jenney 2021; Szeli 2019). This is particularly the case for disabled students with multiple intersecting identities that are framed against their racial and other minoritized characteristics. These students have higher probabilities than their peers to be assigned a disability label and to be subject to compounded forms of social disadvantage (Artiles 2013).

By implication, the call for 'decolonial' resistance involves recognizing the cross-border effects of coloniality. This can be achieved by, disrupting understandings of inclusion that ignore the heterogeneity of disability experience in countries of the North, where in much the same way as in countries of the South, the 'lived' experience of disability can be mediated by colonial legacies, which reinforce power inequities and hierarchical social relations (Kalyanpur 2020).

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The development of inclusive education as an idea and practice needs, therefore, to be firmly embedded in its historical and cultural context while recognizing the traumatic effects of 'colonial inheritance' (Armstrong et al. 2009).

Despite these considerations and the ways in which 'colonial and postcolonial traumas persist into the present' (Visser 2015: 252), and shape the lives and social identities of disabled people, the notion of trauma has been conspicuously absent from disability studies and inclusive education scholarship, which prioritized the disembodied and political dimensions of disability experience as an antidote to individual pathology perspectives that have held sway over the field (Berger 2004; Borg 2018; Morrison and Casper 2012; Williamson and Qureshi 2015). This theoretical omission has, according to Borg (2018: 181), 'circumscribed the narratable realm of disability,' and undermined the development of a more fine-grained and context-sensitive understanding of the complex processes in which disability is discursively and materially produced and experienced against diverse historical and geopolitical forces.

While disability is not trauma, the two concepts have intertwined histories (Berger 2004), and can be eclectically used and cross-fertilized in order to promote more fine-grained mapping of inequalities of education and attainment across diverse (post)colonial localities. Trauma is a constituent element of intersectional oppression experienced by disabled students, whose biographies of traumas are imbricated in and emanate from conditions of colonial structures of power linked to 'cultural' traumas embroiled in and constituted by social injustices and human rights violations (Butler and Critelli 2019; Carello, Butler and Critelli 2019). Yoon (2019: 422) provides an insightful analysis of the ways in which 'disabilities are constituted by transgenerational trauma from contact with colonizing and racist institutions.' This is manifested in the ways in which the experiences of disabled and other disenfranchised groups of students are still marred by 'multilevel racism…self-fulfilling prophecies of low expectations, social marginalization/isolation, lack of professional support or attention, and rules and procedures that create barriers for students' that are rarely discussed (Yee and Butler 2020: 1076). These barriers are related to what Underwood et al. (2019: 29) refer to as 'environmental toxins' that are also 'symptoms of colonialism and a cause of childhood impairment.'

Students' disabilities are therefore (re)defined 'as unacknowledged suppression of hauntings from transgenerational trauma—legacies of institutional racism, poverty, and attempts at dehumanization'. (Yoon 2019: 410). These legacies are, inter alia, embodied in the notion of 'invisible traumas' (Sweeney et al. 2018: 323) that captures the intersections of the trauma/disability nexus with other sources of social disadvantage linked to race, social class, gender and sexual diversity, and reinforces understandings of

> how experiences with stigma, discipline and segregation often vary, based on other identity markers intersecting with race and disability (i.e., gender, language, class), and how this negotiation of multiple stigmatized identities adds complexities. Multiply-marginalized students (i.e., those living at the intersections of multiple identities), have a clear sense of the mutually constitutive processes of oppression…. (Elder and Migliarin 2020: 1856)

