Flocking to Transform Lives in Inequality: Including Evidence-Based Indigenous Knowledge in Inclusive Education Agendas[1]

Reunindo-Se para Transformar Vidas na Desigualdade: Incluindo o Conhecimento Nativo Baseado em Evidências nas Agendas de Educação Inclusiva

Liesel EBERSÖHN[2]

ABSTRACT: This article uses the case of Afrocentric knowledge on resilience to argue for the presence of indigenous knowledge into inclusive education agendas to enable transformation in highly unequal spaces. The premise is that local, indigenous knowledge serves as evidence of effective and efficient buffering against inequality that gives insight into low-threshold options for transformation. When people are disproportionally structurally at risk they have limited access to resources and their potential to thrive is limited – as is the case in emerging economy contexts. Ironically, although the need for transformation is highest in extremely unequal contexts, knowledge from the Global South and emerging economies remain underrepresented in global discourses on development. Rather, development agendas and mechanisms (including for inclusive education) are grounded in Eurocentric and Global North notions of change, inclusion, wellbeing, resource distribution, and service delivery. Indigenous knowledge provides evidence of how, intergenerationally, people push towards available resources as a way to draw on limited resources and promote inclusive, positive development for many. The article uses the evidence from an Afrocentric indigenous psychology theory, Relationship Resourced Resilience, to posit the use of indigenous knowledge in inclusive education to enable transformation in response to hardship that promotes inclusive, collective wellbeing.

KEYWORDS: Sustainability science. Social support collective efficacy. Interdependent, collectivist worldview. Socio-emotional competence.

RESUMO: Este artigo utiliza o caso do conhecimento afrocêntrico sobre resiliência para defender a presença do conhecimento nativo nas agendas de educação inclusiva para permitir a transformação em espaços altamente desiguais. A premissa é de que o conhecimento local e nativo serve como evidência de uma proteção eficaz e eficiente contra a desigualdade, que fornece informações sobre opções de transformação de baixo limiar. Quando as pessoas estão em risco estrutural desproporcional, elas têm acesso limitado aos recursos, e o seu potencial para prosperar é limitado – como é o caso em contextos de economia emergente. Ironicamente, embora a necessidade de transformação seja maior em contextos extremamente desiguais, o conhecimento do Sul Global e das economias emergentes continua sub-representado nos discursos globais sobre desenvolvimento. Pelo contrário, as agendas e os mecanismos de desenvolvimento (incluindo para a educação inclusiva) baseiam-se em noções eurocêntricas e do Norte Global de mudança, inclusão, bem-estar, distribuição de recursos e prestação de serviços. O conhecimento nativo fornece provas de como, intergeracionalmente, as pessoas recorrem aos recursos disponíveis como forma de aproveitar recursos limitados e promover um desenvolvimento inclusivo e positivo para muitos. O artigo utiliza as evidências de uma teoria da psicologia nativo-afrocêntrica, Resiliência com Recursos de Relacionamento, para postular o uso do conhecimento nativo na educação inclusiva para permitir a transformação em resposta às dificuldades, a qual promove o bem-estar coletivo e inclusivo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ciência da sustentabilidade. Eficácia coletiva do apoio social. Visão de mundo interdependente e coletivista. Competência socioemocional.

1 Introduction

How can inclusive education increase opportunities for a good life for children in extremely unequal spaces? This question is not novel. Inclusive education has long been pertinent in spaces of high inequality (Dubin, 2020). The premise of this article is that indigenous knowledge per se, and of resilience in particular, has relevance for effective, efficient, and sustai-

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ned low-threshold alternatives for inclusive education to prevent negative outcomes expected given characteristic inequality. The argument is not that indigenous knowledge on resilience will reduce inequality, but rather, that it may curb the negative effects of endemic inequality – as is pertinent to a Global South country such as South Africa, which in 2023 had the highest inequality in income distribution globally (Statista, 2024).

Indications that indigenous knowledge is effective in responding to challenge is evident in how strategies support unpredicted positive development outcomes – contrary to what is expected given contextual challenges. Indigenous knowledge shows efficient strategies as proximal resources are used to combat risk and promote development – without dependence on outsider input. Indigenous knowledge indicates sustainable strategies for development as the responses exist intergenerationally to counter chronic hardship and draw on accessible resources – given a finite resource-base.

