

Geopolitical Framings of Subalterity in Education III: Context of Displacement

By

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Introduction

Interpreting the role that education plays in societal change in relation to questions of global violence and displacement, requires what Gramsci refers to as a “philosophy of praxis”. As an epistemological and political project that offers to support an anti-imperialist approach to education, it falls within the broader mandate of conceptualizing education that is inherently transformative both materially and ideologically in response to hegemonic structural impediments. This similarly falls within the framework of Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* where the realm of education is rooted in critical consciousness for radical change.

What then would similarly constitute a philosophy of praxis in relation to questions of conflict, exile, and displacement? And further, within the context of what Chimni refers to as a ‘post-colonial imperial order’?¹ This paper presents geopolitical framings of subalterity in education as an analytical framework to explore these questions by focusing on the spatial dialectics of peace, settlement, and welfare-state practices. I will argue that the project of education particularly as it relates to violence and displacement cannot be analysed in the absence of the geopolitics of imperial hegemony compounded by the logics of the neoliberal state.² As the state reflects ‘the variety of geopolitical ways of viewing the world’—the institution of state-funded schools could also be assumed to reflect contrasting ‘geopolitical visions’ as they relate to the ‘geopolitical subject’.³ Hence, this paper attempts to understand how the provision of education, particularly as it relates to the question of forced displacement—beyond its literary component but as a radical strategy of transnational consciousness building—needs to be further analysed by

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examining the role of state-funded schools as sites for broader praxis and civic engagement.

This paper is part of a broader project *Subalterity, Public Education, and Welfare Cities: Comparing the Experience of Displaced Migrants in Three Cities*. The project explores the dire consequences of geopolitical displacement in its multiple forms and practices in three urban regions—Havana, Kolkata, and Toronto—that are a result of the historical legacies of colonialism and continuing imperialism; alongside the spatialities of refuge and subaltern educational praxis that have historically challenged, altered, and redefined these hegemonic relations. Through the disparate examples we gain insight into the complexities and relationalities of subalterity through displacement. A ‘geopolitical vision’, as Kearns notes, is often organized around a ‘distinctive geopolitical subject’ while various institutions are created by the hegemonic nation state to advance the interest of this global subject.⁴ Often the ‘geopolitical subject’ is reflected in the subalterity of the displaced subject. This paper is the third of a series theorizing the geopolitical framings of subalterity in education within the context of displacement—[the first noting its compounding effect on the neoliberalized welfare state; while the second ruminating on the challenges for peace within the shadows of imperialism]⁵—that conceptually builds on the inter-related and overlapping questions that were posed earlier including: what are the challenges of building transnational alliances when the neoliberal educational system predominates globally (materially, normatively, and ideologically)? What are the implications of this on the peace-building process? What are the counter-hegemonic propositions of peace-building within and through a state-based school system? What does a geographical approach offer us in terms of rethinking new strategies for change? In other words, the geopolitics of post-colonialism and imperialism are explored that investigate the ongoing territorial strategies and tactics of spatial exclusion *alongside* the creative politics of resistance. Hence, the theory of forced modes of displacement offered in this paper is grounded in subaltern geopolitics.

The paper evolves with heuristic cases related to the geopolitics of forced displacement and the vision of subalterity in education as the spatial implications for resistance in each of these examples. In the first section, the context of the geopolitics of subalterity is explicated through the lens of three forms of displacement grounded in the historical-colonial realities that have prioritized the structural and continuing legacies of forced displacement. First, *imperial-displacement* is discussed through the dire (yet rarely considered) long term deprivations created by economic and financial sanctions (i.e., embargoes or blockades) on the nation state implicated. Second, *dual-displacement* as encountered through the violence of forced migration from regions of conflict followed by the challenging realities of the resettlement process in settler-colonial societies of the global North. Third, *displacement* through the *continuing post-colonial conditions* refugees cross nebulous borders (i.e. partition-refugees) and live in precarity within urban regions of the global South, often undifferentiated from internally displaced people (IDPs). In this paper, interrogating displacement through its root-causes—as a *structural-political*

imperative (i.e., starting point rather than effect)—premise the motivation and complex dynamics of imperialism and the geopolitics of hegemonic states.⁶ The second section explores the broad framings of education within zones of displacement. The broad guidelines used by the United Nations is noted as a global framework for education in zones of conflict; including more recent discussions of the Global Compact adopted in 2018.

The third section analyses contrasting and oppositional models of education—from Cuba, Toronto and Kolkata. Each context of displacement is followed by a brief discussion of state-based educational responses (i.e., free, universal, secular, public education). The terrain of education within the context of these frames of displacement thus explores the educational production of knowledge societies as a critical mode of intervention within state-based school systems. The four frames of educational displacement include: UN based Sustainable Development & Protection Model; Socialist Citizenship Model; Settlement-Integration Model; Poverty Alleviation Model. Finally, the paper analyses the four frames along three common themes: ‘Institutional Structures & Geopolitical Relations’ (in relation to imperialism/colonialism); ‘State-based Educational Displacement Framework’; and ‘Citizenship and Identity’ (Peace, Belonging, Violence, Survival) and presents a framework incorporating critical ideology—where education is seen as praxis and radically transformative. The ethos of critical ideology (compared to neoliberal frameworks) offers an alternative formulation of education for broader structural change whereby the role of education further delves into the question of displacement, from the ideological to the political. The paper presents possible directives towards a theory of the geopolitics of subalterity in education—as a socio-spatial framework useful in critically examining the empirical and ideological context of displacement.