Along similar lines, Kalyanpur (2020: 305) exemplifies the ways in which the language, poverty and disability nexus in India has resulted in a pathologization process of conflating 'language difference with cognitive disability, resulting in the creation of new group of students labelled learning disabled.' Deficit oriented perspectives on disability coupled with the post-colonial legacy of English-speaking privilege, along with biased assessment regimes, have 'devalued indigenous assets-based knowledge, maintaining social hierarchies' stemming from and tied to a colonial matrix of power. Disrupting the arbitrary conflation of bilingualism and disability and the emergence of context-specific exclusionary spaces 'involves recognizing the intersection of class/caste and disability, particularly within post-colonial contexts of linguistic cultural hegemony' (Kalyanpur 2020: 303). Thus, issues of access and success across all levels of education should be primarily viewed through a trauma-sensitive lens in order to understand how students from indigenous and other disadvantaged backgrounds experience academic failure, due to historical and intergenerational traumas that are entangled in a host of traumagenic structures and cultures that bring to bear a prodigious impact on students' educational and developmental trajectories (Hutcheon & Lashewicz 2020).

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IMPLICATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A trauma-informed theoretical perspective can advance a decolonial perspective on understanding and resisting the ways in which poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and other sources of traumatization create barriers to inclusion (Garcia 2021). Understandings of and responses to inclusion and disability should thus be trauma-sensitive, taking into consideration the intersectional histories and geographies of trauma, marginalization and exclusion that should dictate the priorities and possibilities of inclusive education reform agendas across differing socio-political contexts.

To that end, inclusion's focus on addressing diversity should involve the critical examination of how the nexus of colonialism/ity, the 'politics of underdevelopment' and impairment are played out across Southern and Northern geographies (Alur 2008: 98). This perspective should inform policymakers, service providers and professionals' understandings of the 'lived' experience of disability and trauma within the context of a human rights framework (Butler and Critelli 2019). As Garcia (2021: 379) puts it 'the signs and symptoms of trauma and violence surface in the classroom, and they must be carefully mediated and prevented.' Hence, 'education must respond to the effects of trauma, both historical and ongoing, within classroom settings' (Gaywsh and Mordoch 2018: 3).

Trauma-informed pedagogical practice consists of four interconnected axes of development captured through the 4 R's model (SAMSHA 2014 cited in Avery et al. 2021); The first pillar of development entails recognizing the pervasive impact of trauma and possible ways of 'healing' and recovery, as well as recognizing the effects and manifestations of trauma in students, families and communities. Responding to trauma necessitates embedding knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices, while striving to resist re-traumatization. Central to these processes is a critical examination of 'the intersection of inequality and trauma' (Avery et al. 2021: 2) that advances an 'ecological perspective' on understanding the role of trauma in students' lives, without negating the need to adopt an 'inward gaze' to problematize and disrupt the trauma-producing role of schools (Petrone and Stanton 2021).

This ecosystemic framework is more lucidly captured through an intersectional lens that can advance an intersectoral and cross-disciplinary approach to mitigating trauma. Inclusive education should thus be informed by an intersectional paradigm aimed at destabilizing the disability/trauma grid, and deconstructing the colonial, raced, classed and other dimensions of (invisible) traumas and disability that undermine educational access and success. In this respect, schools are expected 'to design networks of support that cross disciplines such as nursing, family, psychology, nutrition, communication, academic, and behavioral areas' (Bilias-Lolis et al. 2017: 1236).

While acknowledging the debilitating impact of trauma on individuals and communities, we should concomitantly recognize the ways in which trauma can 'also lead to a stronger sense of identity and a renewed social cohesion' (Visser 2015: 263), a proposition that epitomizes and reinforces inclusive education's vision to foster rights-based regimes and equitable social relations across schools as a way of promoting community cohesion. As appositely pointed out by Thomas (2013: 484):

> It is recognition, respect, and identity that are most important for young people's success at school—not the identification of need, nor help. New forms of injustice arising both from nonrecognition and from disrespect contribute to one's alienation and exclusion.