Unquestionably, the most urgent need for transformation away from injustice is in structurally disparate contexts – such as those synonymous with emerging economy contexts. In Global South countries people face disproportionate structural risk – especially indigenous populations (Marshall, 2016). Such extensive inequality predicts limited access to resources, limited potential to thrive with expected negative education, health, and wellbeing outcomes.

Yet, most of the evidence that informs structural change heralds from Global North spaces where chronic and cumulative is absent and where Eurocentric epistemologies drive development values, beliefs, and practices. It is therefore unsurprising that many development interventions from outsider-perspectives in Global South and emerging economy contexts are met with resistance, have only short-term-gains in certain pockets of initial partnering spaces – not sustaining change over-time – and are not scaled-up (Chambers, 2010). Transformation is stymied when insider-participation is absent in outsider development efforts (Gaventa, 2006) and when local knowledge, including indigenous knowledge, is not valued.

Resilience thinking through a sustainability science (Fiksel, 2006) lens has relevance for transformation away from inequality in development agendas. From a sustainability science stance, the drive to transform away from injustice sets the tone for development – rather than the mere capitulation to practices that absorb or adapt to exigent circumstances. Here the merit of locally relevant values, beliefs and practices are held in the same esteem as that of global change mechanisms.

Including the 'local' in 'global development' is possible by drawing on indigenous knowledge. Whereas structurally disparate inequality prevents thriving, using indigenous knowledge on how to use available resources enable equity. In postcolonial, Global South and emerging economy spaces the vast majority of local people are typically indigenous (The World Bank, 2016; United Nations, 2013). Indigenous knowledge mirrors indigenous culture (Nilsson, 2008) – thus representing the values, beliefs and practices of the greater part of populations in Global South spaces. Intergenerationally indigenous people use culturally and contextually indigenous knowledge to manage their context (Odora Hoppers, 2008).

Yet, the merit of this bottomless wealth of knowledge on transformation remains underplayed globally. Prevailing epistemicide (Sousa Santos, 2016) in postcolonial spaces

means that the persistent exclusion of indigenous from power-structures that continue to, incongruously, use largely incompatible evidence from Global North and Eurocentric traditions which are at odds with Global South cultural and contextual enablers and constraints. Consequently, in postcolonial spaces worldwide there is push-back against epistemicide. Since the 1999 United Nations call to question knowledge hegemony by including alternative ways of knowing into the existing global evidence-base (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1999), the body of indigenous knowledge has steadily been expanding with indigenous knowledge production steadily challenging conventions of standards signifying 'quality' knowledge creation, knowledge application and meaning-making (Smith et al., 2016).

The question guiding this article is: How can Afrocentric indigenous knowledge on resilience inform transformation agendas in highly unequal contexts? The thesis of this article is for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge on resilience into inclusive education agendas to enable transformation in highly unequal spaces. First, I position the thesis within the lenses of resilience- and sustainability knowledge as valuable when considering development studies. I then argue against the exclusive use of outsider-perspectives in development agendas, and for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge as an effective, efficient and sustainable approach to inform inclusive education transformation in emerging economies. Next, I draw on evidence from the Relationship-Resourced Resilience theory, an Afrocentric theory on indigenous pathway to resilience (Ebersöhn, 2019) to explain how flocking is used as effective, efficient and sustained strategy to equalise opportunity when resources are unevenly distributed.

2 SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE AND RESILIENCE LENSES FOR TRANSFORMATIVE RESPONSES TO INJUSTICE

Global development envisions evidence-based practices to address inequality, promote justice, and sustain transformation. From a sustainability perspective, science pluralism is embraced to posit globalised development as a dynamic interface of global-local knowledges (Miller et al., 2014). One global-local example is evident in 'climate justice' narratives espousing practices that will 'think globally, act locally' (Fujita et al., 2013). However, as I have argued elsewhere an egalitarian global-local power-base is lacking in development. The development scale continues to tip towards 'global' rather than 'local' (Ebersöhn, 2019, p. 65) where, for example, South African, Peruvian, Ghanaian or Brazilian evidence and outcomes are judged in terms of how close they come to being Western.

