

Gathering Pandanus Leaves: Colonization, Internationalization and the Pacific

Marcia Leenen-Young and Sreana Naepi
University of Auckland, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

It has long been established that education is both a colonial and imperial tool that enables colonizing nations to establish themselves in foreign territories. This paper explores New Zealand's historical and contemporary role in the Pacific and how the country has leveraged higher education to both strengthen and continue its ongoing colonial and imperial projects. Utilizing current understandings of critical internationalization this paper will examine the lengths that New Zealand has gone to in order to protect its international standing as a gateway to the Pacific.

Keywords: Pacific, higher education, colonization, internationalization

INTRODUCTION

Initially, when we came together to write this piece, we saw it as a rolling out of a mat where others interested in discussing critical internationalization and the Pacific could join us in talanoa over the role of internationalization in the Pacific education space (a talanoa is an extended discussion based in relationality; see Naepi et al., 2017, 2019). However, over the many months we worked on this paper we realized that there was no mat to roll out. Instead, the base information needed for talanoa had not yet been gathered. Although much is written about the education-development and education-as-aid narrative in the Pacific (Coxon & Munce, 2008; Coxon & McLaughlin, 2017; McLaughlin, 2018; Nabobo-Baba, 2013; Sanga, 2011), there has been little space made to bring critical internationalization theory, colonization, history, and the Pacific together on one mat. As a result, this paper is a gathering of pandanus leaves from scholarship in critical higher education studies and Pacific history as we attempt to weave a mat from which we can talanoa. This article is a beginning point. A point where we articulate the history of education in the Pacific

through a critical internationalization lens, but perhaps with less focus on critical internationalization than first expected; there simply was not a pattern to weave from.

Throughout this paper, we slip between being part of the Pacific and speaking of the Pacific. This reflects our positionality as part of the Pacific diaspora; at times we are speaking of our own ancestors and ourselves within the Pacific and at other times we are speaking about the regional Pacific, a space to which we cannot lay claim to. This space is where active movements like the *Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative for and by Pacific People* (Nabobo-Baba, 2013) push back against colonial education practices in the Pacific. Like all aspects of modernity, migration and colonization are complex reflections of a multifaceted history, and we appreciate the reader's generosity in working through this space with us. Often international education is viewed as a tool of liberation sold to 'developing' nations as a way to learn their way out of the 'developing' status (Coxon & Munce, 2008; Coxon & McLaughlin, 2017; McLaughlin, 2018; Nabobo-Baba, 2013; Sanga, 2011). However, what is less explored - particularly in the Pacific - is how international education operates as a tool through which old colonial powers can continue to subjugate and control previous colonies while simultaneously reasserting their dominance in the Pacific to global powers.

This paper will demonstrate this by engaging with New Zealand's historical involvement in education in Samoa, Niue, Tokelau, and the Cook Islands. To do this we focus on the historical context of New Zealand's empire in the Pacific (Salesa, 2009) with a focus on education, alongside wider academic discussions on the role of higher education as a colonial/neocolonial/imperial tool that suppresses Indigenous knowledge systems. Having established the context, we will then consider in what ways higher education in New Zealand's empire relates to these wider discussions. Below we offer an analysis that is ordered by ideas as opposed to the traditional chronological historical accounts that are often used; however, the reader will note that there are significant links within the timeline such as the shift from missionary schools and the shift in New Zealand's role as a colonial power occurring within the same time period. These events are interlinked, and future critical histories of the Pacific will unpack how they feed into each other.

In this paper, we expand the definition of international education to be inclusive of not just Pacific peoples travelling to Aotearoa New Zealand and globally for education, but also the education systems introduced within the Pacific as a result of colonialism. It is common within the comparative/development education space to engage in ideas of colonialism and development education, but less so within critical internationalization studies that focuses on the movement of bodies to and from other nations for education. We push at the boundaries of international education definitions because it is through the introduced colonial education system that value is placed on the ongoing international exchange of Pacific peoples to New Zealand education systems. This pushing is necessary as western education in the Pacific has long been an imported product; early colonists understood the power of education to enable them to obtain land and subjugate populations and the continued high value placed on western education is both a remnant of the colonial past and a marker of the present neo-colonial/imperial moment that we find ourselves in.

