

From the civilizing mission of apocalypse to a decolonial praxis of sustainable innovation: Caribbean as capitalist and post-capitalist crucible

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Introduction:

In this poster, I present the Caribbean as a historic site for the development of Capitalism and now—in the face of intense climate change—as a decolonial site for necessarily post-capitalist envisioning, which will require a very different Caribbean education system from the present one.

The Caribbean was once a centerpiece of European economic experimentation and expansion, with colonialism, slavery and indentureship serving as the engines of capitalism (Williams, 1946). During the colonial era in the Caribbean, substantive education was generally denied to slaves. Any sparse educational provisions revolved around missionary-based education, aimed at conversion to Christianity. I posit that violence as disciplinary technology (Foucault, 1975) was the main form of 'education': education for inferiorization and subservience. This internalized 'education', which engendered psychic intra- and inter-personal splintering among the enslaved (Fanon, 1967), gave way to incoherent post-slavery, independent nation-building projects.

Capitalism has wreaked havoc in and on the Caribbean. Its guarantors—in the form of IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programs—are a neocolonial elaboration of what I call the civilizing mission of apocalypse. Europe aimed to 'civilize' the Caribbean (and the non-West), but the violent logics and practices of exploitation and peripheralization caused and entrenched infrastructures and ontologies of apocalypse. I characterize apocalypse here as a systemic cycle of ruination (Stoler, 2013).

Colonialism and neocolonialism also entrenched particular educational formations that were not Caribbean-centric thus, contemporaneous educational structures (including pedagogies and school discipline) are outmoded and not fit for a 21st century global society. 21st century global society is partially demarcated by constant economic disruption; some of it welcome and some of it devastating to marginalized communities. For example, industrialization in the West has been a leading cause of climate change but small island developing states (like many of those in the Caribbean) suffer the brunt of the impacts, such as increasingly dangerous hurricanes, rising sea levels and bleached coral reefs, which in turn imperil the bedrock of many Caribbean economies: the tourism industry.

Intro Cont'd

In the face of these dramatic climate events and the further economic exploitation of marginalized communities, some entrepreneurs have argued for compassionate disruption (Jackson, 2018) which is about using innovation to drive growth while committing to sustainable corporate sustainability while also mitigating the negative impacts of the disruption. In this poster, I aver that the educational system in the Caribbean needs a major overhaul—one premised on disruptive innovation (Christensen, 1995)—to provide the Caribbean body politic with the capacities to creatively tackle climate change adaptation and a

forecast of increasing numbers of climate refugees. In other words, I wish to sketch a model anchored in a Caribbean post-capitalist and decolonial praxis.

Significance to study of CIE: This presentation challenges dominant paradigms of development and argues that those paradigms are injurious to small island states that are peripheral to global society. The development field and major economies can also benefit from a decolonial education for sustainable innovation.

Theoretical Framework:

For this presentation, I am merging theories from postcolonialism and decoloniality, critical peace education and dynamical systems.

Postcolonialism/decoloniality: Mignolo (2011) writes that both decolonial thinking and action constitute a kind of interventionist and activist praxis; he calls for the need to name and decode lingering colonialities (Williams 2016) and the necessarily subsequent step of delinking from oppressive epistemological and ontological regimes.

Critical Peace Education: Critical peace education (Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011) is focused on critiquing all forms of violence, especially structural violence, and envisioning transformative agencies.

Dynamical Systems Theory: An attractor—a term that comes from dynamical system theory—is a macro-influencing force which shapes and maintains the core of any particular system, despite perturbing externalities (Coleman et al, 2007).

I characterize the logic of coloniality as an attractor because it had (and continues to have) staying power into the post-colonial era. This attractor causes ruination, degradation (of varied sorts), economic stagnation, and Caribbean peripherality in the global economy, and I posit decolonial peace education as a praxis by which Caribbean peoples can decode continued structural violence, and envision and enact alternative and sustainable models to hegemonic development.

Methodology: I have been engaged in a longitudinal, vertical case study (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006) for the past decade in Trinidad & Tobago, where I analyze the interlocking relationships between international, regional, national and local factors. The principal site is a secondary school in Port of Spain where I conduct ethnographic and youth participatory action research. I also conduct trainings on conflict resolution, restorative circle, mediation, and activism with parents in socio-economically disadvantaged communities. The data collection has varied phases: I have spent two 7-month stints during the past decade and some years I return anywhere from a week to a month to conduct follow-up research and trainings. I have conducted over 60 interviews and focus groups, 600 online surveys, and over 1000 hours of participant observations and workshops.

Sketch of a Decolonial Praxis of Sustainable Innovation:

- Anti-capitalist education, using indigenous knowledges and practices
- Revamped Caribbean regionalism centered around decolonial processes and not relying on Western logics and processes of exploitation (including being part of a new Global South movement for decolonial development).
- Train communities in endogenous development that they lead, but that are connected to other communities
- Economic diversification so as to diminish reliance on economic monocultures of oil and tourism
- Pedagogies of sustainable innovation in schools
- Decolonial Action Research with students can foster conscientization for both teachers and their students

Cont'd

- Need for a radical restructuring of education: curriculum, teacher training, horizontalizing MoE relations with schools (especially those like my case study school and similarly marginalized schools)
- Involving parents and the wider communities in schools
- Utilization of more positive peace approaches than negative peace approaches (as regards student discipline) (even scaled up: Systemic Peace Education)
- Systems approach to nat'l and regional research and policy making

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