To understand the systemic nature of global-local interface the intersection of resilience theory (Masten, 2014; Ungar, 2012) with development studies (Chambers, 2010) merits consideration. In both development- and resilience studies disruption signals the need for response. The disruption predicts negative development outcomes. The response aims to (i) buffer against the predicted vulnerability of systems to the risk caused by the disruption, as well as (ii) (ideally) enable unexpected positive developmental outcomes – be it for people, nature or built-environment.

Resilience responses synonymous with a sustainability science lens include absorptive-, adaptive- and transformative responses (Fiksel, 2006; Marchese et al., 2018). In the case of

acute change, absorptive responses mobilise the capacity of a socio-ecological system to absorb and recover from the consequences of acute change resulting in restored normative actions, services, and functioning. In the case of chronic challenges, adaptive responses mobilise systemic capacity to restructure networks that enable positive and relevant actions, services, and functioning. Extreme and relentless challenges, however, require transformative responses. Systemic responses target restructuring networks in evolutionary and sustainable ways to enable positive and relevant actions, services, and functioning.

I have argued that resilience responses to structural disparity in unequal spaces reflect the continuum of absorbing challenge, adapting to disaster, as well as magically transforming negative predictions into positive outcomes (Ebersöhn, 2014). The range of responses reflects the nature of contextual disruption. Not only is the disruption characteristic of emerging economies historical, flowing from deeply rooted, unequal colonial histories whilst existing in current geopolitical inequality. The inequality disruption in emerging economies is also chronic – the presence of challenge is relentless, generation after generation. In addition, the disruption is cumulative across systems: hardship pertains to inequality in health services, education provision, welfare support, political representation, economic opportunity, and land-use. It follows that the exigent circumstances of such long-standing, chronic, and systemic structural disparity require developmental responses that go beyond mere absorption and adaptation. Relevant developmental responses would disrupt disruption, transform structures, and enable thriving where contexts prevent thriving.

3 Hidden in plain sight: including indigenous knowledge for transformation

How may one progress from development responses that absorb or adapt inequality to decision-making mechanisms that transform structures and enable environments conducive to promoting just positive outcomes? As indicated, the thesis of this article is to explore the inclusion of indigenous knowledge on resilience in development processes to counter negative conditions that prevent equality.

Structurally policy – and therefore practice – remain rooted in the cultural perspectives of historical, colonial minority decision-makers, or are guided by far-flung Eurocentric, Global North discourses. In contrast, in homes, playgrounds, corridors, and tea rooms the decisions of everyday-people are governed by indigenous knowledge and local socio-cultural values, beliefs, and practices on how to live a good life despite injustice. This phenomenon is not surprising given that the notion of geographical 'place' is central to indigenous knowledge (Makinde et al., 2013). Indigenous culture signals values, beliefs, and practices which are innate and customary (Hodgson, 2002), manifesting the roots and origin of being (Odora Hoppers, 2008), occurring naturally in a specific environment, and providing a base for indigenous knowledge on how to manage a context. People do what comes naturally in their context. People do what they see works. Intergenerational transfer (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013) means that people follow the example of others they trust on how to respond to hardship in a way that enables collective efficacy and equity. The only knowledge that will still be in use in the present is that which worked in the past.

Policy-powerbrokers, however, use change-models that do not intentionally draw on a wealth of local knowledge on how to address inequality in ways that respond to local challenges and make use of local resources. Ironically, hidden in plain sight, are elusive 'secrets' to scalable transformation mechanisms given structural disparity. Examples of indigenous knowledge on monitoring vulnerability, sourcing and distributing resources and accountable service delivery abound as lived testimonies (Forster, 2020; Mapara, 2009). Indigenous knowledge pushes the focus of solutions towards the use of available resources and shows evidence of how to draw on limited resources to enable positive outcomes – be it education, health, or wellbeing.

