

The Complexities of Researching Youth Civic Engagement in Canada with/by Indigenous Youth: Settler-Colonial Challenges for Tikkun Olam—Pedagogies of Repair and Reconciliation

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Abstract

We discuss the first stage of our Tikkun research study that focuses on an indigenized approach to Youth Participatory Action Research in a northern Ontario context. Our research design began with an Indigenous youth-generated report, the Feathers of Hope (FoH): A First Nations Youth Action Plan (Provincial Advocate, 2014), highlighting the needs of Indigenous youth in their own words and experiences. Readings of the report has led to reflexive theorizing on questions of a university-based research model for Indigenized Youth Participatory Action Research (I-YPAR) as well as our ongoing ethical dilemmas of settler researchers co-collaborating on research by/with Indigenous youth. We raise these issues as we theorize the possibilities and complexities of a Pedagogy of Repair and Reconciliation (Tikkun olam) during our critical dialogues as settler-researchers and with Indigenous youth.

Keywords: settler colonialism, Indigenous youth, Participatory Action Research (PAR), reconciliation-as-education, decolonization

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Introduction

The Tikkun project, Pedagogies of Repair and Reconciliation, is focused on transformative Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) conducted at five global sites—Kosovo, South Africa, and three Canadian cities. Challenging conventional notions of research inquiry, the Tikkun YPAR projects are intended as youth-driven inquiries by youth leaders with youth participants in their respective communities. The conceptual foundation of the project is civic engagement research conducted “with” or “by” youth as opposed to “on” or “for” youth (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; SSHRC Aboriginal Research Statement of Principles, 2015). The Tikkun YPAR project goes farther in its transformational aspirations and goals than many social justice frameworks because at its core it is committed to repair and reconciliation surrounding issues of injustice, inequality, and struggles in the lives and education of marginalized youth and their communities.

As critical education settler-researchers in northern Ontario, with a significant representation in schools of the fastest growing population in Canada—Indigenous youth—we have become consumed with questioning how best to direct or guide a YPAR project that is theorized as research by and with Indigenous youth while also seeking repair and reconciliation with Indigenous

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communities. We know that Canada is a colonial country where the issues of injustice, inequality and oppression have been the most severe and longstanding in Indigenous communities (see Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2008; King, 2012), especially through education with the history of Residential Schools. There is an entrenched ignorance of First Nation, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) peoples in mainstream settler education that the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) highlighted and addressed in a special section, Education for Reconciliation (p. 7, #62-65) in its Calls to Action report (June, 2015). The TRC asks that all teachers “integrate Indigenous Knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms” (62.ii) as well as promote non-Indigenous “student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect” (63.iii). Currently, the most we can grapple with as non-Indigenous settler-researchers is to attempt to design platforms and open new spaces (theoretical, digital, practical, material) to augment and amplify the voices and embodied experiences of Indigenous youth who are often silenced in public domains of mainstream, Whiteman (Grande, 2004) or settlerstream Canada, and often rendered marginalized in school and urban contexts. We are studying how to promote Indigenous youth collaboration, learning how to recognize and remove barriers while supporting youth as they adopt new roles as change-makers in schools and their communities.

Our approach to Participatory Action Research (PAR) holds that “those upon whose backs research has historically been carried on are the people who know the most about social oppressions, marginalization and colonization” (Tuck et al., 2008, p. 50). In our work in northern Ontario (traditional territories of Treaties #9, #3 and the 1850 Robinson-Superior), we have observed PAR being indigenized by Indigenous youth as a way to demand access to discussions on policies that directly impact them and to reclaim their own stories and experiences as the focus for decolonization and social justice in education. Recognizing our political position as settler citizens on occupied/stolen Indigenous territory, we are first working to assist Indigenous youth with an amplified critique of historical and neo-colonial policies in order to create spaces in schools where youth can determine projects and efforts to impact their daily lives. Secondly, we are working to influence non-Indigenous youth and settler-educators in a socio-political mission of reconciliation that recognizes Indigenous sovereignty and makes settlers accountable to traditional and treaty rights.