Framing the Geopolitics and the Spatialities of Displacement

The geopolitical conundrum more than a decade after the global financial crisis, and now further accentuated by the global pandemic of Covid-19, is compounded by several radical forces that have forged together to create severe structural imbalances. From the rise of ultra-right and fascist forces and militarized regimes; retrenchment of the welfare state due to the austerity measures of neoliberal policies; rising inequalities and social polarization as a result of increasing unemployment, precarious employment and mounting debt levels; and unprecedented flow of forced migrants as a result of war, violence, famine and environmental disasters among many other changes—collectively, these have become the new structural basis of neo-imperial regimes and an impending threat to global peace and security. Hyndman has long argued that migration has long been a “barometer of geopolitics, from human displacement generated by war to containment practices in particular territories or camps”.⁷ Consequently, the context of geopolitics of subalterity⁸ takes on various forms of displacement depending on strategic imperialist

intervention; and in this paper, these are classified as heuristic frameworks to understand the broader contextual challenges: (i) *imperial-displacement* through blockades/embargoes/sanctions and military occupation; (ii) *dual-displacement* through forced migration and the resettlement process in settler-neoliberal welfare-states; (iii) *ongoing-displacement* and *dispossession through the condition of post-colonialism* as evident within the urban context. These include large-scale internal displacement of people (IDPs) in developing regions across the world, many of them in protracted conditions. The premise of displacement as a structural-political imperative is conceptualized accordingly and briefly discussed below [see Table 1].

The different forms of displacement, further, result in different structures of territorial fragmentation, spatial bounding, isolation, and scales of exclusion actively producing the alienating spaces of subalterity. The process of subalterity is articulated as the process of this geopolitical subjectivity, conditioning the ways of being a subaltern that is in an unsettled relation with the neoliberal/neo-colonial state.⁹ And, in the case of geopolitical displacement—with an unsettled relation with the imperial logics of hegemonic empire. Gramsci traces the historical subjugation and political-cultural marginalization of the subaltern in their relation to ruling groups as an inevitable effect of hegemonic history. Yet the process of subalterity is also in constant contestation resulting in creative resistance at different scalar levels ranging from the international solidarity movements (histories of internationalism and anti-imperialism) to the everyday rhythms of local action. These subaltern movements, including the variational modes of educational resistance, provide insights into the complex forms of praxis from diverse contexts. The role of the state and educational provision in relation to questions of citizenship, belonging, and nationhood is especially insightful in the context of displacement. For those forcibly displaced migrants, “mass schooling system that produces citizens and workers is dependent on a national consensus about who the “we” of citizenship” will include.¹⁰ Further, the project of ‘revolutionary citizenship’ works directly against the project of neoliberalism and in the interest of increased socialist democracy.¹¹ The next section briefly explores three heuristic yet relational vignettes of such disparate case studies, each offering different insights into the geopolitics and spatialities of displacement to the human condition, and the responses of state-based education.

(i) Displacement I: The Imperial Logics of Embargoes/Blockades

The first type of displacement (Displacement I) relates to the practice of sanctions and embargoes. This strategy is often used by hegemonic nation-states as an extension of foreign policy in creating ‘hostile relationships’ through the effects of economic destabilization on vulnerable states and communities. As a particular form of ‘economic-statecraft’ it is deployed to exercise economic power on the production or consumption of wealth in order to affect the flow of trade.¹² Von Amerongen defines the ‘embargo concept’ as follows:

“By embargo we understand a *government* order influencing economic interaction and supervision of the domestic economy to comply with these policies, which are designed to *force the opponent into acceptable political conduct*. Embargo policies are based on the readiness to accept an unfavourable impact on the domestic economy”¹³ (emphasis added)

Nephew similarly describes the strategy of sanctions and embargoes as foreign policy with a primary intent to inflict ‘pain’ particularly affecting civil society.¹⁴ The collapse of economies, hyperinflation and material deprivation (including food and medicine) as a result of sanctions are detrimental to the local populations as it creates a volatile path of unrest and instability. Delevic notes that in the twentieth century, sanctions increased especially after the Cold War from two cases in the 1920s to more than twenty in the 1980s.¹⁵ As an ideological and material construct, and a strategic form of imperial displacement, this often results (though rarely reported as such) in forced migration as conditions become untenable (e.g., US embargo on Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Syria). For instance, UN agencies estimate that 5.1 million Venezuelans have fled the country as of August 2020. The situation is complex, yet the dire consequences of economic and political destabilization as a result of imperial embargoes, alongside the threat of military action and political coups, have led to hyperinflation and the forced exile of countless Venezuelan people. These imperial strategies often rendered invisible are overlooked in studies of forced displacement. The example of Cuba, which has experienced an embargo (referred to as blockade) for over six decades is discussed in the next section.

(ii) Displacement II: World Order of Forced Displacement and Settler-States

Geopolitical processes continue to cause mass displacement of migrants across the globe. The second type of displacement is linked to the mixed and mass forced migration. The different forms of exile and forced migration as a result of colonial and imperial practices of war, dispossession, exploitation, and extraction (labour, land, resources) has increased significantly. The world continues to witness high levels of displacement, whereby nearly 34,000 people are forcibly displaced every day because of conflict or persecution.¹⁶ By the end of 2019, an unprecedented 79.5 million were forcibly displaced worldwide.¹⁷ Among them, 45.7 million were internally displaced people (IDPs), while 26 million were refugees. It is important to highlight that near half were under the age of 18. There are also 4.2 million stateless people who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment, and freedom of movement.¹⁸ Most of the world’s displaced population (over 80 percent) are affected by food insecurity, and yet 85 percent are hosted in developing countries. Many seeking refuge in settler-colonial societies of the global North are placed in situations of precarity

where settling in a neoliberal state leads to dual displacement. The example of Toronto is discussed in the following section.