4 FLOCKING: THE CASE OF AFROCENTRIC INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE ON RESILIENCE

How can indigenous knowledge be included in transformation agendas? How can age-old, tried-and-tested cultural and contextual knowledge on how to push towards available resources to draw on scarce assets be mined? One example of indigenous knowledge which may be promising to enable good lives for many in a high inequality space, is an Afrocentric resilience response, flocking, as posited in the Relationship Resourced Resilience (RRR) theory (Ebersöhn, 2019). The RRR theory was generated based on data from ten years' participatory research with elders and young people in urban and rural settings in South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho, and Swaziland. The theory posits evidence of a locally tried-and-tested response to adversity which is effective and efficient to sustain a good life for many who are excluded from opportunity. The objectives of this section are: (i) to define flocking as a low-threshold, everyday resilience response relevant in an unequal space; and (ii) to describe indicators of flocking. These descriptions serve as a framework to evaluate if flocking is a suitable resilience option to include in a transformation agenda of a given space.

Flocking is social support. Flocking denotes social support as an effective, efficient, and sustainable alternative to counter extensive hardship. Flocking means that when individuals respond to challenge, they make the most of their social connectedness and are aware of one another's vulnerability, as well as resources. The flocking response to challenge is to both give and receive support from one another so that all may thrive. Social support is thus a behaviour that extends from interdependent socio-cultural values and beliefs.

As social support is a goal-directed practice (Taylor & Stanton, 2007) flocking is effective to target specific needs and enable good lives which, unchecked, would have certainly culminated in negative outcomes. Flocking is an efficient response to inequality as available resources are distributed within long-standing social structures. Flocking is a sustainable option to counter prolonged challenges as it was refined intergenerationally to withstand demands from many underserved systems by drawing on finite resources.

Flocking is evident when people distribute available, combined social resources to address needs identified in a social network – signifying a form of supply-chain management to equalise the sharing of scarce resources in an unequal space (Ebersöhn, 2020). This resource supply-chain flows from established relationships to (i) determine which resources are needed to address a particular need, (ii) how to effectively and efficiently source and supply resources necessary to address the identified need, and (iii) monitor and evaluate accountable resource--use to prevent chronic social dependence (Ebersöhn, 2019).

Flocking thus indicates collective agency and collective efficacy (Masten & Reed, 2005). Whereas collective agency is conjoint capacity to use available pathways to attain desired goals, collective efficacy is evident in communities that link social connectedness with informal social control based on beliefs that they are capable of generating workable routes to reach their goals.

As indicators of flocking, collective agency is evident where a group of individuals act in solidarity to work towards a shared goal of providing available social resources to vulnerable group members. Similarly, collective efficacy is demonstrated when a group, that trusts in its socially connected capabilities to enable collective wellbeing, acts together to distribute available communal social resources to vulnerable group members and equalise the inequality playing field.

Flocking distributes available social resources. To flock, people harvest shared social resources to give and receive social support to address collective distress and enable collective wellbeing. The social resources are culturally and contextually informed. From an Afrocentric stance social resources used to flock include cultural, collective-, economic-, and social resources (Kuku et al., 2013). In emerging economy spaces the values and participation of indigenous groups often remain excluded from the centre of decision-making and opportunities. Flocking ensures that cultural resources (shared values, beliefs, and concomitant practices of a group: what 'we' value and what 'we' do by default) are put in the centre of collective efficacy. In postcolonial spaces, indigenous populations often continue to have limited representation politically. However, flocking makes the most of collective resources of informally established yet long-standing organised care and support structures or networks to strengthen responses against hardship. Examples of resource sharing include drawing on credit unions and community safety schemes, parent groups, faith-based groups, self-help groups, home-based care groups, and youth groups.

Given the high levels of poverty, low employment rates, and limited job opportunities in unequal spaces, flocking makes the most of sharing economic resources. Sharing economic resources extends beyond merely providing money to sharing opportunities for income generation and employment with neighbours, friends, and families, as well as explicitly providing tangible services (bartering, borrowing, lending practices, donations, as well as shared savings). In unequal spaces, whereas instances of illness, loss, and bereavement are high, quality healthcare services are few and far between, costly, and access is thus limited. Flocking addresses this need by sharing social resources to provide emotional comfort (listening to each other, counselling each other, comforting and advising each other), and hands-on assistance with housework, patient care, and nurturing to extended family.