Through a commitment to I-YPAR or indigenized (Indigenous) youth Participatory Action Research, we are attempting to enact decolonizing research methodologies (Battiste, 2013; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Donald, 2012; Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008), by focusing on I-YPAR as a theory and methodology where Indigenous youth gain “the right to the tools through which any citizen can systematically increase that stock of knowledge which they consider most vital to their survival as human beings and to their claims as citizens” (Appadurai, 2006, p. 168, as cited in Cammarota & Fine, 2008, vii). In all the Tikkun project sites, youth are encouraged to participate within this form of inquiry or reclaiming, recovering, and reimagining social and political power, in the hopes of promoting greater social justice for community empowerment by and for youth. When discussing the Tikkun project in our site of northern Ontario, we are aware and advocating for research with/by Indigenous youth that brings youth together and increases their stock of knowledge, tools and methods as well as gathers strength and resolve for Indigenous survivance, sovereignty, and traditional and treaty rights—those rights enshrined in Canada’s constitution (see Kulchyski, 2013).

Following the examples of Cammarota and Fine (2008) and Tuck and Yang (2013), we are designing our study’s methodology as YPAR, positioned as a pedagogy of resistance or refusal and a method to build solidarity and a collective imagination of resilience and futurity for/by youth. We believe our YPAR project could bring together diverse Indigenous youth from urban and community contexts to discuss and inquire into their perspectives on de/colonization, racism and injustice, while simultaneously thinking about steps forward to cultural resurgence. By providing

Indigenous youth with new spaces—resources, digital forums and global youth conversations—we hope to help nurture and augment a future-positive imagination, solidarity and resilient collective action movement with/by the global youth of the five Tikkun sites.

In this paper, we outline three important principles of respectful relational research with Indigenous youth that guide our northern Ontario project site:

1. Tailoring research to be claimed by/with Indigenous youth or what we call Indigenous Youth Participatory Action Research (I-YPAR),
2. The 4+Rs (see Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) of reclaiming, recovering, respecting, revitalizing Indigenous spaces, protocols, methods, and means of re-centring Indigenous knowledge in the youth research process,
3. Cultivating and moving forward (gathering strength) our commitment to Indigenous communities by making explicit settler responsibility in the ongoing process of reconciliation of the Indigenous—non-Indigenous relationship (see the final TRC report, 2015). We take very seriously as non-Indigenous settler-researchers what activist Cindy Blackstock (2008) emphasizes for Canadian civic engagement through reconciliation: “It does not mean having to say sorry twice” and it is a responsibility for, by and with settler-Canadians who have often chosen to ignore Canada’s history of colonization and its devastating impacts on Indigenous peoples. Or as Justice Murray Sinclair defines it: “Reconciliation is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts” (TRC website, 2015).

These three principles that guide our I-YPAR can be best described as both a foundation and praxis toward a civic engagement that is reclaiming sovereignty with/by Indigenous youth (see Grande, 2004, 2008; Tuck, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2012). We are challenged and inspired by Grande’s (2004) goal of Indigenous sovereignty as a prerequisite to democracy and to Tuck and Yang’s (2013) question of whether or not the academy (academic research) has proven itself worthy of conducting PAR with (Indigenous) youth. Recognizing the ways in which ‘democracy’ and civics curriculum have been employed in Canada as tools of assimilation—without little acknowledgement of historical tragedies in the name of education (e.g., Indian Residential School system), the denial of treaty rights, and the avoidance of responsibility for/through reconciliation by continuing a curriculum steeped in Eurocentrism (Battiste, 2005), we need to contend with complex issues of identity, sovereignty, nationhood, and citizenship as we seek to imagine a new I-YPAR platform. By using the Tikkun research project as a new ethical space to engage in an Indigenized civic engagement opportunity or youth-driven democratic practices, we are inquiring into what best honours and supports Indigenous traditional and treaty rights and self-determination. Or as Grande (2008, p. 88) states, quoting Lyons (2000):

... toward realizing their own sovereignty. That is, a restorative process that (re) asserts a people’s ‘right to rebuild its demand to exist and present its gifts to the world ... an adamant refusal to dissociate culture, identity, and power from the land. (p. 457)