Higher education is often sold as a solution to increasing levels of global inequity. However, as Tikly (2004) argues we need to consider more critically the role of education and the discourses it reproduces, as education is where “the nature and implications of economic, political and cultural change are constructed and contested” (p.178). Tikly claims that education teaches us “discourses about the nature of social reality and of human nature itself, including those about education and development, provide the bricks and mortar, the final recourse in relation to which hegemony and counter-hegemony are constructed and contested” (p. 178). It is for these reasons that education is a primary tool in colonization/neo-colonization/imperialism, as it enables the resetting of a population’s discourse to one that aligns with the colonizer’s own. Our paper will focus on how the New Zealand government, through replacing the Indigenous Pacific education system, created an education system in the Pacific that values international education beyond their own forms of Pacific education. To demonstrate this, we provide the historical context of establishing New Zealand’s empire and education within it. From there we explore how the Indigenous Pacific education system was replaced through reframing coloniality as a gift, suppressing Indigenous knowledges and shifting communal values to individual ones. These three practices/ideas intertwine and weave in and out of each other’s spaces as they all move towards an education system in the Pacific that initially mandates international education and then eventually sees international education as more valuable than Pacific education systems. This was all done with the ultimate goal of ensuring compliance to the colonial state, thereby reinforcing and ensuring New Zealand’s place in the global order.

CONTEXT

Engaging with the conscious creation of New Zealand’s empire and the history of education within it is necessary as a foundation to gather our materials and prepare to weave our mat. The formation of the empire is an important backstory to why New Zealand was involved in the education of the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Tokelau. Although this is a complex historical narrative within the Pacific, the scope of this paper and the function of this section in surveying these historical foundations requires us at points to simplify complex and significant historical developments. This is by no means intended to underestimate the importance of more detailed critical examinations of the imperial actions that led to New Zealand’s empire or the history of education in the Pacific, and will, we hope, instead highlight both areas as ones that need significant scholarly attention.

That New Zealand had an empire is an often-ignored part of New Zealand’s history (Salesa, 2009) that illustrates an inherited though separate imperial desire for colonial territory in the Pacific. The legacy of British imperialism and colonialism drove successive New Zealand leaders in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century to conceive of themselves as a little Britain with the right of expansion in the South Pacific (Ross, 1964; Salesa, 2012). The British colonization of New Zealand was set on the premise that it was the gateway to increased territory in the Pacific, motivated by politics of empire, and economic and trade benefits. This was underpinned by the humanitarian justification of civilization and benevolence,

alongside the conviction of white racial superiority so aptly captured in the words of Cecil Rhodes in 1877 as a “duty to seize every opportunity of acquiring more territory... that more territory simply means more of the Anglo-Saxon race more of the best the most human, most honorable race the world possesses” (cited in Flint, 1974). This inherited ideology of empire saw successive leadership from Sir George Grey in the 1840s to Sir Richard Seddon at the turn of the century actively promoting a vision for New Zealand’s empire in the South Pacific, or as Damon Salesa refers to it, New Zealand’s “Pacific destiny” (Rolfe, 2001; Salesa, 2012). On 26 November 1883 Australia and New Zealand proclaimed their imperial ambitions and joined forces to draw their line in the sand, or in the ocean, by proclaiming rights to the South Pacific at the Australasian Inter-Colonial Conference in Sydney by warning off any foreign invaders (Salesa, 2012). These are not the actions of a puppet nation directed by their far-off master but instead the conscious attempts of a settler-colony to create their own colonial empire in the Pacific and prove the importance of New Zealand by investing in the colonial ideology of empire.

The territorial loss of Samoa, which had been at the top of New Zealand’s imperial wish list since 1893, saw Premier Richard Seddon take matters into his own hands and embark on a ‘health cruise’ around the Pacific, at which point the future empire of New Zealand was decided (Salesa, 2012; Brooking, 2014). It is within this colonial tension that Britain conceded to the imperial desires of the little Britain of the South Pacific and supported the annexation of the Cook Islands (1901), Niue (1901), Samoa (1914), and Tokelau (1926 [administered]; 1948 [part of NZ]) not as British colonies but rather territories directly controlled and administered from the New Zealand government. This is the extent of New Zealand’s colonial empire in the Pacific, smaller than originally intended but nonetheless built on imperial desires and actions.

