**Decolonizing School Leadership: A Literature Review of Indigenous Culturally Responsive Leadership**

**Muhammad Khalifa, University of Minnesota**

**Deena Khalil, Howard University**

**Tyson Marsh, University of New Mexico**

**Clare Halloran, University of Minnesota**

**Introduction and Purpose**

This literature review synthesizes the literature on *Indigenous School Leadership* (**ISL**) from Non-Western contexts from around the world. We included a review of research of non-dominant, non-Western, indigenous and minoritized forms of school leadership. It would be expected that we included literature from colonized nations, but that we considered research in colonizing nations needs some explanation—evidence from colonizing nations were included because of the both the indigenous expressions of leadership as well as indigenous leadership of enslaved peoples that have even more hybridized expressions of leadership. Yet such hybridized expressions of school leadership also exist in non-Western nations.

In addition to considering location, this literature review is broken into two major themes, and two theoretical frames that emerged from the literature. Theme one is about how schooling for indigenized people was designed as and continues to be colonizing and imperial. Theme two highlights the five expressions of ISL—the prioritizing of indigenous knowledge, the enactment of self-determination and self-reflection, the connection and empowerment of community, altruism and spirituality expressed through servant leadership, and the culturally responsive communicator. Finally, two theoretical frames also emerged from the study and then guided our discussion—*TribalCrit* and *Culturally Responsive School Leadership*.

**Methodology**

Online database and website searches were performed by combining terms related to this focus (see Appendix A for the keyword list). A combination of Boolean terms such as AND and OR were used with the keyword list, and combinations of these terms were used in searching major education research databases (including Academic Search Premier, EBSCO MegaFILE, Education Source, ERIC, and JSTOR) as well as Google Scholar. Our review covered literature from 1988-2015, as well as a seminal piece from 1980. We summarized each source, noted which were empirical, and noted emerging common themes.

**Findings**

The findings of this literature review can be categorized into three basic groups. Group 1 Findings. The most salient theoretical finding was TribalCrit, which was closely linked to Postcolonial theory. Group 2 Findings. Secondly, the literature revealed that the schooling practices around indigenous communities are imperial, colonizing, and vanquishing, and are thus intended to completely destroy the cultures, epistemologies, knowledges, and ways of knowing of indigenous peoples. Group 3 Findings. Thirdly, the literature describes a number of culturally responsive indigenous leadership practices that have been reported in indigenous schools and communities throughout the world. We suggest that ISL and Indigenous schooling should impact Western schooling models. Implications also suggest that it is important for school leaders to be anti-oppressive and advocates for social justice, but that they must also promote culturally responsiveness with an emphasis on indigeneity.

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