(iii) Displacement III: Urban Refugees and the Post-Colonial Condition

Rapid global urbanization and the increasing flux of refugees into cities require us to rethink and conceptualize the relationship between the urban and forced migration.¹⁹ In the 21st century urban centres, particularly in the global South, have increasingly become destinations for forced migrants, including internally displaced people.²⁰ According to the UNHCR as many as 50 percent of the world's 10.5 million refugees (under their mandate), live in cities and towns across the globe. Additionally, twice that number includes internally displaced people. The decision to settle in an urban area, rather than living within the restrictive parameters of a camp, is often based on a perception that the city offers better economic opportunities, increased security, a degree of anonymity, greater access to services, including humanitarian or developmental assistance. A large number of cities in the postcolonial era host significant refugee populations around the world including, among others: Kolkata, Kabul, Quito, Nairobi, Amman, Bangkok, Bogotá, Cairo.²¹ The vulnerability of their situation often places them in exploitative conditions where they are subject to arrest, detention, working in precarious labour market conditions often in the informal economy, and denied access to health and educational services. They may also be targets of organized crime, violence, forced evictions, extortion, and other forms of abuse. The rights of forced migrants hence need to be juxtaposed with questions on how they might negotiate the urban terrain alongside their complex relationship with host communities and state institutions. Conceptually analysing '*urban as an intermediary space of refuge*'²² provides the opportune spaces to think through how communities of care and political alliances develop within the realms of uncertainty in their lives while raising questions of urban citizenship and the right to the city. Darling notes how cities provide spaces of refugee politics by engaging with 'urban informality' and the 'political character of cities' thereby highlighting the agency of everyday life.²³ In the following section, the example of Kolkata as a historical city of refuge will be discussed.

Table 1
Frame I: Geopolitics and the Spatialities of Displacement

Root Causes of Forced Displacement—As Structural-Political Imperative	Territorial Strategy of Subalterity	Institutional Framework of State-based Education
Displacement I: <i>Imperial- Displacement</i> [Ongoing Imperialism]	<i>Forced Containment (bounded forced-immobility):</i> Subalterity through Embargoes/Blockade and	Revolutionary Havana, Cuba Role of State-based Schooling— <i>Socialist Spaces of Education as Revolution</i>

	Military Occupation	<i>Framework towards Revolutionary Citizenship</i>
Displacement II: <i>Dual-Displacement</i> [Settler-Colonialism, Neoliberal-Multicultural State]	<i>Flows and Forced- Mobility</i> <i>Subaltern Cosmopolitanism:</i> Subalterity through Exile and Forced Migration	Settler-Colonial City Tkaronto/Toronto, Canada Role of State-based- Schooling— <i>Spaces of Education as Neoliberal Framework-Settlement, Integration</i>
Displacement III: <i>Post-colonial condition of dispossession and displacement</i> [Post-Colonial legacies of partition-refugees]	<i>Spatial Fragmentation, Contested Borders, and the Urban Question</i> subalterity, statelessness, and internally-displaced precarity.	Post-Partition Calcutta/Kolkata, India Role of State-based Schooling— <i>Spaces of Education as Reformist - Protection, Poverty Alleviation Framework</i>

What Framework Guides the UN Model of Education?

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process —Paulo Freire

Within the broader context of global displacement in its different forms and oppressive regimes, such as discussed above: How has the project of education been framed? What are the unique circumstances and challenges faced? What are the models used to guide pedagogical frameworks with regards to broader social relations among those displaced? Although education has increasingly taken on a *dimension of protection* in conflict zones and offers broader possibilities for investing in development, critics have noted a heavy reliance on the funds and interventions of international actors.²⁴ Hence the dichotomy of educational provision—between international actors and state-based provision suggests different forms of ideological interventions. The proliferation of reconstruction projects, especially after World War II, and the development of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and Education for All certainly led to numerous initiatives to adhere to the right to education; yet, despite numerous declarations Mundy and Dryden-Peterson note that ‘aid has tended to *prioritize countries of special geopolitical interests to the Western world*’ (emphasis added).²⁵ This is noteworthy to keep in mind, when we evaluate the role of imperial hegemony and its close linkages to histories of capitalism and developmentalism.

What constitute among the unique challenges faced by global education and mass displacement? Children arriving from conflict regions of the world, for example, have experienced multiple forms of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, labour exploitation, among others) related to the

structural conditions of imperial wars and aggressions. The challenge to provide schooling for children who have experienced different forms of violence and displacement is regarded as critical for their overall wellbeing requiring as a fundamental right the provision of quality education. Attempts at recognizing these urgent challenges is addressed in numerous UN based reports which provide the broad discourse adopted by different educational agencies. These are often free from any geopolitical discussions of exile and dispossession but rather focus on the after and depoliticized-effects of displacement.

The Report on the High Commissioner's Five Global Priority Issues for Refugee Children for instance, brings forward the need for serious considerations of such troubling effects including: separation from families and caregivers, sexual exploitation, abuse and violence, military recruitment, education, and specific concerns of adolescents. For displaced children, particularly those who arrive from regions of war and conflict, schools are envisioned to provide distinctive spaces of 'protection', some form of 'normalcy', and 'opportunities' to their daily lives. Children from regions of conflict, the report notes, embody multiple experiences of trauma as survivors of torture and human rights abuses, with many experiencing further loss of families, friends, and communities during the process of forced migration and exile. No mention, however, is made of the educational experience of schools under sanctions/blockades and the effects of such displacement on systems of education.²⁶ Thus, the promise of schools that offer a safe-environments affirm peace education and are envisioned to offer a premise free from gender or racial discrimination, exclusion, abuse, and harassment containing the necessary support systems to empower communities of support.

Yet, UNHCR in assuming the role of the pseudo-state also incorporates in many places an 'Education for Repatriation' policy for migrant children whereby voluntary repatriation is planned as the primary route. The Global Compact adopted in 2018 and which is geared towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for instance, outlines the principles of access, inclusiveness, and financial support within the realm of education that could assist in these goals.