EDUCATION WITHIN THE EMPIRE OF NEW ZEALAND

The story of western education in the South Pacific begins with the arrival of the missionaries and their civilizing agenda. In the early days of New Zealand’s colonial presence in the Pacific, education was a tool of conversion (Lange, 2006). This drive for knowledge and literacy pushed by missionaries and embraced by many peoples in the Pacific resulted in a rush toward the development of missionary schools initially for religious study, but after this was secure, for wider educational instruction. The London Missionary Society (LMS) recognized in 1910 that packaging Christianity under the guise of education was the key to its success, concluding that “educational work had been and remained one of the most supremely valuable instruments for achieving the evangelistic purpose of the missions” (Goodall, 1954, 456). While there were also *ad hoc* attempts to establish infrastructure for education prior to 1901, such as the Schools Act of 1895, these met with limited success and the burden of education remained firmly with the missionary community. Missionary education was the initial gateway for both colonization and western forms of education that inevitably led to international education in the Pacific through public education offered by the New Zealand government.

Shifting from missionary education to legislating for international education

Eventually, missionary education gave way to public education systems that led to the New Zealand government legislating for international education within New Zealand's Pacific Empire. The realization of the missionary agenda in the Pacific by the late nineteenth century meant missionaries then turned towards colonial governments to shoulder the responsibility of civilizing infrastructure. But this was not a responsibility that New Zealand was eager to embrace. The burden remained on the missionary structure of education until 1905 when Cabinet decided to apply the New Zealand Education Act to its colonies in the Pacific. Additionally, the attitudes of the New Zealand commissioners in the Pacific held significant sway. In the Cook Islands, the New Zealand commissioner W.E. Gudgeon was facing pressure from LMS to establish a secular system of schooling for the Indigenous peoples. Although he admitted that the "present system of education is not satisfactory" he was hesitant to endorse educational developments due to the cost (AJHR, 1905, A3: 6). While Niue's resident commissioner C.F. Maxwell did not have the same fervor of opposition that Gudgeon did, he also opposed the system of education proposed by George Hogben in 1906 as "too elaborate and costly for Niue" (AJHR, 1906, A3: 174).

Following on from 1906 there were a number of key events that cement the attempted eradication of Indigenous education within the Pacific, including a move to legislate international education beyond a certain point, colonial curriculum, and English instruction. In 1911, a commission led by Chief Justice Sir Robert Stout decided it was time for New Zealand to take responsibility for education in its Pacific territories. In 1913, the Inspector of Native Schools W. Bird visited the Cook Islands and decreed that primary education until the age of 14 should be established, free, and compulsory, but any further education for those that needed it should be in New Zealand (Davis, 1969; Kennedy, 1984). Changes in ministerial positions and resident commissioners meant that there was no opposition to these proposals and Māui Pōmare in 1914 established the proposed secular system of education, although global events meant that this was effectively redundant and education remained inconsistent and ignored in New Zealand's territories. Additionally, while it had been decided by the New Zealand administration that secular education was the preferred system of education, missionary education persevered until the 1950s and 1960s (Davis, 1969).

In Samoa, which was added to the empire in 1914, the demand for education could not be met by the New Zealand administration and largely continued within the inadequate structure previously installed by the German administration and the missionaries. In January 1926, when the empire had reached its peak geographical spread with the addition of Tokelau, a conference was held in Wellington to discuss the education of these Pacific territories (Davis, 1969). While curriculum was a key discussion at this conference, set curriculum implementation was varied and dependent on both the priorities of education within the territories themselves and global events, so even after this conference there was limited movement on education within New Zealand's Pacific empire.

Additionally, it is important to note that Pacific peoples also pressed New Zealand for access to education, although this was neither common nor universal.

