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Reflective Practice Research in International Collaboration

Developing Teacher Education in Togetherness

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LIT

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Chapter 14: Existential Encounters – Epistemological Diversity

Kristin Gregers Eriksen[1]

Abstract:

This chapter starts from a self-altering experience as an international visiting researcher witnessing a Blackfoot First Nations Sundance ceremony in Turtle Island, 2019. I discuss my learnings in dialogue with indigenous, decolonial, and pluriversal approaches to knowledge. The overarching aim with this theoretical-philosophical reflection is to explore the potentials of internationalization in education as an avenue towards co-creation of new paradigms that may open not-yet-imaginable possibilities for sustainable futures. I discuss three main insights that derived from my analysis of the experience, hereunder epistemic blindness, border thinking, and the significance of acknowledging the ontological level when approaching the challenges of modern/colonial unsustainability. Towards the end, I suggest potential openings for pathways towards equitable and ethical approaches to internationalization.

Keywords:

higher education, internationalization, decolonial, indigenous knowledges, sustainability

The experience, Part 1: Sundance 2019

As a visiting researcher to the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, in Turtle Island and what is currently known as Canada, I was an observer of an interdisciplinary undergraduate course on critical and indigenous approaches to sustainability and land and food systems. During the course, students and teachers were invited to witness and take part in a First Nations' ceremony centring the land and relational practices, emphasizing the existential dimension of sustainability. The ceremony took place in the land

of the Blood Tribe, part of the Blackfoot confederacy, residing within the south-western parts of Canada and north-western parts of what is currently known as the USA. The ceremony, Sundance, is an annual tradition of reaffirming and celebrating spiritual beliefs and relations between human beings, the land, and the universe. With the instalment of the Indian Acts, referring to the policies of colonization passed from the Canadian government towards First Nations, such ceremonies were banned (formally, this amendment to the Indian Act was in place from 1895 to 1951). Although it could result in a prison sentence and fines, some would continue their ceremonies as acts of resistance (Pratt, 2019, p. 31). In recent times, several communities have revitalized the ceremony. In this particular community, the chief received a vision that gestured him to include people coming from all four directions[2] in the celebrations. This way, our university group was gifted an invitation to participate.

As a group of university students and lecturers, we stayed on the land and witnessed ceremonies that lasted a little over a week. There was no contact with the outside world or use of screens or phones during the duration of our stay, other than visiting the local village for food supplies. The days started with singing and drumming at sunset, continued with smudging and sacred dancing during the day, and were accompanied by healing and relational practices such as sweat lodges and pipe-smoking circles. The practices were focused on being together, and on experiencing and taking part in relations with each other, the land, and the universe. For the community members who participated in sacred dances, bodily and personal sacrifice performances, such as piercings of the flesh, were a key part of the ceremonies. As a highly international but predominantly non-indigenous group, our roles as visitors were as respectful observers and helpers. Our contributions were related to preparing food, managing waste, gathering sage for smudging, participating in singing and drumming when invited, and contributing in any way we could. The symbolic significance of this was related to reflecting upon how colonial structures create extractive relations where some (and notably indigenous communities) are doing the dirty work, as a metaphor for carrying the heaviest burdens and costs of coloniality, modernity and climate change. The visit thus also represented a symbolic act of giving back to the community as a way of healing colonial relations.

The experience, Part 2: Epilogue

The significance of my experience with the Sundance is not only related to what took place during the ceremonies, but also what happened after. The stated aim of the academic course that witnessing the ceremonies was part of was to "create land-based and existential learning experiences that can open different possibilities to imagine sustainability". Although the experiences were the core of the course content, students had to fulfil a formal exam in the shape of an academic reflexive essay for the university to acknowledge their experiences as learning in the form of university credits. Some of the students expressed their frustration with not really finding the clear connection between their experiences and the requirements of the academic format.