"In line with national education laws, policies and planning, and in support of host countries, States and relevant stakeholders will contribute resources and expertise to expand and enhance the quality and inclusiveness of national education systems to facilitate access by refugee and host community children (both boys and girls), adolescents and youth to primary, secondary and tertiary education. More direct financial support and special efforts will be mobilized to minimize the time refugee boys and girls spend out of education, ideally a maximum of three months after arrival"²⁷

"Depending on the context, additional support could be contributed to expand educational facilities (including for early childhood development, and technical or vocational training) and teaching capacities (including support for, as appropriate, refugees and members of host communities

who are or could be engaged as teachers, in line with national laws and policies). Additional areas for support include efforts to meet the specific education needs of refugees (including through ‘safe school’ and innovative methods such as online education) and overcome obstacles to their enrolment and attendance, including through flexible certified learning programmes, especially for girls, as well persons with disabilities and psychosocial trauma. Support will be provided for the development and implementation of national education sector plans that include refugees. Support will also be provided where needed to facilitate recognition of equivalency of academic, professional and vocational qualifications.”²⁸

Yet it is imperative to keep in mind that the broad UN guidelines outlined above, despite best intentions, operate within global systemic forces of capitalism and imperialism, and hence *cannot* be evaluated in the absence of the structural and political imperatives of a post-colonial imperial order, as discussed in the previous section. The challenge of nation-states in ideologically and materially envisioning the constructs of education relies on the foundation of the political economy of societal structures. Within capitalist states, the role of education is to produce ‘workers’ and economic growth within the paradoxical confines of an individualized and marketized neoliberal welfare state. The precarity of surplus/migrant labour (both in the global North and South) is often disenfranchised by the violent territorialities of border regimes. Within socialist states, the utopian role of education while also producing workers and economic growth relies on a collective ethos of ‘equality of access’ and ‘social citizenship’. As Freire notes in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the role of critical consciousness for learners in assessing their own conditions of displacement, exclusion, and corresponding subjugation, would cater towards developing an alternative pedagogy.²⁹

The next section continues to discuss the three forms of displacements using disparate empirical examples from very different nation-state contexts (Cuba, Canada, India), each followed by brief discussions of the critical role that state-based education has played in shaping transformation.

Structural-Political Insights & State-based Models of Education—Cuba, Toronto, Kolkata

(i) Imperial Displacement: Displacement through Imperial Blockades and Military Occupation—The Cuban Context

Context of Anti-Imperial Cuba:

After the Cuban Revolution in 1959, radical implementation of socialist reforms rejecting capitalism as the basis of production, transformed all sectors of the economy and institutions as foundational to the new social system—including education. Yet, the continuing embargo imposed by the United States since 1961 is regarded as the longest embargo in modern history and is referred to as the *blockade* because of its debilitating effects on civil society in

an effort to stymie the revolutionary state. The detrimental effects of this economic, commercial, and financial blockade over six decades have had serious repercussions in all aspects of daily life of the Cuban people. As a form of material and psychological warfare it has used the violence of containment and immobility to disenfranchise the island state. *Displacement, in this case, in the form of forced-immobility and containment rather than displacement by the forced-mobility of exile—yet both materially and psychologically violent.* This became especially evident after the dissolution of the Soviet bloc in 1989—a period known as the ‘*Special Period*’—when economic trade and assistance came to a halt resulting in serious economic decline, food insecurity and malnutrition of the masses for a few years. In June 2015, a report to the UN by the Government of Cuba described the outdated nature of the policy in detail estimating the cumulative damage to be over USD 121,192 billion, deeply affecting the material conditions of everyday life with respect to food, medicine, health supplies, fuel, and humanitarian goods. To date, though the blockade has been rejected by the UN General Assembly over 24 times, it continues to exist despite being considered a violation of International Law. The report details the unjust nature of the policy and deep extent of US international control. Further, the hegemonic influence of imperial control that is worth noting is the extant of its control, whereby, beyond the function of the blockade serving as a bilateral issue its influence extends to an extraterritorial nature whereby “sanctions are applied to third parties”. For instance, after visits to Cuba, ships are not permitted to dock at US ports, regardless of whether goods entailed are humanitarian hence enforcing the strategy of material containment beyond bilateral relations. The global pandemic has further accentuated the dire impacts of the blockade as medical equipment and critical supplies are restricted. Another serious point of geopolitical contention has been the demand for the return of the territory illegally occupied by the US Naval Base in Guantánamo, as part of a geopolitical strategic occupation of 800 US military bases in more than 70 countries. Both these policies continue to persist illustrating the immense global power and hegemonic control of empire and its allies in global regimes. Despite these challenges the Cuban Revolution remains one of the most resilient revolutions to date providing leadership to the internationalist socialist project. Cuba is known to have one of the best health care and education systems in the world, and a system of cultural and state-based institutions that have kept the socialist economy afloat over the years.

Role of State Based Schooling: Responding to Imperial Displacement—the ‘Revolution within the Revolution’:

The Cuban Revolution laid clear a commitment to *socialist development* including income equality, universal high-quality education, health care, access to housing, and agrarian reform among other changes. One of the first tasks towards the transformation of society was to launch a massive literacy campaign mobilizing the youth and reaching out to the most marginalized populations across the country. Prior to 1959, 25 percent of the population