This largely depended on the attitude of the New Zealand administration within the territory, but particularly early on there is evidence of a significant push towards the development of education beyond that offered by the missionaries. In Niue in particular, the Niue Council formally complained to the New Zealand government in December 1906 about their lack of a school teacher, asking “What country where his Majesty King Edward VII rules is without a public-school teacher?” (AJHR, 1907, A3: 70). This shows a desire for education beyond that offered by the missionaries in the Pacific, and an assumption that access to western education is the duty of the colonial power.

The uneven approach to education in the Pacific indicates that a more in-depth research approach is needed to uncover how different colonies experienced and responded to the introduction of western education. The retention of Indigenous Pacific epistemological frameworks today also speaks of Pacific efforts to resist the eradication of Indigenous knowledges, hinting towards a dual negotiation of Indigenous and western knowledge systems; although this is also an area that needs further exploration. However, the overarching picture shows a colonial administration importing an education system that devalues and seeks to erase Indigenous knowledge systems, while simultaneously making it necessary for Indigenous peoples to engage in international education if they wish to be educated beyond very elementary levels.

Embedded international education

The long established and ongoing Pacific scholarship scheme, where individuals with potential are selected to travel to New Zealand to study and return to their home countries at completion, is an important part of maintaining the neo-colonial structure necessary for New Zealand to maintain its influence within the Pacific. It was not until 1945 that New Zealand recognized their duty in general to their territories in the Pacific, motivated by the stirrings of the United Nations post WWII. By this time the empire included Samoa and Tokelau and New Zealand’s track record in Samoa, in particular, was dark and bloodied (for example, Black Saturday 28 December 1929; Field, 2014).

Prime Minister Peter Fraser (1940-1949) recognized that New Zealand had failed its territories in the Pacific through its disinterest and disregard for education, ordering a report on education in each of the territories that introduced a permanent line of accountability to Wellington in the form of the ‘Officer for Islands Education’ (Davis, 1969). Theoretically, this should have been a point of change for education in New Zealand’s empire, with Fraser endorsing: the establishment of a modern education system, the inclusion of Indigenous Pacific languages in initial years, increased inclusion of Indigenous Pacific culture (albeit through a western lens), teacher training, secondary education (with the exclusion of Niue), and the resumption of the scholarship scheme (Davis, 1969; Māhina-Tuai, 2012). However, this was not to be and the initial fervor for educational development waned, influenced by changes in government and priorities in the empire. The development of secondary education within New Zealand’s Pacific empire saw a surge in the 1950s, in part motivated by increased mobility between New Zealand and the

countries within its empire. Pacific peoples needed higher levels of education where literacy, in particular, was certain to ensure a set level of ability when lured into the New Zealand labor market and to develop an Indigenous educated middle class to take up positions of responsibility within their own countries (Davis, 1969).

This particular gathering of pandanus leaves is in some ways incomplete, as the Pacific region is vast and each nation has its own unique history with New Zealand and the development of (western) education systems. However, a common thread to the story is that education was seen as a way to change how Pacific peoples understood their world through either religious instruction, foreign curriculum, or enforced international study.

REPLACING PACIFIC EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Education is a widely acknowledged force in the realization of empire as a tool to colonize, civilize, assimilate, and establish societal expectations of behavior and morality (Smith, 2012; Stein & Andreotti, 2017; Patton, 2016). This is done through the systematic (attempted) destruction of any existing education system and the entrenchment of a new education system in which Indigenous ways of knowing and being are devalued, dismissed, or deleted. Indigenous knowledge systems were significant, vital, and entrenched in pre-contact Indigenous Pacific societies (Gegeo, 2006; Thaman, 1995). However, the arrival of the missionaries transformed an education that was originally community-based to one that regarded the Christian teacher as the central holder of knowledge in a didactic style of learning that privileged the content of the west - religious studies, reading and writing, history, math, and geography (Thomas, 1993). Education was no longer the occupation of the community but rather something that was embodied in the image built by missionaries and European travelers of the west as an advanced civilization that offered the gift of knowledge.