We realize that it is no simple claim to position ourselves as non-Indigenous, White settler-ally researchers and we are driven to support Indigenous youth by a clear shame and responsibility in ongoing Canadian (neo)colonialism in all social institutions, especially education. Tuck and Yang (2012) theorize a substantive account of the “twelve moves to innocence” that (educator) settler-researchers must contend with, in any work that claims to be social justice or decolonizing or reconciliation education. As we launch our Tikkun research study, we begin by asking ourselves the important unsettling questions that Tuck and Yang (2012) pose on the incommensurability of social justice (settler) education, such as critical democratic citizenship education, when promoting the idea that “land should be distributed democratically” to settlers who already occupy stolen Indigenous

lands but then reclaim this land “as a right, reflecting a profoundly settling, anthropocentric, colonial view of the world” (p. 24). When Canadian settler-educators do not question broken treaty promises or hegemonic Eurocentric values in civics education or what Battiste (2011) terms “cognitive imperialism” in the curriculum, we stand to reproduce or fall into “settler moves to innocence—diversions, distractions, which relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility, and conceal the need to give up land or power or privilege” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 21).

It is our commitment to try and affect political and educational change in schools with Indigenous youth by advocating for I-YPAR that focuses on decolonized and indigenized schooling, culturally responsive Land-based teaching specific to territories/treaties, and Indigenous knowledge-honouring curriculum that is respectful, rigorous, accessible, and welcoming (see Tuck & McKenzie, 2014; Tuck, McKenzie & McCoy, 2014; Korteweg & Russell, 2012; Korteweg, 2010). For affecting change in settler society and civic education curriculum, we resist settler sovereignty or settler normalcy by maintaining uncomfortable tensions for ourselves as researchers through Tuck and Yang’s (2012) idea of an “ethic of incommensurability”. Never forgetting our privilege and power to live on and occupy First Nation territories, it is our responsibility to actively work against colonial-oriented research that lapses into settler moves to innocence and to support Indigenous communities by providing curricular spaces where youth can demand and receive the civic benefits and democratic citizenship owed to them through the treaties.

Tikkun’s Indigenous Site: Relationship-Building for Repair and Reconciliation

We began our Tikkun-Indigenous site project by closely reading the insightful and inspirational Feathers of Hope (FoH) Report by the Ontario Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (2014). The FoH youth project is an ongoing set of forums where Indigenous youth, usually in large numbers of 100+ from across Ontario, are brought together for 4-day meetings to discuss critical topics and issues. Through the accomplishment of the first FoH Report (Provincial Advocate, 2014), Indigenous youth have already demonstrated how they can organize to fight for social justice and change. The questions that begged us as Tikkun settler-researchers were: What we could do? What spaces could we open, accentuate or amplify? for the Indigenous youth to continue to engage in this dialogue about the identified issues that matter most to them? How can we help ensure that Indigenous youth can do meaningful and impactful civic engagement with enough resources and adequate supports? Our challenge was how we could respectfully connect our research into service for greater impacts for the youth’s community engagement and advocacy with and by Indigenous youth for other Indigenous youth and their communities.

We present three critical praxes or axioms upon which our Indigenous-Tikkun project must take account as we develop our relationships with Indigenous youth through our own decolonizing community-engaged scholarship. Three critical issues of I-YPAR in our Tikkun project site concern the following:

1. From an Indigenous perspective, a problematic reading of the dominant Eurocentric discourses on what constitutes youth civic engagement education in Canada.
2. How do Indigenous youth continue to experience non-citizenship or second-class citizenship (marginalization) on their very own Indigenous homelands and territories called Canada?
3. How do non-Indigenous settler-researchers actively consider these ‘incommensurable’ ethical dilemmas as they work to fulfil their responsibilities in reconciliation through I-YPAR?

Issue 1: The Indigenous—Settler Relationship in Theories of Citizenship Education and Youth Civic Engagement in Canada

As university-based non-Indigenous academics, we must constantly work against our own embedded settler-colonial understandings such as Eurocentrism that defines what counts as important knowledge (Battiste, 2005) and who has the power to exercise that authority of cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 2011). Without challenging our thinking, we easily revert to a state of settler normalcy (Tuck & Yang, 2012) where White settlers assume and determine the normative centre; or, the recurring settler-colonial impulse “to disavow the presence of Indigenous ‘others’” (Veracini, 2011, p. 2).

This involves revealing the discourses that maintain settler-colonialism and disregard Indigenous understandings, such as Indigenous knowledge that reveals principles of citizenship or protocols of community membership. And we maintain that it is vital to approach civic engagement research as a vehicle to move towards reconciliation, conceptualized “as a practice and not a process” (Veracini, 2012, p. 9), a practice of moving towards open-endedness of Indigenous survivance, identities, and knowledge systems rather than a process with the settler goal of the Indigenous matter finally being resolved or settled.