As a teacher educator and heavily entrenched within a Western-dominated academic culture and habitus, I was also urged to translate my experiences from the ceremonies into words, or something semiotically accessible. I found myself altered, and that something had shifted in my understanding of sustainability and my relation to the earth and fellow humans, but it was hard to explain exactly what and how this was. As I tried to explain my insights to colleagues back home in my university, it somehow appeared naïve or insignificant; the words could not contain its full meaning. It appeared impossible to communicate to colleagues, even as they were interested and showed engagement with my sharing. I felt lonesome in the encounters with people who did not share the same embodied experience with me. I searched back to my fellow participants from the ceremony to sit with them and share our collective memory of the experience. Somehow, I had the notion that I had received a fundamental teaching, but it did not seem to hold value as learning or insight in the languages and formats of the university, and I was not able to communicate it to my colleagues in the way I wanted. This must not be understood as implying alleged inabilities or lack of will to understand from my colleagues, but rather about my own experience with lack of tools for explaining and sharing properly. It should rather be understood in relation to the structures of knowledge and validation we are socialized into through Western academia, as I will elaborate more on below. Even in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, the feeling I was left with was the clear sense that the knowledge that I so clearly perceived as self-altering in its original context somehow appeared invisible as transferred to a different context.

What is at stake?

Global citizenship education and internationalization of higher education are commonly suggested as pathways towards addressing our current challenges of social injustice, climate change and ecological crisis, not least with the launch of the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.7* on quality education (UN, 2022). An underlying premise of such policy efforts is the conceptualization of education as potentially transformative, holding the ability to create social, political, and ecological change towards sustainable futures (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). However, there are growing concerns about internationalization becoming instrumentalised and thwarted by neoliberal, capitalist, and colonial interests that are fundamentally unsustainable (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; Pais & Costa, 2020; Stein, 2021). Stein (2017) upholds that the problem with current efforts towards internationalization in higher education is related to how these imperatives are constructed within the same modern-colonial frameworks that are the actual genesis of the problems of (un)sustainability that they allegedly are set out to solve. This particularly concerns epistemological ignorance and monocultures in research and academia, reproducing coloniality and Eurocentric dominance by projecting Western and Eurocentric approaches to knowledge as hegemonic, universal, and superior (Kuokkanen, 2008; Spivak, 1994).

What was at stake in my experience during and after the Sundance was represented by feelings of both doom and hope in relation to the potential of internationalization and education in alleviating current challenges. The visit entailed a clear experience of encountering sustainability in a different and new way. I was somehow able to see the edges and limitations of the vision of sustainable futures I am socialized into from my training in Eurocentric academia more clearly, spurring a sense of sorrow in the failed promises of the modern society and a dystopic presence. At the same time, I also felt the emergence of radical hope in the community with the people and the land experienced in and through the visit. In the following, I choose to further explore this path of lingering hope and possibility, reflecting upon the question:

How can internationalization contribute to higher education's efforts towards enabling sustainable futures?

The overarching aim of the coming theoretical-philosophical reflection is to explore the potentials of internationalization in education as an avenue towards the co-creation of new paradigms that may open not-yet-

imaginable possibilities for sustainable futures. Although an explicit aim is to provide critical interruptions to naturalized ways of thinking about internationalization of higher education, the goal is not to dismiss the value of these efforts as such. I argue that internationalization may provide valuable spaces for existential encounters that hold unique potentials for pluralizing epistemologies needed for the global human community to gesture towards sustainable futures. Notably, such encounters represent the potential for *border thinking* (Anzaldúa, 1987; Mignolo, 2000), an epistemic response from the subalterns, or the borders, that spurs pathways to transforming hegemonic ways of thinking. Focusing on the role of pedagogy and epistemology for understanding transformative education, there is a risk of concealing the material and economic structures of coloniality framing the potentials for social and ecological justice and change (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Towards the end, I approach this challenge by suggesting the notions of epistemic justice and the North Sámi concept of *verdevuohtta,* or friendship (Finbog, 2022), as visions for a more equitable and ethical approach to internationalization.[3]