Within the empire of New Zealand, as a settler colony itself, educational structures followed that of the British empire prioritizing western values and knowledge systems. As shown above, early missionary education structure was ad hoc and formal colonial structures transformed schools into vehicles to systematically erase Indigenous languages and knowledges. Simon and Smith (2001) explain this within the context of New Zealand Native Schools, pointing out the Pākehā teachers within these schools were agents of the state and “expected to engage with Māori in specific ways designed to systematically undermine their culture and replace it with that of the Pākehā” (p. 3).

Within the Pacific, the undermining of Indigenous knowledges went hand in hand with the racist conviction that Pacific peoples were not capable of higher forms of thinking (Nicole, 2001). There was a ‘danger’ associated with education because it was perceived that Pacific peoples were largely only suited to manual occupations and not occupations of the mind. In the Cook Islands, the New Zealand commissioner W.E. Gudgeon did not think the education of ‘Natives’ was a priority for New Zealand, claiming “it would be a mistake to establish a large number of government schools for the several missions give instruction in those branches of study that are really necessary to a primitive population” (AJHR, 1904, A3: 7). In 1906 Gudgeon

objected to the proposal from George Hogben, the head of the Department of Education, that proposed the anglicization of the Indigenous populations of the Cook Islands and Niue through widespread English teaching and the adaptation of a system similar to that of the Native School system in New Zealand (AJHR, 1906, A3: 67). Gudgeon was convinced that a secular education system was too costly, of no point to the Native population, and with an element of danger that education would spoil the Native population for what they were best fitted - “the cultivation of the soil” (AJHR, 1906, A3: 214; Kennedy, 1984; Māhina-Tuai, 2012). Similarly, Niue’s resident commissioner C.F. Maxwell did not think Niue people needed a high degree of education, claiming:

My experience with the Maoris is that the well-educated Maori, when he returns to his native kainga is in the majority of cases comparatively useless, as he has distaste for ordinary work, and longs for something higher, which is seldom attainable. There is no reason to suppose that the Polynesian would not resemble the Maori in this respect (AJHR, 1906, No. 174).

The principal objective of education according to Maxwell was to teach the Indigenous Niue people English, for which he believed one school in Alofi would be adequate with one teacher and an assistant. This disturbing insight into how education was framed in the Pacific provides an understanding that the colonial education system was designed to ensure that Indigenous Pacific peoples were only suited for manual labor.

The curriculum for Pacific peoples was ad hoc and reflected what the colonial center, New Zealand, believed was best for the Indigenous population or what the local New Zealand government representative believed was needed. The purpose of education was to educate a few to work in low levels of government administration and the rest to work in manual jobs that did not require too much thought. For example, W. Bird, the senior inspector for Native Schools, in 1913 promoted enforcing a curriculum in the Cook Islands of learning based on a traditional European curriculum, but in 1922 the Inspector of Schools W.H. Gould argued that education should address the needs of the people and advocated education to develop an “intelligent farming community” (Davies 1969, p. 277). This preoccupation with manual vocations for Pacific peoples within the empire is not only reflected in the curriculum but also in the slow development of education beyond the primary levels. It is not until the 1950s that a desire for higher education is recognized, and even then, the New Zealand administration was unconvinced that higher levels of education were the mandate of the ordinary Pacific person within their empire.

Through focusing the curriculum on manual labor, the colonial government not only removed Indigenous knowledge but also enforced the notion in Pacific communities that they were unsuitable for anything other than manual labor. The replacement of an education system is a complex process that we argue was made possible in part through two steps; the first is the reframing of the colonial agenda as a gift and the second is through the suppression of Indigenous knowledges.

GIFTING COLONIAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Maldonado-Torres (2016) makes the argument that the cognitive leaps needed in order to ‘discover’ an already occupied space meant that Indigenous peoples had to be seen as not human, which in turn meant that colonization was framed as a gift from the colonizers to the colonized, as opposed to a violation. This ‘gift’ was thought to make Indigenous peoples human through the uptake of the colonizer’s ontological and epistemological practices.