We review a prevalent approach to citizenship education or the idea of education for democracy that is most cited and current in citizenship education studies. Focusing on Westheimer and Kahne’s (2004) seminal work, *What kind of citizen?: The politics of educating for democracy*, we start with an article that has helped steer the field of civic or democratic citizenship education for the past 10+ years and can serve as a comparative for revealing different framings of citizenship education at this critical moment of “education-for-reconciliation” (TRC Calls to Action, 2015). To define the different types of citizens in 2004, Westheimer & Kahne looked at answers to the question, “What kind of citizens do we need to support for an effective democratic society?” The categories of citizenship that they identified were 1) the personally responsible citizen, 2) the participatory citizen, and 3) the justice-oriented citizen. While we recognize and support a strong vision of democratic citizenship education, we also need to reveal the unproductive Canadian colonial-oriented discourses that this article could maintain in its silences on Indigenous issues and history. As Indigenous youth are mandated to ‘do citizenship as school’ through curriculum (e.g., high school civics courses), we have to grapple with the reality that civics curriculum can reproduce and entrench an ongoing ignorance of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) peoples’ history and current issues while marginalizing their very existence and rights as sovereign first peoples of this Land (see Godlewska, Moore, & Bednasek, 2010).

The confluence of these tensions with our own privileged position as White teacher-educators in the university has been particularly troublesome as we wrestle each day with the real threat of reproducing settler-colonialism. We respectfully need to re-examine Westheimer & Kahne’s (2004) vision of a democratic society that has greatly influenced the field of Canadian civic education because it is based on a system of Western ideals and Eurocentric epistemologies that misses, ignores, or avoids the fundamental issue of Indigenous Land and Indigenous sovereignty through the treaties. Or, to place this foundational article in the context of education-for-reconciliation, how could these conceptualizations of citizenship be decolonized or made more relevant and responsive to Indigenous youth who are citizens of First Nations communities as well as second-class citizens of the Canadian state through the Indian Act? We analyze each type of citizenship identified in this important article and attempt to consider it from an Indigenous youth perspective.

1. Character education movements are seen to be closely linked to personally responsible citizen traits. These efforts often emphasize a conformist behaviour and law-abiding citizen, who does not actively pursue critical democratic citizenship or social reform. This type of citizen is the

model that most citizenship education curriculum attempts to deliver to the majority of Canadian youth and emphasizes that youth should help those in need but not consider why they are in need.

When it comes to Indigenous youth, however, this type of citizenship education is neo-colonial oriented and reproducing. In learning to be a 'good' Canadian, Indigenous youth are directed to follow the rules of citizenship as imposed by the settler majority, especially those who run government with the most power (white, wealthy males). This approach to citizenship teaches youth to be good neighbours who do not question colonization, hegemony, social structures of injustice, or the roots of racism in Canadian government and policies (such as the Indian Act of 1876 that continues to this day).

2. Participatory citizenship curriculum focuses on students understanding existing government structures and community-based organizations in order to consider how they can plan, participate, and organize their own efforts as citizens.

3. Justice-oriented curricula prepare students to improve society by critically analyzing and addressing social issues and injustices, paying specific attention to the root causes of injustices. This approach to citizenship curriculum focuses on debate, weighing evidence, analyzing argument, and practicing Western critical thinking.

The latter two types of citizenship education (#2 participatory and #3 justice-oriented) seem to be promising as they allow for flexibility in how Indigenous students identify as citizens and then express their conceptions through actions; however, both approaches to citizenship curriculum have been developed and refined by settler-researchers without consideration of how these values and epistemologies remain Eurocentric. For example, Indigenous communities do not proceed by debate to determine winners and losers in arguments but rather they engage in holistic circle discussions for restorative justice and practices where everyone speaks as long as they need while facing one another (see circle methodologies of Graveline, 2000). The other problematic premise is that when citizenship education is delivered by Canadian settler-educators inside the authorized state institution of school curriculum, it is already embodied and then reinforced as a normalizing settler-colonial construct and has serious limitations in allowing Indigenous students to identify and act as sovereign citizens of their Indigenous communities and First Nations.