Methodology and analytic approach

The methodological approach in this chapter is inspired by *reflective practice research*, where the goal is to deepen one's understanding of experience and practice to develop practical wisdom, for example as a teacher educator (Biesta, 2014; Weiss, 2021; Helskog and Weiss, 2023). Reflective practice research is recognized by the inseparability of knowing and doing, or theoretical and experience-based knowledge, which in the pre-modern Western epistemological tradition was described by Aristotle as *phronesis* (Weiss, 2021). The inseparability of knowledge as an entity and practice is a key common feature of indigenous epistemological paradigms (Wilson, 2008; Prete, 2019). Within an indigenous paradigm, it is also vital that epistemology is inseparable from ontology, entailing that ways of knowing are interrelated with ways of being. Moreover, knowledge and learning are considered relational rather than individual possessions (Prete, 2019). In my methodological approach, I build on insights from both what, in simplified terms, would be described as Western-based epistemological theory and decolonial and indigenous perspectives and methodologies. Recognizing the differences in worldviews, and notably that indigenous research methodology is not a perspective to be added but rather a paradigm (Wilson, 2008),

I also underline how I, as a researcher, am positioned in a cultural interface (Nakata, 2007) that represents a dynamic moving between positionalities and perspectives (Eriksen, 2022).

I realize the potential risks of applying "Western/Eurocentric" and "Decolonial/Indigenous" as potentially essentialised and binary concepts. However, they must be understood here as strategic analytical tools serving the aim of enabling critique. When referring to the Western-modern hegemonic norms and culture of the university, I am applying the understanding described in Finbog (2022, p. 4) not as a particular location or social group, but rather as a collective philosophical, moral, and scientific doctrine that is widely accepted as being the dominant collective discourse of knowledge. The intention with this construction is not to disqualify the relative diversity of knowledges derived from the Western world, but rather to critique the positioning of the Western, Eurocentric traditions as allegedly universal (cf. Andreotti, 2011). As Kuokkanen (2005) points out, centring indigenous perspectives in the academy and education is about redefining Eurocentric hegemony as to concepts such as research, science, and, most recently, humanities. This is not reserved for indigenous philosophies or thinkers, of course, but is rather part of a diverse group of critical resistance to dogmatic and unjust appropriation in the university, "opening up to forces from without" (cf. Derrida, 2001, p. 235; Kuokkanen, 2005, p. 20ff).

The purpose of this chapter is to stimulate new, critical conversations in the field of internationalization of higher education by paying explicit attention to perspectives often excluded from the discussion. In this paper, I choose to centre indigenous perspectives, paying respect to the context of my experience with the Sundance, as well as my own positionality. I, like many others who today consider themselves Norwegian, have Sámi ancestry, and it therefore appears as "close to home" for me to refer to concepts from a Sámi ontology. I also acknowledge the difficulties, risks, and limitations of applying Western terminology to address indigenous ways of knowing, but ground my approach within what Kovach (2009) describes as "strategic concession", claiming space for alternative epistemologies in a not always welcoming, albeit powerful, academy.

Theoretical reflection

In the following I further explore and analyse my experience with and after the Sundance through lenses from decolonial (cf. Eriksen, 2021; Mignolo

& Walsh, 2018) and indigenous philosophies, notably from the Blackfoot confederacy, located in south-western Canada and northern Montana, US (Prete, 2019), and from Sámi contexts (Finbog, 2022; Fjellheim, 2023a, 2023b; Kuokkanen, 2005, 2008). As an approach to epistemology, decoloniality is not really a theoretical position, referring to a fixed standpoint or a predefined or final truth. Rather, decoloniality can be understood both as analysis and critique as well as a stance and praxis signified by resisting the modern-Western idea of the universality of epistemology (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

In my further reading, I discuss three themes that derive from the experience: the encounter with epistemic blindness, border thinking, and the meeting between knowledge systems, and the significance of acknowledging the ontological level when approaching the challenges of modern/colonial unsustainability.

