Communities and Climate Change: Why Practices and Practitioners Matter

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A considerable amount of cultural and biological diversity on Earth is connected to Indigenous communities. For example, an estimated five thousand distinct Indigenous cultural groups (speaking four thousand Indigenous languages) belong to geographical territories that cover approximately 24 percent of land worldwide, hosting up to 80 percent of our planet's biodiversity. This is despite Indigenous communities making up only 5 percent of the global population. Like all communities, Indigenous communities are subject to climate change. Yet unlike others, they are particularly vulnerable to its social and environmental effects since they are already compromised by long-standing injustices in the form of social, political, economic, and cultural (SPEC) marginalization. Though they constitute only 5 percent of the global population, they make up 15 percent of the global poor. For example, due to Māori tribal communities having their lands stolen and subsequently being forced to migrate away from their ancestral homelands, the Northland region remains the most impoverished area in Aotearoa (the Māori name for New Zealand). The largely coastal and rural Indigenous tribal communities in New Zealand are vulnerable to extreme flooding events resulting from unpredictable weather patterns, sea level rise, and coastal erosion. This double burden of SPEC marginalization and the effects of climate

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change directly threatens the continued survival of Indigenous communities, and thereby also jeopardizes not just the cultural diversity mentioned above but also, plausibly, our planet's biological diversity.[1] After all, not only are many Indigenous practices committed to environmental protection (for example, the Māori practices governed by kaitiakitanga, as we discuss below) but also a great amount of knowledge about the environment and its protection exists only with and within social practices (language practices being merely the most obvious example).

It is reasonable to claim that Indigenous communities have a right to exist on their lands and waterways and to pursue the lives they value by enacting the numerous practices that represent their rich cultures. Denial of that right is disrespectful and represents a lack of recognition, which is an injustice not merely because it constrains Indigenous people or does them harm but also because it impairs them in their positive understanding of self at both the level of the community and the level of the individual.[2] This alone provides very strong grounds for empowering Indigenous groups, especially through recognizing and rectifying historical injustices (and thereby eliminating marginalization), and though this is surely reason enough for protecting these communities, in this essay we will defend further, secondary grounds for doing so. Only by protecting these groups can we preserve the practices that are critical for worldwide human flourishing in the face of climate change. Thus, the empowerment of these groups not only directly supports their own flourishing but also indirectly supports the long-term flourishing of communities elsewhere (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike).

Given how critical Indigenous communities are for preserving diversity, it is unfortunate that enabling and securing their functioning and flourishing remains an ongoing, widespread challenge. To be sure, recognition of the value of Indigenous communities for protecting our planet is on the rise,[3] but the implementation of local and regional policies for removing barriers to protection and promoting genuine and equitable partnerships with Indigenous peoples (along with the global goals and targets those policies are meant to achieve)[4] continues to lag. Many of these communities experience limited land tenure and constraints on access to natural resources; their voices and perspectives frequently also fail to be accommodated in policy and law. Together, these conditions are barriers to collective self-determination and justice.[5] Creating real opportunities for Indigenous communities to cultivate their socioenvironmental practices, and thereby to maintain and refine their practical cultural heritage, is critical. In particular, as this

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essay argues, global justice will be pursued and realized only when we recognize the need for a rich and diverse range of socioenvironmental practices, which necessitates further protection of the communities in which they are enacted.

An example of a rich and diverse set of Indigenous practices can be found under the umbrella of kaitiakitanga (usually translated into English as "stewardship" or "guardianship"), a Māori concept that indicates the intimate, place-based attachments of a community and codifies the socioenvironmental responsibilities that arise therefrom.[6] Of philosophical and practical importance is the way that kaitiakitanga conceptualizes and maps the distribution of responsibilities to protect and enhance human-environment relationships, and how it guides practices through norms of care, use restriction, and restoration.[7] These human-environment relationships are of central concern regarding virtually all practices that involve the utilization of natural resources, such as harvesting and hunting.[8] Preserving and strengthening these relationships relies on deep, placed-based knowledge, relevant practical experience, and structures for the intergenerational transfer of both. Thus, kaitiakitanga also extends to practices of research (for example, species monitoring and ecosystem health) as well as education and knowledge transfer.

