



15th International Congress on Mathematical Education

7-14 July 2024 • ICC Sydney, Australia
Come and be counted

Topic Study Group 5.5: Social and political dimensions of mathematics education

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Team details

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Overview

This topic study group (TSG) intends to interrogate the intersection of past and present social, gender, ethnic, racial, cultural, and economic projects with mathematics education and to explore approaches to liberatory mathematics education. Correspondingly, TSG5.5 has two goals:

- Deepen awareness about how practices and processes within mathematics education contribute unwittingly to injustice both within mathematics education itself and broader social and political dimensions.
- Contribute significantly to worldwide discussions about not only the sources that sustain systemic injustice but also pathways to action for greater social and economic justice.





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Those goals and TSG5.5's intention emerge from a history of efforts to incorporate critical perspectives into the field. After decades of deliberations about power, oppression, marginalization, and inequity, first in ICME-13 (2016) and again in ICME-14 (2021) included mathematics education's social and political dimensions as a TSG's theme. This TSG proposes to extend those deliberations by examining relationships among mathematics education, systemic and structural forms of oppression and violence, and colonial and decolonial actions. Specifically, racism, sexism, and other social and economic oppressive structures are colonial practices and systemically embedded in institutions, laws, and written or unwritten policies. Those structures and practices embody entrenched beliefs that produce, condone, and perpetuate oppression and violence against Black and other people of colour, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals, among others. Significantly, they affect life's personal, emotional, academic, and material dimensions.

Theoretically, this TSG assumes a decolonial stance towards mathematics education. Such a stance involves understanding systematic oppression and transforming inequitable systems shaped by capitalism, patriarchy, and imperialism into more just structures. However, referring to any collection of actors within mathematics education, decolonization may not signal a genuine representation of just systems since, through different acts of reproduction (such as mathematics curricula, best practices of teaching, and so on), dependency resulting in systemic oppression may remain and be supplanted by other oppressive forms. Consequently, to struggle against colonial structures and systemic oppression involves continual reevaluation and adjustments. In short, the decolonial perspective calls for solidarity with social, economic, and political struggles that challenge inequities and hegemonies.

Areas of interest

Maintaining the theme of the ICME-13 and -14 TSGs, Social and political dimensions of mathematics education, this TSG aims to deepen further the previous discussions and address systemic oppression and decolonization. It aligns with other initiatives such as the Political Dimensions of Mathematics Education (PDME) movement that emerged to rally a focused, explicit examination of the politics of mathematics education, and the Mathematics Education and Society (MES) that has held 11 conferences and continues to gather mathematics education workers to interrogate issues at the intersection of mathematics education and social issues. This TSG will advance discussions of interactions between mathematics education and social and political issues that have percolated in the margins of the ICME community since at least 1976. Accordingly, we propose the following broad guiding questions to indicate challenges and possibilities that need to be further delineated and interrogated:





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- What roles and influences do or can mathematics have for individuals and collectives in oppressive societies?
- How can mathematics and mathematics education advance racial, economic, cultural, and gender projects for social justice?
- How can mathematics or mathematics education transform capitalist, patriarchal, and colonial world systems?
- What social, political, and economic elements systematically exclude the oppressed in the teaching and learning of mathematics? How can they be interrogated and interrupted?
- What are conceptual and methodological frameworks that enable policymakers, researchers, teachers, and students to think about the intersection between, on the one hand, systemic oppression and decolonization and, on the other hand, mathematics and mathematics education?
- What is the role of international and national assessment of mathematical knowledge in consolidating and perpetuating specific economic, racial, gendered, cultural, and social orders?
- How do mathematics education research and practice contribute to perpetuating colonial relations and destabilizing countries and communities?
- What mathematics education research and practices could lead to more just economic, racial, cultural, gendered, and social life forms?

Please note the following two points:

- We intend for the above-listed questions and topics to guide and trigger ideas. Participants' submissions and discussions are not limited to what is stipulated above.
- As an outcome of this TSG, we hope to organize a publication of significant interest to the mathematics education community. However, its form and content will be decided later.

How to make a submission to this Topic Study Group

Submissions for Topic Study Group Papers and proposals for Posters open 28 April 2023 via the official ICME-15 website, icme15.org. The website also contains a timeline of dates for the activity of the Topic Study Groups in the lead up to the Congress.

For questions about this TSG, please contact the Co-Chairs using the email addresses provided.