Epistemic ignorance

Engaging with decolonial and indigenous literature makes it clear how the experience of being invisible when trying to communicate the experiences within the frameworks of the Western academy is long known to and previously thoroughly explained by colonized and indigenous peoples. As Kuokkanen (2008) maintains, the university as an institution is characterized by a prevalent epistemic ignorance, referring to how academic structures, practices, and discourses enable reproduction of Western hegemony in defining epistemic norms and traditions. This also concerns the disqualification of affective and embodied knowledges as part of what is conceived as rationality, based on the naturalization of Cartesian dualism (Alcoff, 2007). Practical, first-person, experiential, and embodied knowledge of all sorts was discredited by modern Western epistemology and relegated to the sphere of culture, tradition, and myth. The systems of validation of knowledge and "truth" in the academy depend rather upon it being transformed into propositional knowledge that can be rendered fully in linguistic form. Hence, it was difficult or even impossible to translate my experiences into something of this format that can be recognized as knowledge by my peers, or even myself, being socialized into the modern Western understanding of epistemology. This was also at stake for the students, writing their essays to obtain credits; somehow, this system of validation was incapable of acknowledging their existential learning. I have grown up

and been socialized into a positionality as a majority white European and simply not used to being confronted with this invisibilization. It is rarely something I embody. Living the realities of this through my experience, therefore, made me alter through the struggle of understanding, in Todd's (2003) description of learning.

Importantly, the epistemic ignorance that I was confronted with cannot be understood as a simple case of "not knowing" or mere lack of understanding. It is also entrenched in a system of practices and structures that actively foreclose other than dominant epistemologies and refuse to contemplate their existence (Fjellheim, 2023b; Kuokkanen, 2008, p. 63). Hence, the ignorance is sanctioned (Spivak, 1999), meaning that it is actively upheld by dominant power structures serving the reproduction of coloniality of knowledge. As Quijano (2000) argues, European colonialism did not end with historical colonialism based on territorial occupation; rather, enduring power and knowledge structures, described as the coloniality of power (shorthand: coloniality), were installed. The European hegemony concentrated all forms of control, including the production of knowledge. Coloniality of knowledge amounts to "a full dependence of the models of thinking, making, and interpreting the world based on the norms created and imposed by/in Western modernity" (Tlostanova et al., 2019, p. 290). In the same vein, alternative, traditional, and local modes of knowledge production are erased, and the university creates a monoculture that is in reality as particular as all other epistemologies but that projects itself as universal and delocalised.

What is at stake in the frustration experienced both by me in conversations with peers and the students trying to convey their knowledge in the academic, written format is the forcing of translating experiences into a system of validation developed for other forms of knowing. On a deeper level, this is not simply a conflict only of the epistemological kind but also has an ontological dimension. As the systems of validation in the Western academy are based on an ontology of separability and representability that creates an alleged separation between the subject and the object, an indigenous and embodied way of knowing is grounded in a holistic ontology where the knower and the known are part of the same process. What this also informs is the limitations of the Western academy in realizing the diversity of knowledges. I know what I know from my experience because I practiced it – I embody it. And what it also tells us is that the content, the ways of thinking, will not change without structural and material change,

such as how academia is organized, how knowledge is validated, and who defines these norms.

Border thinking and the encounters of knowledge systems

As described above, the inability for me to translate my learnings into a form of knowledge to be validated in the university was also a case of the meeting of different epistemologies. This existential encounter with the structures and boundaries framing knowledge and "truth" has, in the decolonial tradition, been described as "border thinking" (Anzaldúa, 1987; Mignolo, 2000). Border thinking must, however, not be understood in terms of a mere clash of cultures or perspectives. As Mignolo upholds, border thinking occurs wherever the conditions are appropriate and the awareness of coloniality comes into being (2011, p. 276).