Practices and concepts, and the complex networks they make up, are not static, of course. In the past, these elements had to adapt to different environments to maintain both individual and communal flourishing. For instance, Polynesian ancestors of the Māori travelled across the Pacific and then through Aotearoa. This required adaptation and responsiveness—in particular, the ability to incorporate new ideas and practical innovations. Such dynamism draws much needed attention to the way in which diverse and transformative practices are vital for living well at both the level of the individual and the level of the community, especially when they are confronted with change and uncertainty. As we will further argue, only by recognizing the significance of thriving Indigenous communities for the persistence and thriving of practices like those that fall under the kaitiakitanga umbrella can we properly recognize the voices and perspectives of these communities in global climate policy and law.

Social Practices and Their Importance

In contemporary philosophy, the technical notion of "practice" is perhaps most often associated with Alasdair MacIntyre, whose set of necessary conditions provides a somewhat narrowly defined concept:

> [A practice is] any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.[9]

As his examples indicate, MacIntyre limits his concept to activities of (very) high complexity: chess qualifies, but tic-tac-toe does not; farming qualifies, but planting crops does not. Thus, the practices to which MacIntyre refers are typically of (very) coarse granularity, by which we mean a characteristic akin to the distinction between actions that are basic and actions that are increasingly nonbasic (or complex) in the philosophy of action:[10] as farming is carried out *by* planting crops (among other things), the latter is located at a finer granularity level than the former.

MacIntyre's conceptualization of practice suits his particular project of grounding human virtues (and providing foundations for an entire ethical theory). However, it does not align with the term's far broader use by others—for instance, to describe the types of gardening, hunting, and other practices undertaken by the communities we discuss in this essay.[11] So while we build on MacIntyre's work, we depart from it by being more inclusive in the types of performances we address and by explicitly highlighting various features of the activities that interest us.[12] In the following paragraphs, we will conceptualize "practice" as performance patterns in two related ways, one focusing on the activity at the level of the individual and the other on the activity at the level of the collective.

A personal practice is a series of habitualized individual activities that are dispersed across time, properly causally related, and subject to norms. Each practice is constituted by behavior patterns that represent specific combinations of mental and bodily performances[13] (doings), physical and mental attributes[14] (beings), and person-external resources utilized by the individual throughout[15] (havings). For example, take a customary fishing practice such as hook-and-line catching. It consists of specific mental and corporeal performances (such as the casting of lines, wielding of poles, and balancing of bodies on boats or rafts) and particular physical and mental attributes (such as the knowledge of when and where to find fish, patience to wait for bites, and bodily dexterity to operate gear), as well as a range of tools and other resources (such as poles, lines, hooks, and a bait or lure). The practice is subject to a range of norms, such as prohibitions on catching various

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species in specific seasons and areas. Finally, an individual's current habitualized fishing performance is causally connected to his or her similar performances in the past (for instance, when the person learned the practice by emulating other older and experienced fishers).

Our second conceptualization requires a shift in focus from the individual performer to the community of practitioners: a social practice is a class of habitualized activities that are dispersed across time, space, and individuals; that are properly causally related; and that are subject to norms. Each practice incorporates similar combinations of the three interconnected elements of doings, beings, and havings. Thus, any individual's performance pattern is also part of a social practice if it is sufficiently similar to the performance patterns of others and causally related to them in relevant way(s). For example, we can speak of Māori tribal practices of fishing because the individual performance patterns of numerous members of a tribe (across time and space) are similar. All of them originate from the performance patterns of previous tribal practitioners, because the young learned from the old. And all of them are subject to the same norms, such as those of kaitiakitanga. Thus, each individual performance pattern possesses its various central qualities (the doings, beings, havings, and norm adherence) because it belongs to the same social practice.