In Westheimer & Kahne's article (2004), two school programs are analyzed—one that promotes a participatory citizen curriculum and one that promotes a social-justice oriented curriculum. The concern for our Tikkun Indigenous youth project is that these two programs were either able to allow students to see themselves as agents of change in their community or to understand the underlying social causes for inequalities but not both together. Even in these exemplar school programs, achieving both democratic emphases simultaneously was rarely possible. We wonder where does this analysis leave Indigenous students who need to engage in their own decolonizing journeys to then better understand their position and act as citizens of sovereign First Nations that have governed in succession since time immemorial?

Keenly aware of the colonial legacy of racism and assimilation policies in Canadian schools/curriculum, it is highly problematic to design and implement a research project whose primary goal is to support civic engagement when Indigenous youth have been told and taught that their communities, systems of government, Elders as wisdom leaders, languages, laws and protocols are all at a deficit to Western models of citizenship. Encouraging Indigenous youth to construct notions of citizenship in Canada can be very toxic grounds for their cultural and holistic well-being if settler-colonialism is not explicitly taught and equally deconstructed.

From a close reading of the Feathers of Hope (FoH) Report (Provincial Advocate, 2014), we were able to identify some of the toxic tensions that Indigenous youth have experienced and then expressed in their own voices and words as the key democratic issues that they face as citizens. We

present these selected quotes to demonstrate that settler-educators and researchers need to contend with these critical issues in/through civic engagement education.

We and non-First Nations people must learn about the promises and obligations made to us through the treaties, made between our nations and the Crown and the fact that they are ignored, not respected or are broken all the time. (Provincial Advocate, 2014, p. 36)

Indigenous youth are already aware that there is an absent curriculum or erased version of Indigenous nation-hood and citizenship within Canada that needs to be present. They realize that this absence begins in an untaught historical and ongoing relationship between First Nations and the Crown. This undeniable historical relationship positions Indigenous students differently than settler-youth to engage civically in Canadian society.

The mainstream education system places First Nations youth at a disadvantage and forces us to surrender/lose our identity on the process of achieving credits in subject matter that is of no value to us back in our home communities. We want to know why we cannot live, grow up, thrive and give back in our communities in ways that are meaningful and relevant to our local customs and traditions. (Provincial Advocate, 2014, p. 63)

More than being bored or feeling imprisoned in mandatory curriculum and classes, these Indigenous youth were able to articulate the corrosive assimilative impacts of subject matter that does not speak to their culture, communities or identity. The question is how could a Tikkun approach to civic engagement help repair and reconcile the damages of this curriculum as well as address the needs of Indigenous youth as stated in this section's last Feathers of Hope (FoH) Report (Provincial Advocate, 2014) quote:

We are tired of sitting around and doing nothing. We want to learn, to grow, to better ourselves and the communities we come from. We are tired of asking. We are ready to take on more responsibility. We want to create change and we want to hear the respect of young people in our home communities and across Ontario's north. (p. 96)

Issue 2: Indigenous Differentiated or Non-Citizenship for Tikkun Civic Engagement

How do Indigenous youth experience non-citizenship or second-class citizenship (marginalized) in their own Indigenous Land/country and what impacts does this have on citizenship education? We begin this section with Indigenous youth talking back to the notion of embodied citizenship with their lived experiences as documented in the FoH Report (Provincial Advocate, 2014). It is evident in the words of these young people that they do not believe their best interests are being respected and promoted by the Canadian state or education systems.

This is modern day colonization at its finest. With these deeply internalized negative beliefs we carry within ourselves, how can we be expected to feel confident enough to be able to achieve the dreams we had as small children before the shabby realities of our lived situations set in? (p. 70)

Yet, these Indigenous youth remain steadfast and are unwilling to accept this reality of marginalization. They are using their voices to hold the Canadian government accountable and assert their rights as Indigenous youth. "First Nations youth deserve better than the lives of neglect and marginalization we have been forced to live due to the failure of [the Canadian] government". (p. 11)

By highlighting these Indigenous youth voices from the Feathers of Hope (FoH) Report (Provincial Advocate, 2014), we wish to center the question of what does citizenship mean for Indigenous youth who are routinely denied the rights and opportunities afforded settler children and

youth in civic engagement education? Political theorist Woons (2014) discusses the inadequacy of current theories of Canadian citizenship when considering that what constitutes a Canadian citizen in turn denies that Indigenous youth are more than citizens of the Canadian nation state. The Indigenous youth of the FoH Report and our own Tikkun site are citizens of First Nations that continue to persist (survival) and preceded the current nation-state of Canada since time immemorial. With this fundamental principle of territorial membership, how can educators and researchers attempt to measure or understand Indigenous youth civic engagement through the lens of Western-settler theories of citizenship?