Border thinking is thinking from the "outside", using alternative knowledge traditions and languages and modalities of expression. It is thus simply not what happens when Western epistemology and "other" knowledge systems meet. It is rather the introduction of alternative epistemologies and ontologies into the hegemonic discourses of Western modernity so that the frames and borders that restrain knowledge and knowing are rendered visible. It makes us see what does not gain space and validation within the dominating conventions of knowledge and truth. In my experience, the encounter with alternative forms of knowledge through a Western-modern lens of knowledge validation also led to an encounter with the limitations of this system in what knowledges can or cannot be understood from this perspective. In such an encounter, then, where one is exposed to "multiple realities", the hegemony of Western knowledge can be relativised, making space for destabilization and the pluralizing of knowledges (Andreotti et al., 2011). As the decolonial perspective on knowledge upholds the inseparability of knowledge with context and praxis, the actual visit to the place (in my example, the reserve where the Sundance took place) was key for the occurrence of border thinking. This is an argument for internationalization in education as an avenue towards enabling border thinking, in creating mobility between different epistemological contexts understood as geographical places.

Border thinking does not have a representational aim or an object that it wants to "get right", but rather the focus is on the field or episteme that it wants to transform, complexifying and diversifying the possibilities of

evaluation across differences (Alcoff, 2007, p. 97). It is from the margins of the coloniality of power that "critical border thinking" emerges as a critique gesturing towards a pluriversal (Mignolo, 2000) transmodern world of multiple and diverse ethico-political projects of horizontal dialogues and communication. However, to achieve pluriversality of knowledges, it is fundamental to transform the concrete material structures and systems of domination and exploitation of the present colonial power matrix. Epistemic ignorance is not only a lack of understanding but also refers to practices and discourses that actively foreclose other than dominant epistemologies through the working of power and hegemony (Kuokkanen, 2008). Decolonization is not situated in the mind, as a sort of "free your mind and the rest will follow", but rather positioned in the particularities of coloniality and its structures (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 19).

In my example, this is at stake in the systems of validation of the students' learnings. For the experiences to be acknowledged as actual learning, they must be validated through the format of a graded text. As a teacher educator, this has made me contemplate the inbuilt limitations of the validation and grading systems in the university and how they, at times, may serve to exclude and disqualify knowledges, in spite of other intentions. For alternative knowledge systems to gain a space in academia, it is not sufficient to translate. This serves what Spivak calls Eurocentric arrogance of conscience (1999, p. 171), the assumption that with sufficient information, one can "understand" the other. A significant part of the teachings I received through the experience at the Sundance was exactly that there are things I may not fully understand, but I can still choose to witness and acknowledge. However, within the academic structures, the space for such knowledges is dependent upon the university to reorient and expand paradigms and strategies of welcoming and validation (Kuokkanen, 2008).

Acknowledging ontological foreclosures

Having accounted for the issues related to the perceived inability to communicate and validate the learnings within the norms of Western academia, I am still finding myself returning to the question of *what these learnings were*. What were the insights and learnings concerning my understanding of sustainability?

The significance of opposing epistemic ignorance, enabling border thinking, and making way for a pluriversality of knowledges is interre-

lated with our current predicament concerning climate change and ecological crisis. Several critiques of the global sustainable development discourse have argued its shortcomings as orienting educational horizons of hope and change, as it is grounded in the same colonial systems and logics of exploitation, separability and perpetual growth that caused the crisis (Davis & Todd, 2017; Stein et al., 2023; Whyte, 2019). There is also an increasing acknowledgement that local, traditional, and indigenous knowledges hold value in terms of sustaining healthy relationships between human beings and the earth. The emphasis on alternative knowledge systems, and particularly indigenous knowledges, is further manifested by global policy developments on matters concerning sustainability. The UN Biodiversity Agreement, written in Montreal, December 2022 (COP15, 2022), amounted to a historical recognition of traditional knowledge as an important factor contributing to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The agreement underlines how traditional knowledge and indigenous people's presence are vital when protecting and restoring nature and biodiversity.[4] Moreover, the International Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) has acknowledged the imperative of considering indigenous knowledges as a vital part of the knowledge base concerning climate change mitigation.