Practices often change over time, and they can also cease to exist altogether. Does it matter if they stop existing? That depends. One important consideration is how and why practice cessation occurs. Sometimes, it is a result of changing socioenvironmental contexts. For instance, if previously available havings (including close substitutes) become unobtainable (for example, due to the depletion of natural resources), the practices that require them become impossible to perform; or if previously *un*available havings become obtainable (due to new trade relationships, perhaps), it may enable the performance of different practices that are more adaptive, rendering old ones superfluous. In other cases, practice cessation occurs due to lack of intergenerational knowledge transfer and a corresponding capability loss, frequently in the wake of community breakdown (for example, due to disease or violent conflict). Within the context of Indigenous communities, large-scale practice cessation has occurred as a result of colonialism, which caused land loss, forced migration away from tribal communities, and multidimensional marginalization. In such cases, practice cessation is part of long-standing historical and ongoing contemporary injustices.[16]

Across cultures and societies, practices are valuable because we need them to flourish as human beings in the long run. In fact, they are central to addressing every human-need category: subsistence, protection, affection, and understanding, to name just a few.[17] For example, tribal practices of hook-and-line catching enable the members of Indigenous collectives to satisfy their subsistence needs. But at the same time, they satisfy identity and understanding needs because the performance of a practice connects the practitioner (and thus the collective as a whole) to the relevant environment and also to ancestors and descendants. Regarding the former, the performance of hook-and-line catching maintains a practitioner's close relationships with various elements of the natural environment, including the marine habitat, the creatures that live in it and their lifecycles, the daily tidal rise and fall of sea levels, the annual seasons, and so forth. Regarding the latter, performance patterns that represent a social practice are always learned from other, usually older and experienced practitioners (who learned them from other performers in turn, and so on). Once the novice has mastered the practice, she too will likely pass it on in the future, thereby extending the historical chain of practitioners and contributing to what we might call "a practical tradition." These historical chains frequently connect numerous generations of practitioners, linking today's performers with those who lived centuries before them and with those who will live in the (distant) future. By carrying out a practice today, the individual connects to her ancestors and their lives in a meaningful way, thus strengthening one element of her own identity (as well as the identity of her community).

Yet, practices connect us not merely to people and places but also to what we will call "deeply held philosophies." For example, in Māori culture responsibilities are grounded in a complex network of descent and kinship connections inclusive of all human beings, nonhuman animals, and the natural environment.[18] These connections generate responsibilities for responding to socioenvironmental challenges in ways that enhance, rather than diminish, shared well-being over time. For instance, the Māori concept of rāhui expresses exigent prohibitions on the use of particular natural resources and corresponding constraints on practices. These constraints ensure immediate responses to threats of serious harms; for example, by categorically prohibiting the harvesting of certain species, thus securing their regeneration (and the health of the ecosystem overall).[19] In this manner, rāhui, as a key element of kaitiakitanga, draws attention to the ways that practitioners are responsible for protecting socioenvironmental

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relationships—even if doing so is costly for them. Practices, thus, express and connect Indigenous communities to deeply held philosophical assumptions about well-being and justice.

The Value of Practice Diversity

Social practices as such are not the only necessary condition for human flourishing; practice diversity is critical as well, and it has at least two forms. First, there is depth of diversity, in that the same practice, or type of practice, may be carried out in different ways (for example, to prioritize different ends, utilize different parts of an environment, or suit different parts of the day). For instance, besides hook-and-line catching, tribal communities might also practice underwater spearfishing. Both avoid overharvesting and virtually all bycatch (marine species caught unintentionally while trying to catch another type of fish), but each technique also has unique strengths and weaknesses. In some circumstances, underwater spearfishing is more productive, but in others, it is not (say, at nighttime).

Second, there is breadth of diversity, in that the same end, or set of ends, can be achieved through different practices, or types of practice (for example, to utilize diverse environments and the resources they offer). For instance, the fishing and farming practices suitable for marine environments are quite different from the hunting and farming practices suitable for terrestrial environments. The more parts of its surroundings a collective can sustainably engage with to meet the ongoing needs of its members (by satisfying more of their needs or addressing each one more effectively), the greater the likelihood that the group will flourish in the long run. Using this logic, we can draw the social circle much larger and speak of "the collective" as the entire global human population. It is perfectly sensible to say that the practice portfolios of local communities constitute the planetary human collective's practice portfolio, inclusive of diverse performance patterns that are adaptive for different local communities in (radically) different environments.