was considered illiterate. Three central tasks included decolonizing the educational system; raising the educational standards of the system; mass literacy. The 1961 Cuban National Literacy Campaign—*Campaña de Alfabetización*—provided the foundation to the social, economic, cultural transformations that followed the 1959 Revolution. During this campaign, 250,000 volunteers taught 700,000 people to read and write in one year. Over half of these *brigadistas* were women—what Fidel Castro referred to as a *Revolution within the Revolution*. Education was the centerpiece of the revolutionary agenda and was critical in advancing social development of the masses and eliminating illiteracy—an ideation of what Perry Anderson referred to as the ‘dialectical development between revolutionary theory and political praxis’.³⁰ Fidel Castro regarded education as a revolutionary activity and the literacy teachers as part of the army combatting *both* ignorance and imperialism. Further, the ideological vision of a new Cuban citizen referred to as the ‘New Man’ (Che Guevarra’s vision) would be inspired by moral rather than material interests. The school system incrementally expanded over the years, in both urban and rural areas, using different pedagogical models including boarding schools referred to as ‘*schools in the countryside*’ in the 1970s, which had a positive effect on student achievement.³¹ It was important to produce highly skilled professionals for leadership of the Cuban economy, to staff government positions, universities, and other sectors and the socialist vision of education played a strategic role in achieving these goals. The legacy of the Cuban education system continues to the present day not just within the island state but through its internationalism on a global scale, sending teachers and doctors to developing countries. The *Yo Si Puede* program has extended to over thirty developing countries in the world and has taught nearly 10 million students to date. Despite the obstacles of the blockade, attempts have been made to engage in continual developments during the pandemic, such as in distance education that involve communities and families to turn ‘homes into schools’. Building on initiatives that were implemented by Fidel Castro in 2001 these includes television programs devoted to education and national coverage extending to far ends of the island. Further, after the pandemic, the state has initiated a mass distribution of audio-visual and other educational products and a variety of supports for teachers such as those produced by CINESOFT.³² As a cornerstone of the revolution, the intricate educational infrastructure along with the elaborate community-based institutions play a major role in shaping accessibility across the country.

- (ii) **Dual Displacement:** World Order of Forced Displacement & Resettlement in Settler-Colonial societies—The Context of Tkaronto, Canada

Context of Settler-Colonial State, Tkaronto/Toronto, Canada:

As a settler-colonial state, the foundation of Canada is based on the colonization of Indigenous peoples. A central challenge for scholars of

migration and forced displacement, therefore, is to recognize the temporal and socio-spatial logics of settler colonialism that have attempted to eliminate and erase the presence of Indigenous peoples.³³ The settler state narrative as a ‘nation of immigrants’ built on the idea of ‘settler futurity’ intentionally erases the representations and historical legacies of Indigenous peoples and hence critics have argued that the complex relationship between Indigenous peoples, European settlers, and migrants needs to be recognized.³⁴ In this historical geopolitical context, the duality of displacement is evident—first, within the global-imperial hegemonic apparatus, how forced-migration flows are relationally linked within the settler-colonial context of the capitalist state. Second, in how the neoliberal welfare state dynamics play out in the settlement process in accommodating (or not) those displaced.

After the Second World War, Canada, as a settler-colonial society, granted refugee status to an estimated 37,500 Hungarians who had arrived in 1956–57, the largest single source country at that time; and to approximately 69,000 “boat people” who had arrived from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos from 1975–80.³⁵ By 2017, the Canadian state acceptance rate was 286,476 migrants of whom 41,477 (14.5%) were refugees.³⁶ Most of the refugees in Canada during the past ten years have come from different parts of the world most recently from Syria, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and Colombia. A large proportion settles in the major urban centers of the country making multiculturalism a largely urban phenomenon. Based on the 2011 National Household Survey, one-third of immigrants in Toronto had arrived in Canada during the past 10 years. The City of Toronto which prides its identity as a *City of Diversity* (as enshrined in its official motto) reports over half of its residents born outside of Canada, over 230 different ethnic origins. Porter and Yiftachel note that the settler city is often portrayed as symbolic of a ‘new world’—a “space of liberalism and democracy, a hub of globalization, a magnet for international migration, or a center of investment and corporate power—all dominant discourses that conceal their ongoing colonial nature”.³⁷ By 2016, international media outlets such as the BBC Radio announced Toronto as the most multicultural city in the world, yet, with little acknowledgment to its past. Further, it is important to bear in mind that Canada’s system is closely aligned with neoliberal multiculturalism and accordingly favours economic migrants over family migrants and refugees. Between 2011–16 of those accepted, over 60% were economic immigrants, 26% were family class immigrants, while 11.6% were refugees. Canada classifies refugees according to five categories—either based on resettled categories from overseas or after successful refugee claims are made in Canada. These include Government sponsored refugees (GAR), privately sponsored refugees (PSR), Blended visa office-referred refugees (BVORs), and Refugees landed in Canada (RLCs) and Refugee dependents (see Table 2).

Between January 2015 and July 2018 Canada had admitted 109,945 refugees of which 57,240 were privately sponsored refugees (PSRs). The geographical concentration in the province of Ontario continues for both refugees and immigrants, whereby 50% (22,870) of refugees settle in the City of Toronto. The refugee claimants from the top 25 countries at this period

arrive from a range of countries. The sub/urban/altern cosmopolitanism of the settler city is reflected in the spatial landscape of the city.³⁸ Hence it is important to keep in mind that the pre and postmigration experience is closely bound to the heterogeneity of conditions that firmly affect the process of integration ranging from the geopolitical conditions of the source region, experiences of war and trauma, and professional and language skills acquired. Within this context of mass migration, the discourse of resettlement in the Canadian neoliberal welfare state has undergone over two decades of cutbacks due to austerity measures. The neoliberal welfare state is confronted with the challenge to resettle migrants—for example, through health, housing, language skills, education, and employment—yet the neoliberal state itself is faced with a crisis due to decades of rapid dismantlement of the social welfare system.

Table 2

Canada-Admissions of Resettled Refugees by Province/Territory and Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Intended Destination and Immigration Category, January 2015-July 2018				
Province/Territory and Census, Metropolitan Area	Blended Sponsorship Refugee	Government-Assisted Refugee	Privately Sponsored Refugee	Total
Canada: Total	6,840	45,870	57,240	109,945
Ontario Total	3,670	18,280	23,425	45,375 (41%)
Toronto	1,220	5,935	15,715	22,870 (50%)

Source: Facts & Figures 2015: Immigration Overview-Temporary Residents—Annual IRCC Updates, https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/052642bb-3fd9-4828-b608-c81dff7e539c?_ga=2.177479013.1915646597.1536851664-659409770.1536851664.