On a different level, my experiences also gifted me a teaching about the limitations of knowing as such. I had the very clear sensation that in being together during the ceremony and experiencing the relations with each other and the land, the insights into sustainability were not mainly *known* but rather *experienced*. This way of understanding knowledge not simply as an object but as a practice, is very well described within Blackfoot pedagogy. In accordance with Blackfoot ontology, pedagogy is more than learning; it is about a way of living, being, and learning, where what is to be learned is united with how it is learned (Prete, 2019, p. 35). Knowledge is transferred through practice and relationships. Knowledge, or rather knowing as practice, is not an entity out there to be obtained as an object by the individual knower but is practiced and is entrenched in relation to place and people.

However, on a related level, the experience also opened my understanding to the limitations of knowing as such. As argued by Stein et al. (2023), climate change and the related crisis of our times are rooted not mainly in lack of knowledge, but rather in foreclosures and socially sanctioned disavowals; fantasies and desires stemming from the continuous investment in inherently unsustainable modern-colonial habits of being. The consequence of this is hence that the changes that need to happen for gesturing

towards more sustainable futures are not mainly occurring on the epistemological level: there is not simply a need for new and better knowledge, but rather different ways of being human in the world and in relation to the earth. What we need is an ontological critique of modernity/coloniality that proposes the interruption of modes of existence that are grounded on human exceptionalism, exaltation, and entitlements, rather than an expansion of those. The question thus becomes not what knowledge can help education reorient towards supporting sustainable development, but rather *what kind of learning and educational practices could prepare people to face the impossibility of sustaining our contemporary modern-colonial habits of being?* (Stein et al., 2023, p. 275).

Experimenting with different visions for internationalization of higher education: Cognitive justice and verddevuohta

As pointed out by Bauman (2000), "There is a widening gap between the kinds of challenges modern education was designed to address, and the challenges we face in today's uncertain, complex, and rapidly changing world. [. . .] The present educational crisis is first and foremost the crisis of inherited institutions and philosophies, which are meant for a different kind of reality" (Bauman, 2000, p. 31 in Stein, 2017, p. 3). This is particularly pressing when looking at sustainability, where our overwhelmingly clear knowledge about the current crisis does not seem to move towards sustainable change and transformations of our ways of being in and with the world.

As I have argued above, one avenue towards sustainability is the decolonization of Western modern hegemony in defining and validating knowledge. This is not a case of disqualifying Western science and epistemology, but rather of relativising its alleged universality through border thinking, making space for a greater pluriversality of knowledges. Learning from the First Nations' vision of the four directions and the medicine wheel as a metaphor for epistemological pluralism, we can envision the four directions each as significant for

> looking at something in the centre that humans are trying to know . . . The idea of moving around to look from a different perspective, from the north, the south, the east and the west, and from above, below or within, is contained in the creative process . . . Indigenous logics moves between relationships, re-

> visiting, moving to where it is necessary to learn or to bring understandings together (Cajete, 2000, pp. 210–211 in Andreotti et al., 2011, p. 47).

