

# The Significance of Indigenous Theories for Educational Studies in Europe

Conference at the University of Education in Freiburg, Germany, 21/22 September 2023

In the context of European educational studies, some attention has been given to postcolonial theories in the last decades and, more recently, to decolonial approaches. Nevertheless, the inspiring potential of indigenous theories in the field of education has scarcely been noticed, especially in German-language educational science. At the same time, in a post-colonial world society confronted by multiple crises, an awareness of theories different from hegemonic Western perspectives seems increasingly necessary, and not only in the field of education.

Nevertheless, the idea of non-indigenous academics learning from indigenous theories and the aim of applying those theories in the context of Western science come with an inherent risk of reproducing a colonising gesture in this aspiration, and thus must incorporate a reflection of how to deconstruct pre-existing hierarchies among different bodies of knowledge, as well as debate on questions of solidarity and recognition.

The aim of the planned conference is to explore the fruits and pitfalls of recognising indigenous theories in the context of educational science in Europe. A special emphasis will be put on German-language countries and Kaupapa Māori, a rich and complex indigenous philosophy and practice developed by Māori theorists in New Zealand/Aotearoa. Together with Te Kawehau Hoskins and Alison Jones, professors at Te Puna Wānanga, the School of Māori and Indigenous Education at the University of Auckland/Waipapa Taumata Rau in New Zealand/Aotearoa and both experts on Kaupapa Māori, the following questions will be discussed:

- In what ways are educational thinking and practice in European German-language countries influenced by (post-)colonialism and ideas (and stereotypes) of indigeneity?
- Which aspects of indigenous philosophies – and, in particular, Kaupapa Māori – can be regarded as useful challenge in relation to unquestioned assumptions in Western educational science? How can the claim of Western science to hegemony be called into question? How can a power-sensitive project of translation between a privileged and a marginalised knowledge set be realised without reproducing existing inequalities? How can such a scientific project be based on the possibility of non-mastery and uncertainty and still produce valuable results? What might the results of those translations in relation to educational practices in German-language countries be?
- How can the problematic aspects of non-indigenous scholars' aspirations of engaging with indigenous theories be dealt with? What are the important cornerstones for cooperation and the building of relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous researchers in such a project? In what ways can such cooperations contribute to international solidarity and allyship in a world society marked by inequalities and escalating crises?

## Conference programme:

### Thursday, September 21st 2023

10:45	Welcome and Introduction	KG5- 103
11:00-	<b>INTRODUCTION TO KAUPAPA MĀORI THEORY</b> Chair: Bettina Fritzsche	
13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is Kaupapa Māori? (Te Kawehau Hoskins)</li><li>• Critical Theory and Kaupapa Māori face-to-face (Te Kawehau Hoskins / Alison Jones)</li><li>• Non-indigenous engagement with Kaupapa Māori/indigenous thought and knowledge (Alison Jones)</li></ul>	KG5- 103
13:00- 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00-	<b>COLONIALISM IN GERMANY</b> Chair: Lalitha Chamakalayil	
15:20	14:00- Ocean of Dreams? German Colonialism and the Pacific (Eva Bischoff)	KG5- 103
	14:40	
	14:40- 'A specifically German theory of colonization': Colonial racism in German	
	15:20 education up to the Nazi era and continuity (Z. Ece Kaya)	
15:20- 15:40	Break	
15:40-	<b>DECOLONIAL AND INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES IN EUROPEAN SCIENCE</b>	
18:40	Chairs: Isabelle Ihring and Bianca Baßler	
	15:40- The definition, emergence and transition of knowledge. How a relational	KG5- 103
	16:20 perspective can help in postcolonial endeavours (Iris Clemens)	
	16:20- Appreciation or Appropriation? Decolonial Perspectives on the Reception of	
	17:00 Indigenous Knowledge in Methodological Discourses in Germany	
	(Robel Afeworki Abay)	
17:00- 17:20	Break	
	17:20- Decolonial thinking in education in Western and non-Western contexts	KG5- 103
	18:00 (Phillip Knobloch)	
	18:00- The promise of intelligibility: On visibility and epistemic violence	
	18:40 (Cristina Diz Muñoz)	
19:30	Conference Dinner at Primo Market	

Friday, September 22nd 2023

08:45 Arriving and Coffee KG5- 103

09:00- **DE/COLONIALITY AND INDIGENEITY AS SUBJECTS IN DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL**  
12:00 **FIELDS** Chair: Juliane Engel

9:00- Postcolonial Orders and the Construction of Indigenous/Hegemonic Knowledge KG5- 103  
9:40 – a Case Study of not Being Heard in the Swiss School Context  
(Lalitha Chamakalayil / Oxana Ivanova-Chessex)

9:40- All my Relations - an indigenous perspective and it's impact on social work (Ute  
10:20 Straub)

10:20- Break  
10:40

Chair: Robel Afeworki Abay

10:40- Practicing Beliefs as Practices of Indigenous Knowledge in Thailand – Exploring Karma  
11:20 as Explanatory Pattern of Disability Challenging Western Approaches to (Inclusive)  
Diagnostics (Michelle Proyer) KG5- 103

11:20- Radical Contextuality: (Indigenous) Theorizing from the Territory. Developing a  
12:00 global/planetary learning in teacher education in the framework of the long-standing  
academic cooperation between Antioquia University (Colombia) and Bern University of  
Education (Angela Stienen / Alba Lucia Rojas Pimienta)

12:00- Lunch Break  
13:00

13:00- **ETHICAL QUESTIONS** Chair: Florian Weitkämper

14:25 13:00- Which explicit and implicit ethical norms in "western" educational sciences have  
13:40 to be discussed when meeting indigenous philosophies of education? KG5- 103  
(Nausikaa Schirilla)

**Parallel Session:**

**KG5- 104** Chair: Cristina Diz Muñoz

**KG5- 103** Chair: Florian Weitkämper

13:45- The Politics of Recognition and the  
14:25 Politics of Refusal – Postcolonial,  
Indigenous and Dominant  
Perspectives on Recognition  
(Sina Isabel Freund)

Possibilities and limits of solidarity under  
condition of white supremacy  
(Isabelle Ihring/Bettina Fritzsche)

14:25- Break  
14:45

14:45- **GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES** Chair: Benjamin Jörissen

16:05 14:45- Global Inequalities in a Decolonial Perspective (Manuela Boatcă) KG5- 103  
15:25

15:25- Indigenous Knowledge and Planetary Research (Juliane Engel / Saskia Terstegen)  
16:05

16:05 Concluding Remarks / Final Discussion KG5- 103

16:30 End of the Conference

**Organizing Team:**

Bettina Fritzsche, Isabelle Ihring, Bianca Baßler, Christine Riegel, Ronja Trommer & Anna Albiker

**Locations and registration:**

The conference will take place in the University of Education Freiburg/Germany, Kunzenweg 21, 79117 Freiburg, KG 5, rooms 103 and 104. The conference dinner will be at Primo Market, Bernhardstraße 6, 79098 Freiburg:  
<https://trattoriaimprimo-markt.cafelists.com/en/>

If you want to attend the conference, please send an e-mail to [indigenoustheories@ph-freiburg.de](mailto:indigenoustheories@ph-freiburg.de) until 10.9.23 and also tell us, if you would like to take part at the conference dinner on 21.9.23, 19h30.