Role of State Based Schooling: Dual Displacement and the Neoliberal Welfare State:

The growing number of migrant children who are enrolled in Canadian state-based schools come from diverse backgrounds and experiences (immigrants, refugees, and non-status). In the province of Ontario there are currently 76 publicly-funded school boards including public secular boards, public separate/Catholic boards, and French boards, and offer classes in elementary, middle, and secondary schools (JK to Grade 12) providing the educational context for migrant children. The school boards over the years aligned with the ethos of Canadian multicultural policy have developed an ‘integration policy framework’ that includes a range of programs and services including linguistic support (English and French Language Learners (ELL and FLL); welcoming policies; settlement workers (SWIS program), and other supports to meet the social, cultural, psychological and emotional needs of their students. The Inner City program offered by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), provides additional resources in neighborhoods with a higher

percentage of migrant children from low socioeconomic groups. However, students arriving as refugees, asylum seekers, or without status face distinct challenges based on their premigration experience, many of them who had lived as protracted refugees in camps for many years. The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed a rapid growth of the refugee population in Toronto mainly from nine major source countries. Yau discusses this rapid growth noting that by late 1994 refugee students made up 13% (approximately 3,900 students) of the secondary population and 7% (approximately 3,000 students) of its elementary students.³⁹ As mentioned earlier in the paper, the role of schools in the post-migration settlement experience includes numerous challenges. Based on a series of interviews, focus groups, and data from the TDSB, Yau documents the major challenges: from psychological distress and PTSD; precarious residency status; disintegration of family units; financial difficulties; frequent relocations; cultural disorientation, to relationships with teachers, peers, academic performance, working part-time among other themes.⁴⁰ Others have identified similar challenges incorporating workshops to familiarize teachers with the urgent questions, sensitivities, and care needed to address these structural challenges of displacement and exclusion on several levels.⁴¹ Despite the policy framework that has been outlined above with the matrix of policies and practices, the neoliberal educational model, inherently part of the Ontario education system is differentially aligned. Driven by an individualistic, competitive, market-based, financially conservative model, schools have experienced cutbacks, closures, and deep retrenchment of critical services affecting migrants most closely. Thus, the harm and exclusion of dual displacement experienced both during pre-migration and in the settlement process of post-migration is accentuated by both geopolitics and the policies of the neoliberal welfare state. The denial of public services to non-status migrants places them in a further precarious situation during the post-migration process. Yet, this denial of basic services was challenged by Toronto based migrant activist groups like *No one is Illegal*—establishing Toronto as an official Sanctuary City—whereby every resident was granted access to public services in the city regardless of legal status. Similarly, the Toronto school boards were challenged by the activist group *Don't Ask Don't Tell* regarding linking student-identification and non-status information—whereby students were not compelled to reveal personal status during school admissions due to risk of deportation.

(iii) **Post-Colonial Condition of Displacement:** Urban Context of Subalterity—The Context of Calcutta/Kolkata, India

Context of Post-Colonial Partition Refugees, Calcutta/Kolkata:

After the partition of British India in 1947 and the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, the city of Kolkata experienced an unprecedented flow of migrants to the city. The mass exodus of 10 million partition refugees to India from former East Pakistan in 1971 is rated as the largest refugee flow of the 20th century. Yet as Samaddar astutely reminds us, by bringing the context of the legacies of colonialism and the partition of the subcontinent into these

debates, the ‘first wave to arrive in independent India *were not aliens but part of the nation*’ (emphasis added).⁴² Many had witnessed communal violence, destruction of property, and endured trauma and exile. These refugees spread all over West Bengal and other parts of India, but primarily settled around the greater Calcutta region. The border remains porous and fluid to the present and scholars of migration in the region have noted that there remains a fair amount of ‘cross border movement of people’ and ‘people-to-people contact’⁴³ including many economic migrants crossing over in search of better livelihood and social opportunities.⁴⁴ The spatial morphology of postcolonial urbanism over the years reflects these flows and resettlements in the form of the numerous satellite colonies and squatter settlements scattered across the urban region due to the shortage of housing.

The role of the Indian State in the rehabilitation of the refugee population was central in the process of nation building despite the limited resources and experience of dealing with the immensity of such a humanitarian emergency. The rehabilitation programs and policies provided by the Central and State government following partition included the planning and implementation of reconstruction programs which went ahead with negligible international assistance.⁴⁵ In the study of policies, particularly in relation to the experiential lives and the sufferings of those forcibly displaced, Samaddar contends of the value to ‘capture policy as the experience of the subject’ and explore within this context the concept of ‘power and care’.⁴⁶ Within this ‘ethics of care’ he highlights the ‘paradoxes of hospitality’ such as evident in the dualities of administration through ‘law versus practices’; and the institutional infrastructure that were a concrete result of these practices.⁴⁷ Initially, the relief and rehabilitation programs for the displaced were marked by neglect and the institution of vocational programs were later planned according to caste, class, and occupation.⁴⁸

Dasgupta classifies the four groups of Bengalis who arrived after partition by class, caste, education, and by type of labour.⁴⁹ These included the middle and upper-middle class who arrived with capital and investments; middle class who were able to access government positions; those with less wealth and who lived in resettlement colonies and suburbs without state assistance; and displaced peasants and agricultural workers from downtrodden communities who resettled in squatter settlements or *bustees* across the city working in menial and precarious occupations. Others were moved to camps and rehabilitation centres or were redirected to other inhospitable regions and many moved back to the city due to the difficult conditions. Politically, there were those that supported the state and believed that sufficient support was extended; while others, including the communist party who critiqued the state. Those living in colonies were successful at organizing themselves with support from the left.