Over time, human surroundings are subject to variation—either because environments themselves change or because collectives relocate (often forcibly). For example, climate change is resulting in (often radical) disturbances of natural environments, marine and terrestrial alike. While original plant and animal populations deteriorate (and frequently die off altogether), new species may also invade and further exacerbate the stress on previous inhabitants.[20] Faced with

these environmental disruptions, human collectives may need different practices to continue their sustainable utilization of, and engagement with, nature. Alternatively, collectives may be forced to relocate due to ebbing access to natural resources, social or political conflicts, or a combination thereof. Frequently, such displacement results in shifts to significantly different natural surroundings, which, once again, entails that previously enacted collective practices are no longer adaptive or meaningful in the same way.

From the perspective of human flourishing, the best response to the uncertainties regarding future changes to the environment and other circumstances is recognizing the need for a highly diverse range of social practices. Access to a diversified portfolio increases the chances that at least some adaptive practice(s) will be readily available when needed, making the development and maintenance of such a practice portfolio prudent for the human collective as a whole.

In the long run, social practices exist (and continue to exist), however, only if they are (and continue to be) enacted by a community of skilled practitioners for whom they are adaptive. Many of them are performed only within small groups that are vulnerable to the forces indicated above (ebbing access to natural resources due to climate change, social/political conflicts, and so on). Of course, some of these practices are merely indirectly related to environmental degradation and climate change. But others are clearly directly relevant, as they represent means for adaptation or mitigation—not just within the Indigenous communities whence these practices originate but well outside of them, too.

To use an example of environmental management practices from Oceania, Indigenous communities in Australia have a fifty-thousand-year-long history of preventing large-scale bushfires by clearing the land of debris, scrub, undergrowth, and certain flammable grasses. Given the anticipated global increase in ambient temperatures in the future, the threat of extensive bush and forest fires in places like Australia will only grow, which makes Indigenous fire prevention practices more valuable than ever, for both Indigenous and other communities alike. Yet, these climate change adaptation practices rely on deep knowledge of the land and complex practical skills, both of which only the Indigenous communities possess.[21]

Typically, Indigenous peoples—especially those who continue to live in tribal communities—have very small ecological footprints on the environments in which they have lived for generations.[22] In that regard, they radically differ from mainstream consumer societies, and a key reason for this is their low-carbon

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consumption practices. Compared to first-world consumer cultures, members of Indigenous communities whose ways of life honor long-standing, reciprocal human-nature relationships meet their needs in ways that avoid virtually all the ills of contemporary consumerism: unsustainable diets, high-carbon mobility, outsized and energy-inefficient dwellings, fast fashion and other forms of rapid product obsolescence, excessive household waste (much of which is not biodegradable), and so forth.[23] Indigenous consumption practices model, and are a model for, climate change mitigation in at least two ways. First, the traditional communities that enact them directly avoid contributing to consumerism's environmental degradation and climate change. And second, their very enactment is concrete evidence of the existence of alternative means for securing human flourishing—evidence that renders implausible the view (and claim) that high-carbon consumption is a necessary condition for living good human lives.[24]

The protection and preservation of such social practices necessarily requires the recognition and empowerment of the communities in which they exist and are adaptive. Just as significant for Indigenous communities is that the protection of these practices is bound up with recognizing historical and contemporary injustices as well as responsibilities for restoration. As such, not only do we have weighty reasons to protect communities of practitioners (including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups) but we also have reason to protect and enable Indigenous communities and their practices as a matter of global justice. Working to empower these communities and removing what are, in the end, long-standing constraints on their social practices is therefore critical.

Recognizing and Empowering Local Practitioners

Recently, the importance of Indigenous communities and practices has increasingly been acknowledged at the levels of national and global political decision-making. This trend is not only encouraging from the perspective of the value that we attach to practice diversity as per our reasoning in the previous section. As we will argue below, it also makes sense from the viewpoint of the social organizational principle of subsidiarity.