Colonizers were convinced of the gift of colonization. In the Pacific, this was achieved through framing of the Pacific as ‘other’ through a perceived racially based superiority of western epistemological systems built from the depiction of the Pacific as an example of an ‘infant’ barbarian-like society untouched by the rigors of the modern world. Throughout Europe this rhetoric of colonization reproduced the notion that Indigenous people were less than human, childlike and dependent on the gift of colonization to bring them back to the light; back to humanity (For example: Caillot, 1910; see also Nicole, 2001; Said, 1993). This conviction of racial superiority drove missionaries and colonists to see western education as a gift to be given to those they considered without knowledge, ignoring the already established and thriving Indigenous epistemological systems in the Pacific because they were not recognizable to the colonial eye.

Pacific peoples also valued and embraced western knowledge systems as a means of access to this ‘new world’. From the earliest arrival of missionaries in the Pacific, learning was dangled as a benefit of drastic cultural change. Pacific peoples wanted to read and write, and considering the only available way to do this was through the Bible, conversion was widely assured (Ellis, 1831; Parsonson, 1967). Similarly, the desire for education can be illustrated through New Zealand’s inability to meet the demand of the people. For example, in 1915 when E.W. Beaglehole the Superintendent of Schools was in Samoa and announced the opening of the first secular school, they were overwhelmed by applicants for a school that could only service 60 students (Davis, 1969). In Niue, there are multiple examples of Niue people actively working to bring western education to Niue, providing land, money and housing to ensure Niue children had access (Davies, 1969). Within New Zealand’s Pacific empire there seems to be an awareness that in order to capitalize on this colonial relationship, Pacific peoples needed to embrace western knowledge systems because they gave access to this new world, economic prosperity, and social mobility.

This cognitive leap made by members of both the colonizers and the colonized communities naturalized the idea that any part of the non-human (Indigenous Pacific) epistemology/ontology is without value, and is at best disposable, at worst, criminal. We see this in the Pacific where education is used to both convince the colonizers and the colonized that Pacific knowledges are non-human (de Sousa Santos, 2007). The introduction of western knowledge systems within the Pacific embeds what Boaventura de Sousa Santos termed abyssal thinking (2007). Abyssal thinking articulates western knowledge as all things knowledgeable on this side of the abyss whereas knowledge on the other side of the abyss, Pacific knowledge, “vanishes as reality, becomes non-existent, and is indeed produced as non-existent. Non-existent

means not existing in any relevant or comprehensible way of being. Whatever is produced as non-existent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other” (2007, p. 45). It is this shaping of Indigenous knowledges as non-human and colonizing notions that portray education as a gift (vs violation) that leads us to an education system that centers the “presumption of a Eurocentric epistemic canon that attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production at the expense of disregarding “other” epistemic traditions” (Tamdgidi, 2012, p. VIII). This reshaping becomes important for understanding how, even when western-style higher education is introduced to the Pacific, Pacific peoples continue to engage in international education practices such as the scholarship scheme because our own forms of knowledge are not understood to bring any value.

SUPPRESSING OF INDIGNEOUS KNOWLEDGES

Western education is a space and place that reproduces the colonial logic of a monocultural knowledge system in which western understandings of the world are held up as ‘truth’ and other knowledges are disregarded or othered (Barber & Naepi, 2020; Hau’ofa, 1994, 2008; Kidman & Chu, 2019; Māhina, 2008; Nabobo-Baba, 2013; Naepi, 2018, 2019; 2020; Samu, 2010; Suaalii-Sauni, 2008; Tamdgidi, 2012; Thaman, 2003). This mono-knowledge system is an important part of ensuring colonial/neo-colonial/imperial education efforts that means Pacific understandings of the world are silenced, removed, and criminalized.