5 Indigenous knowledge on resilience for transformative inclusive education agendas

In this section, I provide a vignette based on evidence from long-term studies in rural and urban spaces, with elders and young women and men in Southern Africa (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Ebersöhn & Loots, 2017; Ebersöhn et al., 2015; Ebersöhn et al., 2017; Ferreira et al., 2013; Ferreira et al., 2016; Loots et al., 2012; Versfeld et al., 2022) to illustrate how indigenous knowledge regarding resilience contribute to enable inclusive education – absorbing

societal inequalities to transform the unevenness of opportunity structures. The vignette demonstrates how flocking brings together and takes advantage of collective resources that favour inclusive education in highly unequal spaces.

The principal unlocks the school gates of the primary school in a rural, South African village. She can barely believe that this school, nested in such a space of high poverty, is now able to include so many students. Just a year ago students, who were supposed to be at school, were excluded from education. Students were too worried about their parents' unemployment and illness in their homes with limited health care and scarce job opportunities. Students were hungry. They were scared to walk to school because of the violence and crime in their community. They were reconciled to the hardship of many of them needing to share a handful of desks, chairs, textbooks and teachers. They felt so helpless to do their best academically because parents – with low literacy levels – were unable to help them with their homework.

The school principal gives a satisfied and proud smile. Together with the school-community her school has taken advantage of their collective resources. They collaborated to enable inclusive education opportunities for students – despite the ongoing inequality in society.

The principal is very happy about the new fence, working gate and secure lock donated by the small business community collaborative. Students no longer feel worried about crime and violence spilling over from the school community onto the school grounds. The principal looks at the large numbers of students walking around in shoes, school uniforms, blazers and jerseys donated by the local church. She is extremely proud of the school-based vegetable garden operated by out-of-work parents. She has read in the essays students write, and heard in their speeches, how proud the students feel of their parents, who by their combined efforts, are supplementing the government-funded school feeding with a tasty variety of fresh produce.

The principal listens to the laughter of teachers coming from a classroom. She is full of admiration with how teachers have joined hands with teachers in neighbouring schools to provide each other with emotional support, share lessons learned on how to deal with limited textbooks and teach difficult subjects. Since the teachers initiated this peer-support network the principal has observed the teachers in her school enjoying their work more, being absent less and feeling more confident to teach.

The principal is in awe with the way that the after-school homework club and additional reading initiatives run by young school-leavers who volunteer at the school have contributed to increased levels of student reading comprehension. The students, their families and community organisations all donate books, magazines and newspapers to the reading club.

The principal's heart swells when she looks at extended families active on the school grounds. Not only does the local clinic has a nurse to assist parents with referrals for health assessments and to translate difficult-to-understand prescriptions into actions. Teachers assist parents to complete social welfare forms – which puzzle them – in order to add to household incomes. A group of parents stand around the bulletin board announcing opportunities to generate income.

Flocking enabled inclusive education in high poverty contexts. Flocking supported previously excluded students to learn and to be happy, teachers to teach well and continue in

the profession, school leaders to head well-managed schools and the collective wellbeing of extended families (Ebersöhn, 2019; Ebersöhn & Loots, 2017; Versfeld et al., 2022).

6 WHAT ARE INDICATORS OF FLOCKING?

A proposition is that indicators of flocking may be used to evaluate the feasibility of social support to include students in education when school buildings are limited, trained special education teachers are in scarce supply, and families in school-communities have multidimensional economic, health, and wellbeing needs due to high poverty. Table 1 provides an overview of indicators and contra-indicators pertinent to flocking, as well as measures to evaluate flocking as a response to challenge. Indicators include that flocking (i) is a response to a context of extreme inequality and collective distress; is an interdependent socio-cultural response; (iii) is resilience-enabling to promote collective wellbeing outcomes; and (iv) is dependent on social connectedness and socio-emotional competence.