Woons (2014) begins with the idea of differentiated citizenship or asymmetrical forms of belonging to the same political community, a concept that has received considerable attention over the past 25 years in Canadian political theory. Kymlicka (1995), for instance, talks about the importance of group-differentiated (or collective) rights that have ensured Indigenous peoples' equal access to their cultures, "access that secures the liberal value of individual autonomy" (as cited in Woons, 2014, p. 192). As settler-researchers and educators, how do we ensure that we do not uphold one ideal or definition of citizenship and civic participation that is rooted in White Euro-Western notions of democracy, civic responsibility, or nationalism? We need instead to provide spaces and opportunities for Indigenous youth to self-determine what it means to be civically engaged by/with other Indigenous youth and community.

In his exploration of citizenship theories, Woons (2014) brings to light glaring inadequacies in how settler theories have attempted to understand Indigenous citizenship. For example, Woons demonstrates that Cairns' (2000) theory of 'citizens plus' relies heavily on linear theories of progress and encourages Indigenous peoples and communities to emphasize a shared national identity in order to engage the empathy of the settler majority that will then secure support and funding by the nation state needed for their communities. Williams (2004), on the other hand, offers an alternative theory of 'citizenship as shared fate'. While Williams' theory recognizes that Indigenous civic identity must be rooted in notions of sovereignty, it falls short by assuming that settler-Canadians and Indigenous peoples will hold a shared vision of what is in "everyone's national interest" (Williams, 2004, as cited in Woons, p. 197).

Civic settler-educators need to refute the doctrine of *terra nullis* and instead embrace the reality that European settlers and explorers arrived in a North America (Turtle Island) that was already thriving with sophisticated Indigenous societies and a multitude of nations. And when we discuss citizenship education and participation by Indigenous youth, this dialogue should not be framed by youth identities as citizens of the Canadian nation state but rather as citizens of much older nations that pre-date confederation, colonization and "discovery". Ultimately, this is not a question that we can attempt to answer by theorizing. We must provide the space and opportunity for Indigenous youth to determine what citizenship and civic identity means to them and their communities.

Issue 3: The Problematics of Settler Education Research as YPAR

How do these issues, theories, embedded epistemologies and our own positions as non-Indigenous settler-researchers impact our I-YPAR community engagement work with youth inquiring into civic engagement? In this last section of the paper, we inquire into what settler-researchers must grapple with to disrupt linear or hierarchical notions of change embedded in Eurocentric knowledge systems as well as re-imagine theories of change as we do I-YPAR by/with Indigenous youth. We admire and follow those Indigenous scholars who offer strong theories out of knowledge systems that have persisted since time immemorial and can provide valuable Indigenous frameworks for education (see Battiste, 2013; Donald, 2012) and research methodologies (Kovach,

2010; Wilson, 2008). As settler-researchers, we must continuously challenge ourselves to think about I-YPAR through indigenized frameworks such as the Canadian Council on Learning's (2007) First Nation, Métis, and Inuit models of lifelong learning; Battiste's (2011, 2013) Indigenous knowledge focused educational vision; Tuck's (2009) principles of sovereignty, contention, balance and relationship; Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) important 4R model; and other models of Indigenous epistemologies in education. These frameworks are connected in a circle, where they all exist in the same space and time in a manner that is informed by and affirms Indigenous knowledge. If we frame our Tikkun study as a linear narrative of educational progress from bottom or marginalization (at-risk) to the top or empowerment (success), we are then reproducing 'colonial logics' (see Donald, 2012; Donald, Glanfield & Sterenberg, 2012) in our theories of change that then risks reproducing research for/on Indigenous youth rather than by/with in I-YPAR.

As we strive in our Tikkun site to create a different or fugitive educational research space by/with Indigenous youth, we are challenged with many dilemmas and limitations. Before we begin our Tikkun project's data collection phase and as we conceptualize purpose with/by Indigenous youth and develop relationships with community, we list our ongoing ethical dilemmas to expose the incommensurability of our project as university settler-researchers engaging with Indigenous youth for YPAR to effect change in settlerstream schools.