A central tenet of this process was the conscious and purposeful overshadowing and discrediting of Indigenous Pacific epistemologies to illustrate the superiority of western knowledge systems, consequently establishing the western world as the global center of all true knowledge production; an attitude that despite efforts from many Pacific educationalists to disrupt largely prevails today in the Pacific. One key method of education used to colonize Pacific peoples was through the dominant mode of instruction - the English language. English further colonized Indigenous peoples through the erasure of Indigenous languages, often through actions of punishment and violence (Mühlhäusler, 2002; Thomas, 1993). This linguistic imperialism associated the English language as the way to access education and true knowledge, and gave access to the privileges of the western world (Mühlhäusler, 2002). The elitism of this linguistic structure was reflected in the colonial system of education, where often the Indigenous language was the mode of instruction in primary schools, but English was used in secondary education (Thomas, 1993). However, the ad hoc nature of New Zealand’s educational policies within the empire meant that decisions of language use were inconsistent, although many claimed the point of education in the early twentieth century was to civilize Pacific peoples through learning the English language. For example, in 1920 W. Bird, the senior inspector of Māori schools, endorsed the exclusive use of English as the medium of instruction in the Cook Islands and Niue; a policy that was harmful to those under it and largely endured until 1945 (Davies, 1969; Māhina-Tuai, 2012). The active elevation of English as the language of knowledge and education above the use of Indigenous Pacific languages was a significant imperial shift within the empire of New Zealand that suppressed and

relegated Indigenous knowledge systems to the realm of tradition and myth. Again, this practice reinforced to Pacific peoples that international education systems were more valuable than their own knowledge systems, therefore reinforcing the value of international education.

These two practices of reframing colonization as a gift and suppressing Indigenous knowledges had wide-reaching ramifications. However, we wish to focus on how these movements almost resulted in a fundamental shift in how Pacific peoples engage with and understand their world.

INDIVIDUALISATION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

The neoliberalization of higher education has further entrenched the individualization of both knowledge construction and success. This fundamental split from knowledge as relational has reframed Pacific peoples and communities, and how we understand ourselves.

Missionaries aligned their belief that intelligence equated with morality by identifying and elevating people they thought could learn the way of God and then, in turn, teach their fellow Pacific peoples. The grooming of key individuals to be ‘teachers’ was a central mechanism of conversion in the Pacific from the 1820s, with missionaries commonly travelling with Indigenous Pacific people they had already trained. In July 1830 the first missionary in Samoa, John Williams landed in Savai’i with 8 ‘native’ teachers from the Cook Islands and Society Islands ready to spread their beliefs (Williams, 1837). Subsequently, the Samoan District Committee (SDC) of the London Missionary Society (LMS) voted in 1838 to send “not less than ten native teachers to accompany Mr. Williams on his projected voyage to convey the Gospel to the Westward” (SDC minutes, 4 December 1838 cited in Nokise, 1983). To these European missionaries, Indigenous converts who were then sent out to spread the word of God were delegated ‘teachers’ throughout the Pacific and not missionaries. They were intended to pave the way for European missionaries which constructed a clear hierarchy within the church structure that identified and elevated key Indigenous positions while also allocating them as subordinate to European missionaries (Nokise, 1983).

Education has historically been entwined with the ideology of empire as a method of both assimilation and segregation that created a colonial elite of Indigenous peoples who aligned with the priorities of the colonial power (Smith, 2012). ‘Gifted’ Indigenous peoples were identified and groomed through educational opportunities that indoctrinated them into the colonial culture, creating an Indigenous elite that would encourage their people to embrace assimilation. This was a conscious process of colonization that utilized education to convert an Indigenous elite in order to use them as vehicles to indoctrinate and suppress their own people. The words of Thomas Babington Macaulay in his *Minute on Indian Education* clearly espouse the benefits of a western education in building this Indigenous elite when he states:

we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in

blood and color, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (Macaulay, 1835)

This transformed an education that was originally community-based to one that individualized success through the promises of western education and the access it granted to the gifts of the western world. As such, the rewarding of individual excellence within international education becomes a logical advancement for Pacific communities.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND THE PACIFIC

The above storying provides context for the contemporary impacts of historical education policies in the Pacific. The colonial replacement of our education systems and the subsequent movement of the knowledge center from the community to the colonizer resulted in the need for international education in the Pacific. With the creation of New Zealand's Pacific empire, there was a shift in ideals of knowledge acquisition and education that orientated those countries in the empire towards their colonial center: New Zealand. As a result, New Zealand has become the destination of choice for Pacific peoples wanting an education that will give them access to opportunity and establish them as an authority within their communities.