Table 1

Indicators and measures relevant to flocking

Indicator	Definition	Contra-Indicator	Measure
Response to challenge associated with an extremely unequal context.	Chronic and cumulative intergenerational hardship synonymous with a postcolonial, Global South space predicative of collective distress across Quality of Life domains.	Equal opportunities to access ample structures for care, support and development that enable a good Quality of Life across domains.	• Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). • EQ-5D (Rabin & de Charro, 2001). • Conservation of Resources Evaluation (Hobfoll et al., 1992)
Interdependent (collectivist) socio-cultural response.	Socio-cultural values, beliefs and practices characterised by collectivism, communality, reciprocity, conforming behaviour.	Socio-cultural values, beliefs and practices signified by independent self-construal.	• Individualism and Collectivism Scale (Triandis & Gelfland, 1998). • Independent and Interdependent Self-Construal Questionnaire (Singelis, 1994).
Social support as preferred response to challenge.	Favoured response to challenge is collective agency and collective efficacy to distribute social resources.	Collective efficacy and -agency not privileged as part of efficacy responses.	• Collective Efficacy Scale (Goddard, 2002). • Collective Resilience Scale (Lyons et al., 2016). • Community Resilience Scale (Silva et al., 2022). • Social Resilience (Copeland et al., 2020). • Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) & Adult Resilience Measur (ARM) (Resilience Research Centre, 2018).
Enables unpredicted, positive collective wellbeing outcomes (is resilience-enabling).	Transforms opportunity in an unequal space to support unpredicted positive development outcomes for a collective across Quality of Life domains (subjective and objective health and wellbeing; environment and infrastructure; education outcomes; socio-economic outcomes; political outcomes).	Response to challenge is ineffective to support unpredicted positive development and collective wellbeing across Quality of Life domains.	• Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (UNDP, 2023). • EQ-5D (Rabin & de Charro, 2001).

Indicator	Definition	Contra-Indicator	Measure
Dependent on social connectedness.	Robust relationships enabling a sense of belonging and social cohesion.	Social isolation and fragile social relationships.	• Social Connection Scale Revised (SCS-R) (Lee et al., 2001). • CYRM & ARM (Resilience Research Centre, 2018).
Reliant on interdependent socio-emotional competence	Socio-emotional adeptness to establish and maintain relationships demonstrating socio-cultural values, beliefs and practices associated with an other-focused orientation, conforming to in-group norms, as well as emotional regulation that promotes harmony and socially engaging emotions.	Socio-emotionally inept to build and nurture relationships, and/ or socio-emotional competence grounded in individualistic values, beliefs and practices.	• Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (OECD, 2021). • BarOn EQ-i (Bar-On, 1996).

Flocking is a response to challenges related to extreme inequality as characteristic of an emerging economy and postcolonial, Global South space (Branson & Zuze, 2012; Laryea-Adjel & Sadan, 2012; Palardy, 2013). Chronic, intergenerational inequality predicts multi-dimensional vulnerability inhibiting opportunities to experience a good life. The presence of equal opportunities to access quality structures for care, support, and development that enable a good life across Quality of Life domains is contra-indicative for flocking as a response to disruption. Flocking is a socially structured response prompted by inequality to buffer against vulnerability, prevent predicted negative developmental outcomes, and ultimately promote unexpected positive development and a good life. Flocking thus developed to tackle the chronic and cumulative nature of inequality in an emerging economy.

Flocking is a response to chronic adversity. Structural disparity means scarce resources are unevenly distributed, resulting in enormous opportunity differences between highest and lowest-income societal groups to experience a good Quality of Life. Flocking modifies such unjust opportunities that relentlessly confront (and marginalise) generation after generation. Intergenerationally, people have refined flocking as a reaction to give and receive social support to each other. Flocking uses what is available between people to provide access to limited resources and enable collective positive developmental outcomes. Flocking permits response to *cumulative* challenges that exist simultaneously across systems – socio-economic, health, education, and political challenges. People have learned to flock to share their food with those they know are hungry, to tell neighbours about job opportunities they become aware of, to provide home-based care to friends who are ill, and to share books, stationery, and school uniforms with children in need.