Dilemma 1: We expect Indigenous youth to tell us who they are—in opposition to the negative stereotypes that are constantly imposed upon them by attitudes, policies and misunderstandings or ignorant stereotypes by non-Indigenous settler Canadians. But why should non-Indigenous institutions such as education (and educational research) believe that Indigenous youth should serve us or help non-Indigenous Canadians become better informed or better educated citizens? The real issue should be how can we, as university-based White settler-researchers, ensure and continuously demonstrate that our research project can be of valid service to Indigenous youth lives or worthy of Indigenous community participation.

Dilemma 2: In our Tikkun-I-YPAR site, we are sensitive to the fact that Indigenous youth belong to themselves and their communities, not to research or researchers. We need to consider what Indigenous youth are saying and to whom they are speaking before we can contemplate sharing their words through academic discourses or to non-Indigenous audiences. What ethical and respectful responsibilities do non-Indigenous researchers need to assume with Indigenous youth (and communities) when we publish the data of their voices, stories and perspectives? And what do we risk when youth voices are published or exposed to academic audiences? For example, Groves Price & Mencke (2013) in their study of Indigenous youth and PAR methods for digital storytelling assert that (settler) researchers do not have the right to take any data ownership in the youth's stories produced or voices captured by the PAR project. To continue respectful relations and conduct ethical research with Indigenous communities, these education researchers refuse to publish details of the youth's digital stories or reveal the contents.

Dilemma 3: How do we design and embody research where we can serve Indigenous youth by amplifying and strengthening Indigenous voices in education and, in the process, disrupt Whiteman curriculum and Canadian neo-colonialism? Or are we continuing a settler-colonial agenda where Indigenous youth are 'othered' or put in the position of the subaltern (Spivak, 2010) where they can only speak or be heard as voices of pain and degradation (see Tuck & Yang, 2013)? How do we escape these tropes in I-YPAR and should we be even starting this exchange of university expertise and funds for Indigenous participation and voice?

Dilemma 4: Critical theory and settler-colonialism demonstrate that we have to continuously question our settler-researcher reflexivity in the process of beginning, negotiating and then materializing a research project with Indigenous peoples. We have to question how we read and observe Indigenous youth's stories, values, actions, embodiments because it is extremely easy for non-Indigenous or university-based researchers to fall into 'deficit' traps or assume an attitude that disadvantaged or marginalized students are disengaged or passive participants when their actions, behaviours or statements do not conform to preconceived notions of civic engagement, cultural strength, or community resilience.

Concluding Thoughts

We have explored through a decolonizing lens the core concept of the Tikkun project: "The Participatory Action Research partnership of Tikkun is intended to help participating youth to evolve into active citizens and leaders" (Tikkun Project website). While we are working towards this goal, we know that as non-Indigenous settler-researchers it will be ourselves who will undoubtedly learn the most and that Indigenous youth will be helping us evolve into more respectful relational citizens on Indigenous traditional territories. We anticipate that it will be Indigenous youth who will teach us, as settler-researchers, to better understand what position and ethical responsiveness we need to take in our Tikkun research and pedagogy.

When non-Indigenous educators seek to support Indigenous youth activism, we must work equally hard to challenge our own settler-colonialism as university-based settler academics and leverage our privilege to offer beneficial community service and engagement programs for youth. This research is a two-track process: we cannot do the research work or inquiry of one—respectful relationship-building and offering authentic beneficial service that youth define as meaningful—without the other, lest we risk to reproduce neocolonial research as for/on youth. The more we challenge ourselves, the better we are able to hear what Indigenous youth are saying, to become better equipped to do research by and with Indigenous youth, and become more receptive and sensitive to this new knowledge.

As settler-researchers, we are convinced that we need to 'get out of the way', to displace ourselves (see Root, 2015), and in doing so, we intend to offer a fugitive (third) space where Indigenous youth are able to speak their truth and reclaim their sovereignty while we can be present to witness, amplify, support, translate, or leverage their own inquiries and I-YPAR work. Through this process we learn to become better non-Indigenous allies, to disrupt and educate non-Indigenous settler Canadians, and to do our part in Tikkun Olam—the repair and reconciliation of relations in Canada between Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens, out of a hope-filled frame of reference inspired by/with Indigenous youth.

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