Role of State Based Schooling: Spaces of Educational Policy Post-Partition—Protection, Poverty Alleviation Framework:

The challenge to provide a new model of education post-independence India in 1947 that would suit the aspirations and needs of the nation became a priority along with emergent nation-states in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. While tracing the *History of Education in Modern India*, Ghosh argues that the challenges faced in meeting the ‘promised revolution in the education system’ were not easy to materialize as India faced a host of pressing problems.⁵⁰ This included the rehabilitation of refugees after Partition from both West and East Pakistan (later Bangladesh). The Constitution drafted in 1949 made the provision of Education a State Subject where the responsibility for education was divided between the Government of India (i.e., Central or Federal) and the States (i.e., province). The intent of ‘massive state supported expansion and democratization of schooling’ was intended as a ‘key instrument of change and emancipation’, particularly for the schooling of children belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities.⁵¹

Today, education in India includes both publicly and privately funded schools. Public schools in Kolkata are managed and funded by all three levels of government—central (national), state (province), and local (including municipal). Ghosh notes four categories of schools in Kolkata which include private schools, state government schools, state government sponsored schools, union government schools, and union government sponsored schools.⁵² State government schools are run by the West Bengal Board of Primary Education (WBBPE), and by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), and provide free and compulsory education for children as outlined in the Indian Constitution under Article 21A. The Right to Education Act (RTE) was implemented in 2010 to ensure universal compulsory elementary education free of cost for children between the ages of 6-14 years of age. For those unable to afford schooling, especially children belonging to disadvantaged groups (SC and ST), migrant families, and undocumented workers – publicly funded schools provide the only access to education. The provision of textbooks, uniforms, school supplies are included in state-based schools. A number of initiatives have been used to draw children to the schools (primary and upper-primary) including the national Mid-Day Meal Scheme, which is designed to provide nutritional, hot lunches on a free and daily basis. Funded by the Government of India under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* and National Child Labour Project (NCLP). Meals are often cooked by local community members for an honorarium and often within the premises of the school. As parents or children are not subject to a screening process during admission (as per RTE mandates), these incentives are intended to not deter the enrolment of children of displaced migrants. Yet the harsh reality of poverty, and the practices of survival and earning a livelihood, discourage students from daily attendance and the necessary time required in school. These challenges among others hinder progress and have led to inequities in retention and attainment, higher drop-out rates, and school completion rates.

Conclusion: Towards a Theory of Geopolitics of Subalterity in Education

Educational relationships constitute the very core of hegemony, that any analysis of hegemony necessarily entails a careful study of educational activities and institutions, and that neither the complexities of hegemony nor the significance of education can be understood as long as one thinks of education exclusively in terms of “scholastic” relationships

---Antonio Gramsci

Previously I have argued that subalterity in education is grappling with a differential and complicated terrain.⁵³ I noted that the political and theoretical importance of this conceptual framing suggests that its form, function, and structural significance has posed a number of new challenges for those investigating social justice and rights in education. In a time of global economic crisis, cultural divides, and social and political uncertainties, an expanded notion of subalterity is crucial in understanding the underlying embedded and strategic workings of education.

The three heuristic examples provided in this paper, though each embedded within their own historical and geopolitical contexts, alongside capitalist and non-capitalist orientations, illustrate the complex underpinnings of forced displacement and provide theoretical insight into the broader socio-political impacts of education in response to anti-imperialism, anti-neoliberalism, and anti-colonialism. Despite their differences, the foundation of a ‘geopolitics of subalterity in education’ framework is embedded in a dialectical analysis where the relations among state ideology, policies, and practices are critical in understanding the role that education plays in assuaging not only the suffering of the violence of displacement; but also, to transform the social structures and build critical consciousness more broadly for political change. Space, as seen so far, plays a central role through the imperial project of territorial capture, colonial continuing strategies of mobility and immobility, or production of border regimes; while the dialectics of resistance include place-making practices, the politics of refusal, or usurping land rights and claims. The politics of education in relation to displacement is embedded within these structural systems.

The role of education in relation to displacement, therefore, presents multiple layers of possible analysis—from the ideological to the political. Four contrasting and oppositional models of education have been presented so far. Of course, as mentioned earlier it is important to keep in mind that the historical specificities and unevenness of economic and social development in different geographical contexts lead to different genealogical conditions of how displacement is understood, enacted, and contested. Nonetheless, the theoretical and political implications can be analysed within three broad lenses (See Table 3): 1) Institutional structures and geopolitical relations; 2) State-based educational principles in relation to displacement and social transformation; 3) citizenship and identity and implications on peace, belonging, violence and survival.

Table 3

Framing the Geopolitics of Subalterity in Education		
Institutional Structures & Geopolitical Relations (in relation to imperialism/colonialism)	State-based Educational Displacement Framework	Citizenship and Identity (Peace, Belonging, Violence, Survival)
UN Model Universal Orientation	Sustainable Development & Protection Model – Ubiquitous model. Focus on conflict affected countries. Reduce vulnerabilities, more resiliency	Peace, Belonging, Violence, Survival
Cuba Socialist Orientation <i>Contentious:</i> Anti-Imperialism and claiming its own sovereignty Displacement in response to blockade and military occupation. Non-Signatory to the UNHCR.	Socialist Citizenship Model <i>-Education as Revolution</i> -Collective ethos and Political consciousness -Critical Pedagogy – anti-imperial -production of workers in socialist economy, nation building project -Equal access at all levels of education – primary to university – towards social transformation Work/Culture/Education -schools working with other sectors including local institutions. - internationalism of education on a global scale.	Peace, Belonging Violence, Survival Collectivist consciousness, anchored in social structural change, build on political participation
Tkronto–Canada Capitalist Settler Society Orientation Liberal Capitalism, Settler Colonialism, Neoliberalism, Multiculturalism <i>Supportive:</i> Major Trade partner and ally. Part of NAFTA trade agreement, NATO. Foreign and economic policy in alignment with US interests. Signatory to the UNHCR.	Settlement-Integration Model - Liberal multiculturalism -Neoliberal Subjectivity and production of workers and surplus labour in marketized economy - Primary and Secondary level focus -Settlement Experience of migrants e.g., Language Acquisition	Peace, Belonging Violence, Survival Reformist, Individual and community integration, responsabilization. Differential access to settlement resources.