As indigenous ontologies teach us that knowledges are situated, contextual, relational, and practiced, the border thinking and pluralization of horizons of knowing are also somehow dependent upon encounters and movement, making a clear argument for the value of internationalization. This is not to say that internationalization of higher education can continue as a practice of unsustainable mobility of people flying across the globe, but that the encounters between people and contexts can be key to sustainable futures. This is especially so for approaching and seeing the limitations of Western epistemologies. Acknowledging that learning from local, traditional, and indigenous knowledge systems may be especially important for approaching sustainability, this runs a high risk of the encounters being thwarted by coloniality and turned into extractivism and appropriations that serve the reproduction of Western, white imperialism. We know far too well that indigenous peoples' rights to land and sustenance of cultures are continuously violated in different contexts across the globe in the names of the Anthropocene and green colonialism (Davis & Todd, 2017; Fjellheim, 2023a). Consider this statement in UNESCO's statement on the role of education and so-called "21st-century skills" for enabling sustainable futures:

> Alternative knowledge systems need to be recognized and properly accounted for, rather than relegated to an inferior status. Societies everywhere can learn a great deal from each other by being more open to the discovery and understanding of other worldviews. There is much to learn, for instance, from rural societies across the world, particularly indigenous ones, about the relationship of human society to the natural environment. (UNESCO, 2015, p. 30)

This is, on one side, presented as an acknowledgement of indigenous knowledges. However, it is also stated that "there is much to learn . . . " from these knowledges. The phrasing illustrates the risk of collapsing the understanding of the plurality of knowledges into a case of different cultures or perspectives, not challenging the position of Western science and epistemology as the norm. If not approached through considerations for epistemic justice, such a well-intended statement risks the reproduction of hegemony through the positioning of an "us" who are to learn from "them", representing "other cultures" (Kuokkanen, 2008; see also Helskog and Weiss, 2023).

For enabling frameworks for imagining more ethical, equitable, and healthy relations and gesturing towards epistemic justice, I learn from Sámi scholar Finbog (2022) and suggest the North Sámi concept of *verddevuohta*, translated as 'reciprocity through hospitality and friendship', as an imaginary horizon. This notion entails a vision of the self-in-relation common to indigenous ontologies. In times past, verddevuohtta in Sápmi was a relationship and system of trading of goods and services between Sámi communities, or *siidas*. The different parties were *verdde* to each other, and as Finbog (2022) describes, "the essence of verddevuohta was similar in that it designates an ecosystem founded on the relational qualities of a Sámi ontology [...] it is the meeting of equal partners that work together to achieve something" (p. 99). Verdde then describes a relation of mutual respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and commitment, which I argue is imperative for ethical practice of internationalization in and through higher education.

Notes

[1] Kristin Gregers Eriksen is an Associate Professor and Head of the research group in Social Studies at the University of South-Eastern Norway. Her key research interests and publications revolve around indigenous and Saami knowledges in education, decolonial theory and pedagogy, and anti-racism and social justice through education.

[2] In the medicine wheel in First Nations' cultures, the World is seen as having four directions: Black (West), Red (North), Yellow (East) and White (South). This is part of a holistic ontology, and the four directions must not be understood as merely geographical concepts. The number four is an expression of balance and harmony inherently present and contained within, and the directions hold great (context-specific and diverse) meanings and significance in a variety of aspects such as nature/human relations, health, well-being, community, and spiritual balance.

[3] 'The Sámi' is a collective term referring to several groups and communities of indigenous peoples that has traditionally been connected to the ancestral homeland of Sápmi. Sápmi stretches across mid- and northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland, and north-western parts of Russia (Kola peninsula). I, like many others who today consider themselves Norwegian, have Sámi ancestry, and it therefore appears as "close to home" for me to refer to concepts from a Sámi ontology.

[4] Traditional knowledges and indigenous knowledges are not the same, but they do overlap. These kinds of knowledges are recognized by the inseparability between knowledge as theory and practice, their embeddedness in local places/land, and that they are often collective and are orally transmitted within a community. Indigenous communities are among the groups who have best protected and developed traditional knowledge, but traditional knowledge is not restricted to indigenous communities or individuals. On the other hand, Indigenous knowledges cannot be reduced to traditional knowledges.

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