Scholarship scheme

The practice of 'sponsoring' promising Indigenous peoples in order to encourage them to return home and work within the governmental infrastructure to promote the acceptance of a benevolent colonial power is a tried-and-true imperial technique. The British used it effectively as a mechanism to influence thoughts and attitudes within their colonies by developing an Indigenous elite that would support their policies and act as a conduit between the colonial center and the Indigenous peoples.

Within the Pacific, highlighting 'gifted' individuals for advancement was done through education, and most obviously through the international scholarship system. In New Zealand, the government had already established this practice of identifying and promoting 'gifted' Māori from the Native Schooling system with scholarships (Simon & Smith, 2001). Initially, a scheme that sent gifted individuals to school in New Zealand was cheaper to the administration than setting up advanced education in the empire (Ma'ia'i, 1957). Race-based presumptions about intellectual ability convinced them that intelligent Indigenous peoples were an anomaly and so the best way of establishing an Indigenous elite that would do their work in the colony was to set up an international system that rewarded gifted individuals. This was not a system set up to respond to the educational needs of the people in Pacific (Ma'ia'i, 1957).

A scholarship scheme was suggested between New Zealand and the Cook Islands as early as 1904 but did not begin until 1919 when the Cook Islands offered three annual scholarships to attend St. Stephens Māori College in Auckland for two years.

In Samoa a scholarship scheme was contemplated as early as 1918, which seems incredible considering the global context of WWI, but the first Samoan scholarship students did not arrive in New Zealand until a few years later, again at St Stephen's Māori College (Davis, 1969; Māhina-Tuai, 2012). While the scheme was suspended during WWII, the newly recognized educational responsibility of New Zealand to its Pacific territories in the aftermath of this war breathed new life into the scholarship scheme, which became a regular feature in its Pacific territories - including Tokelau, although not until the 1970s (Māhina-Tuai, 2012).

However, in part, what the scholarship system does is ensure that colonial knowledge systems that suppressed Indigenous knowledge, individual and collective, and celebrated colonial practices, continues. Some individuals who receive scholarships in New Zealand education continue to take back with them knowledge practices that reinforce early colonial practices. This practice can be tied to wider discussions on the role of western universities in reinforcing Eurocentric fundamentalism (Grosfoguel, 2012) as some Pacific peoples continue to engage in an education system that devalues their knowledges and practices, taking these views home to work in influential spaces that see Eurocentric ontologies and epistemologies shape Pacific nations.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have traversed a significant period of time across a diverse region. However, in weaving the narrative we have endeavored to show how, through its early colonial period, the New Zealand government was able to replace Indigenous Pacific knowledges and education systems with a manual labor-based education system centered around western ontologies that ultimately led to an enforced international education system for Pacific peoples. This meant that from very early on anything above manual labor required engaging in international education, which then developed into a valuing of international education systems above and beyond Indigenous Pacific ones - significantly shaping the Pacific today. However, as outlined above, there are increasing levels of push back to this educational system and our knowledge systems were not lost despite efforts by the colonial government.

This article shows the urgent need to consider critical international education alongside historical and contemporary colonial politics within the Pacific, and the role of education within this. There is also potential to talanoa between critical internationalization scholars and development/aid/education Pacific scholars who have established a wealth of knowledge within the Pacific. Our initial weaving is nowhere near sufficient to begin our talanoa. Instead, we have begun to weave a pattern that others can add to, hoping eventually we can talanoa on how the history of colonial education has contributed to the contemporary valuing of international education in the Pacific.

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SEREANA NAEPI, PhD, is a lecturer in the Sociology Department at the University of Auckland. Her major research interests lie in the area of higher education, Pacific peoples, equity and knowledge construction. ORCID: 0000-0002-6067-9014 Email: s.naepi@auckland.ac.nz

MARCIA LEENEN-YOUNG, PhD, is a lecturer in Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland. Her major research interests lie in the area of Pacific history, decolonization, and Pacific pedagogies. ORCID: 0000-0002-3630-5346 Email: m.leenen@auckland.ac.nz