Displacement in response to hosting refugees (primarily with status).	(ESL, ELL), settlement workers. -Uneven spatial distribution of resources and programs within publicly funded schools. - dependence on fundraising, charity-funds, volunteers, NGOs - schools primarily working within their own sector.	
Kolkata–India Capitalist Post-Colonial Nation Orientation.	Poverty Alleviation Model	Peace, Belonging Violence, Survival
Capitalism in developing country, postcolonial condition with ongoing wide social polarization in class structure. <i>Fluctuates post-independence.</i> Variable depending on foreign policy. Not signatory to the UNHCR. Displacement in response to hosting forced migrants (status, non-status, inter-provincial) alongside marginalized communities (hierarchies based on class, caste).	-Primary Education focus -Uneven spatial development - Schools to provide: literacy, food, clothing, other basic material needs, attendance, livelihoods - status not important- resistance to nation-state formalized identities. -teachers role also as community workers and proxies to caregiving - schools working within their own sector.	Focus on peace as survival; sustain livelihoods; vulnerabilities and avoidance of violence; protection

First, the Global UNHCR paradigm purports broad principles of protection and a sustainability model to education within conflict zones. This Sustainable Development & Protection Model advocates broad liberal principles of peace, belonging, survival, and protection from violence.

Yet, in democratic capitalist states, however, the educational systems plays a contradictory role. That is, on one hand, there is the requirement to maintain its geopolitical position and image in the international sphere as places of refuge; while simultaneously preserving social relations in the interests of a capitalist state. Thus, in this case the Settlement-Integration Model works within a neoliberalized ideology in a capitalist settler-colonial state—where education is construed within a multicultural paradigm for displaced migrants in an individualized, marketized ideology. Similarly, in capitalist-developmental contexts state educational systems practice a Poverty Alleviation Model—a reformist tool where the ambiguous and contested lived reality of extreme social polarization, mobility, and borders from a postcolonial condition remain. Finally, critical ideology—where education is perceived as praxis and radically transformative within the

socialist orientations of the collective allows for a Socialist Citizenship Model. In resistance to the antagonistic geopolitical relations with imperial hegemony develops an educational realm where political consciousness shapes a socialist citizen model.

The neoliberalization of education is a global condition, accentuated within a pandemic where the geopolitics of vaccines prevail. Its governance model is one based on the ideas of competition, marketization, and a language of efficiency guided by audit cultures and austerity measures. The modernist notions of nation-state systems—who ‘belongs’ and who does ‘not belong’, questions of whose status, citizenship and rights prevail—are closely bound to the colonial politics of education. Pedagogically as Apple notes the ideological aims of marketized policies are to provide educational conditions necessary for increasing international competitiveness and profit in the interest of serving the capitalist state; and to reproduce surplus, precarious labour (classed/raced, often displaced forced migrants).⁵⁴ In such models, less emphasis is placed on the development of critical pedagogies—such as a lack of building political awareness on the histories of colonialism, wars, dispossession, and structures of uneven global development. This in turn promotes a pedagogy of cultural imperialism thereby reproducing systems of capitalism, racism, and patriarchal societies. Neoliberal subjectivity, class/caste/racial/gender divides prevail in all aspects of daily life and modes of reasoning. In alleviating such inequalities, the educational policy takes on a reformist charitable/developmentalist approach rather than striving towards societal structural change. Inevitably, the neoliberalization of education across the globe has taken on different forms in different places—but the essence remains the same. Such measures result in the fragmentation of communities and civil society with the loss of local institutions and venues of building civic capacity.

In contrast, a critical ideology is where education is seen as revolutionary praxis that is radically transformative and provides a different context including a historical-political epistemology that is not passive but reflexive and aware of its alienated existence. This includes a critical pedagogy that addresses and reflects on questions of oppression and seeks solutions through questions of peace-building and solidarity movements—the production of knowledge for social transformation. In the global context of imperialism and forced migration, how do such educational directives work towards change in systemic and oppositional ways? Examples prevail that provide the impetus for contemplating such directions. Historically we can learn from the extraordinary example and strategies of the Cuban Model with its continuing legacies of the Literacy Campaign movement which transformed the educational landscape of a country despite the impacts of an imperial blockade. Fidel Castro’s vision of ‘Education as Revolution’ continues to the present and provides a global framework to think counter-hegemonically and that can be applied to other conditions of forced displacement around the world. Ideas of Antonio Gramsci similarly have questioned how the liberation of the subaltern classes required a massive educational effort that would confront the challenges of a state educational

system designed to serve the interests of the upper classes and their hegemonic influence on the rest of society. Paulo Freire's work on the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the implementation of popular education is another critical methodological framing that has historically attended to many of these challenges. The revelation of atrocities committed in residential schools on indigenous children from the *Truth and Reconciliation Report* in Canada, anti-racist, anti-colonial, and decolonizing educational directions are gaining new ground. The provision of education—as a site for broader praxis—argues for a need for more complex and radical interventions that move away from imperialist, neo-colonial, and neoliberal-reformist norms of education. The importance of building a critical ideological perspective on the intellectual foundations of such work, provide for us an anti-hegemonic basis for thinking through the geopolitics of subalterity in education.

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