Central to the triptych of recognition, respect and identity is acknowledging the importance of 'narratives of trauma' that can be 'empowering to individuals and their communities' (Visser 2015: 257) and used 'as a means to heal and learn' (Petrone and Stanton 2021: 531). Embedding these narratives in pedagogical discourse 'can unearth and resist' colonial structures that are still inconspicuously manifested and perpetuate a legacy of trauma (Yee and Butler 2020: 1076)

Kalyanpur (2020: 303) explains the decolonial potential of Amartya Sen's capability approach with a view to 'identifying the assets embedded in indigenous and individual frames of references to disrupt the narrative of IE [Inclusive Education] toward more positive outcomes.' Capabilities

are therefore not only 'context-sensitive,' but are also informed by 'Indigenous knowledge and assets,' while considering their interactions with and position vis a vis 'political, social and cultural settings.' Stories of oppression and trauma linked to colonization and colonialism should thus inform the development of inclusive schools that can have a universal applicability and adaptability to contextual dynamics and differing 'traumatized cultures' (Berger 2004).

In addition to rigorous pedagogical designs, inclusive teachers should strive to empower students who have been traumatized—by valuing their identities, narratives, life experiences and cultural histories and embedding them in pedagogical discourse (Garcia 2021; Smallwood 2021). Failure to do so can contribute to a process of perennial (re)traumatization; Dalley (2015:377), for instance, draws on Fanon's work and highlights the ways in which 'non-recognition produces trauma,' while pointing to 'the need to disrupt traumatizing structures at the systemic level through collective action' with a view to creating 'a more equal world in which traumatizing structures are destroyed' (Dalley 2015:389). This necessitates 'new ways of valuing, not privileging Eurocentric values as universal or superior' while also pursuing 'affirmative practice' (Sultana 2019: 34) to challenge structural inequities that mould the biographical experiences of disabled and other disenfranchised groups of students. This process entails a 'bottom-up' approach to leveraging transformative trauma-informed action, where students, families and their communities can have an active role in dictating the development of relevant supports and interventions, while disrupting the enduring legacy of their colonial subordination and voicelessness (Avery et al. 2021; Puszka et al. 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

The article has provided some insights into the role of trauma in developing decolonial understandings of inclusive education that challenge limited and limiting western-centric theorizations of the inclusion and exclusion nexus that disregard power imbalances and social inequities across diverse socio-political contexts. A decolonizing perspective brings to the fore the imperative of diversifying inclusive education theories, policies and practices that focus on developing 'an understanding of individual and their symptoms in the context of their life experiences and history, cultures and societies....' (Keesler 2014: 39).

Globalizing discourses of inclusive education are ineffective, if not pernicious, unless they are shaped against the 'aspirations of historically disenfranchised students from varied ancestries amid systemic inequalities, trauma, and ongoing forms of violence' (Garcia 2021: 376), an issue that needs to be at the epicenter of attempts to galvanize the 'healing potential' (ibid: 376) of inclusive schooling. The rhetoric of inclusion and disability necessitates a global discussion of disability and inclusive education that does not homogenize and silence the peculiarities and 'traumatized cultures' (Berger 2004) of diverse socio- political contexts, especially in countries of the South. This requires, according to Abdulrahman et al. (2021: 26) 'that instead of inclusive education being wrangled to fit onto existing processes and structures, it is allowed to shape a new architecture of schooling for a postcolonial world'.

The nexus of trauma, disability and inclusion should, therefore, be examined at their intersections with colonialism/ty and its 'traumatized cultures' and their impact on the lives and education trajectories of disenfranchised groups of students. These students are rendered objects of an 'individualistic gaze' that is skewed in favor of students, whose corporeal, racial and classed identities and their intersections are aligned with colonial forms of being, thinking and acting. The individualistic and pathologizing gaze obscures the colonizing structures of oppression and social disadvantage (Hutcheon & Lashewicz 2020) that jeopardize the human rights and social justice foundations and orientations of inclusion. Much like inclusion, the process of decolonization is in a state of becoming and not being (Sultana 2019); it is an incessant process of interrogating, destabilizing and subverting the matrix of coloniality and its disabling, oppressive, discriminatory and exclusionary implications for a sizeable percentage of students residing in Global North and South localities.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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