Flocking is a socio-cultural practice grounded in an interdependent, collectivist worldview – germane to dominant socio-cultural values, beliefs, and practices of a majority of indigenous populations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands (Juslin et al., 2016; Markus & Kitayama, 2004; Stephens et al., 2012). The absence of an interdependent worldview is a contra-indicator for flocking.

Flocking is indicated as a fitting response to a challenge for individuals with dominant interdependent self-construal. Interdependent self-construal implies that individuals understand themselves as being part of a social network, a community of meaningful social

relationships with social roles and group affiliations for whom collective values take precedence over individual traits, beliefs, and attitudes (Cross et al., 2003).

Socio-cultural values, norms, and beliefs which underpin flocking include (Ebersöhn, 2019; Mkhize, 2006; Motsi & Masango, 2012) collectivism, communality, conforming, and reciprocity. A collectivist response to challenge flocking is other-focused rather than self-focused with an extended kinship system where it is inconceivable that a person can live in isolation from others. Collectively the distress of one is a collective challenge, to help others is to help oneself, and the wellbeing of one is that of a collective.

As a communal response to challenge flocking is based on a belief that the aspirations, assets, needs, and benefits of those with whom you are socially connected are considered shared social resources, available to be tapped into to promote collective wellbeing. Flocking is the result of norms to conform to in-group standards with harmony seeking as the end-point of responses to challenge. Individuals who do not obey in-group expectations are excluded from receiving social support. As flocking is built on notions of reciprocity, those who respond to observed need by giving social support and donating their available social resources may expect that they will similarly receive social support from others in a social network, individuals who do not give social support and don't share social resources will be excluded from social support practices. In this way flocking does not espouse chronic dependence on others. The collective expectation is that individuals will demonstrate intentional efforts to (i) decrease their dependence on others and (ii) increase their contribution to joint social resources to assist others in need.

Flocking as response to challenge enables unexpected positive outcomes – contrary to what is predicted in a context of extreme adversity. Thus, flocking is resilience-enabling. Contextually flocking is a response triggered by the chronic and cumulative challenges of extreme inequality. Socio-culturally flocking aims at buffering against the collective distress of extensive vulnerability, whilst – incredibly – enabling collective wellbeing for many for whom circumstances are dire and prospects for a good life difficult. From a sustainability perspective flocking is thus a transformative resilience response (rather than absorptive and adaptive) (Fiksel, 2006; Marchese et al., 2018), changing the inequality odds. A contra-indicator for flocking would be a response to challenge that is ineffective in supporting unpredicted positive development and collective wellbeing across Quality of Life domains.

Contextually flocking responds to challenge by considering multidimensional constraints inherent to the structural disparity that inhibit a good life. Similarly, flocking mobilises the socio-cultural resources of a collectivist worldview to use social structures as a pathway to provide social resources to those who have the short end of the opportunity-stick. In this way, despite scant resources, flocking is efficient in using what is available communally to improve the odds for more people to experience a good life. Flocking thus transforms opportunity in an unequal space to support unpredicted positive development outcomes for a collective across various Quality of Life domains (Higgs, 2007), including personal ratings of overall subjective wellbeing and happiness (Møller & Dickow, 2002), and satisfaction with environmental QoL (housing, schools, health services, safety and security, roads, and transport) (Westaway & Gumede, 2001).

Resilience knowledge with which flocking resonates includes evidence on collective- and community resilience (Norris et al., 2008), as well as relational- (Daiute, 2013) and social resilience (Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013; Obrist et al., 2010). Like collective resilience, pertinent to disaster and shock studies, flocking is also indicated by a crowd tendency to create alliances and use community structures to buffer against the shock of an acute and unfamiliar disturbance. And, similar to community resilience, flocking also creates organisational ties to engage local people to bolster and safeguard social support in order to reduce risk and resource inequalities and moderate the effect of unfamiliar challenge.

Comparable to relational resilience, flocking indicates an awareness that relational resources (including extended family, and kinship systems) assist people during troubled times to attain positive outcomes. Analogous to social resilience, flocking foregrounds the social dimension of resilience where people have coping capacity (to manage various adversities), adaptive capacity (to learn from previous events, modify and handle current and prospective challenges), and transformative capacity (to craft structures capable of promoting individual- and societal wellbeing irrespective of future disruption).

As a socially structured resilience response, flocking requires social connectedness and socio-emotional competence. Flocking depends on social connectedness, the existential need for social cohesion, and a sense of belonging that drives people to know how to establish and maintain positive and long-lasting relationships (Smith & Mackie, 2000). Flocking requires robust social relationships, networks, rituals, and practices that enable social inclusion and a sense of belonging (Antonovsky, 1987; Taylor et al., 2005).

The absence of social connectedness – with concomitant, social exclusion, isolation, and loneliness – is a contra-indicator for flocking. Flocking requires social networks with associated social- and cultural capital (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004) that span proximal family and community relationships, as well as distal relationships via extended kinship systems. Social- and cultural capital enables social support in terms of (i) early identification of need, (ii) knowledge of available resources to respond to needs, (iii) distribution of resources, (iv) monitoring and evaluation of resource-use (Ebersöhn, 2019).

Flocking is also contingent on socio-emotional competence and the absence of socio-emotional competence is a contra-indicator for flocking as a plausible resilience response. Socio-emotional competence (Bawgell & Michelle, 2011; Durlak et al., 2015) required for flocking denotes individual social adeptness – traits necessary to build and maintain relationships and sustain social connectedness. Social support is not possible when individuals become isolated from others because they are unable to establish and nurture relationships. In the absence of socio-emotional competence individuals will be isolated from social connections and excluded from the social support that provides social resources (Bawgell & Michelle, 2011; Durlak et al., 2015). Individuals or groups who are socio-emotionally inept to build and nurture relationships, and/or for whom socio-emotional competence is grounded in individualistic values, beliefs, and practices is contra-indicative of flocking as a feasible response to challenge.

Flocking requires socio-emotional competence underpinned by interdependent values and beliefs (Ebersöhn, 2019). Flocking requires individuals who are socio-emotionally adept to have an other-focused orientation (De Leersnyder et al., 2013) – favouring outside-

-in and self-distancing perspectives such as routine mutual perspective-taking in the form of consultation and consensus to direct socially approved flocking decisions. Socio-emotional competence for effective flocking will enable harmony-seeking (Morris et al., 2001) behaviour during teamwork and collaboration to attain shared goals of social responsibility, social welfare and social usefulness that conform to in-group (Nsamenang, 2006) norms and standards of behaviour. Socio-emotional competence will foreground emotional regulation with a prevention focus to enable prosocial interaction and socially engaging emotions in order not to break the rules of social norms (Trommsdorf & Heikamp, 2013).

7 CONCLUSION

A flocking-informed inclusive education agenda could start by partnering with school-, and school-community partners to map existing social networks. Established informal and formal social structures can serve as an access point to decision-makers with local knowledge of pockets of both vulnerability and strength in a school-community. These social networks could include in-school networks, as well as informal school-community structures. The education agenda could plan for social gatherings to make the most of partners who value socialising and a sense of belonging.

Given that context and culture indicate the use of flocking to respond to challenge it promises an accessible, easy-to-go-to option to benefit many. Decision-makers (whether at policy-, district, or school-level) may assess the context and culture of a high need school space to determine if flocking could include marginalised students. Wherever harsh inequality may predict grave developmental outcomes for students and teachers – be it in inner-city schools, schools in refugee camps, or remote schools – flocking may be indicated as a recourse to support quality education. Socio-culturally flocking would be a good fit when the school--community subscribes to collectivism, demonstrate strong relationships, and has robust socio--emotional skills.

Indigenous knowledge of resilience gives evidence of how unjust conditions may be transformed to support the wellbeing of many with minimal outsider-influence and maximum use of available resources. Flocking is an Afrocentric resilience response indicated for use in spaces of extreme inequality and by people with a dominant interdependent socio-cultural worldview, with solid relationships and sound socio-emotional competence. Flocking is transformative as people without access to resources are able to support each other by using what they have available to create good lives – despite scarcity. Indicators, contra-indicators, and measures relevant to evaluating the suitability of flocking to combat challenge are provided.

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