Over the past decades, there has been increased global recognition among activists, scholars, and policymakers of the pressing need to oppose harmful patterns of production and consumption, especially in light of their contribution to environmental damage and global climate change. In response, interest in relevant

Indigenous social practices as well as the philosophies and frameworks that ground and govern them has been increasing, even at high levels of global governance. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in 2019 officially recognized the detailed knowledge of biodiversity and ecosystem trends that Indigenous peoples and local communities have amassed.[25] The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2030 explicitly rely on the knowledge of local communities for designing and implementing sustainable policies and practices.[26] And *The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene*, the 2020 Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme, takes Indigenous knowledge of conservation to be fundamental for the "great transformation" toward environmental sustainability, which is becoming more urgent by the day.[27]

This recent global interest connects with Indigenous communities' own long-standing struggles to achieve self-determination and secure thriving human-nature relationships.[28] Among the results of this nexus are collective Indigenous declarations.[29] What is more, Indigenous struggles have ushered in significant transformations in governance and law (both domestically and internationally). In Aotearoa, for example, a recent product of decades-long treaty settlement efforts is the granting of legal personhood to natural entities, which centers and protects local tribal communities' relationships with rivers, mountains, and forested areas.[30]

Not only do these political and legal reforms recognize the role of local Indigenous communities in global socioenvironmental protection, and the importance of forming partnerships with them in the face of global challenges. Such transformations, and the Indigenous struggles that are their origins, also provide important insights and evidence for how practices and practice-centered thinking can contribute to the way local communities are included in climate conversations and policy.

What is more, that inclusion can be argued for from the perspective of subsidiarity—the notion that social/political issues are best dealt with at the most immediate (or local) level that is consistent with their resolution and the promotion of the common good.[31] For that, we refer to relevant work in the field of global health. With the aim of reordering our assumptions about the value of situated, on-the-ground knowledge in the global health literature, Seye Abimbola details some of the practical and moral benefits (and, correspondingly, avoidances of injustice) of adopting a principle of subsidiarity.[32] Practical

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benefits include allowing on-the-ground actors who understand local problems to take initiative, to experience the consequences of their own choices and actions, and to revise their own knowledge based on intimate, placed-based experiences, thus promoting communal responsibility taking, learning, and resilience. Moral benefits include the transfer of accountability to local communities, the inspiration of confidence in the value and use of local knowledges, and the recognition of the importance of pursuing a common good.

To secure these benefits, the primary agents of knowledge (considered primary, or proximate, in that they daily enact practices on the ground and transform the local structural determinants of need satisfaction for themselves and for other local practice participants) should be able to produce and use their own knowledge, and to have it recognized by others as such. Subsidiary agents of knowledge (considered subsidiary, or distant, in that they collect, compile, package, and trade the knowledge of primary agents, as well as use it to design policy), on the other hand, should support primary agents when and where they seek help, in ways that enable and empower them to achieve their own goals. In our view, these points apply not just to the domain of health but also (in keeping with our key concept of concern) to social practices more generally—including those that are relevant to environmental destruction and climate change.

Abimbola differentiates between four knowledge-producing and knowledge-using groups, the first two of whom represent primary, and the latter two of whom represent subsidiary, agents of knowledge: (1) activists, who challenge existing social structures and practice institutions that disadvantage them and other groups of local practitioners; (2) technicians and administrators,[33] who work within existing structures and institutions to secure the goods of their practice (and make incremental changes, at best); (3) policymakers, who design structures and institutions at various levels (especially on the local-global spectrum); and (4) academics, who collect, compile, and repackage the knowledge of the first and second groups, disseminate it through publications and teaching, and sometimes create new knowledge themselves.

Abimbola argues that while the first two groups are the key producers of knowledge in the health domain, systematic conversations about global health occur primarily between the latter two, policymakers and academics. Far removed from on-the-ground practice (and practice participants), they render the expertise and knowledge needs of activists as well as technicians and administrators invisible. As a consequence, global health "literature reads like a conversation to which

the primary participants were not invited."[34] To better advance global health, the practice requires epistemic structures and processes that properly engage at the level where contextual problem-solving and change can, and most often does, occur. Thus, we have good reason to reform these structures and processes in ways that recognize the expertise and needs of proximate practice participants, thereby empowering them to further pursue and achieve the goods of their practice on the ground (and, due to sheer accumulation over time, in the world at large).

These insights also apply to global goal- and policy-setting discussions regarding most other domains or concerns, including conversations on global climate change and the social practices so intimately connected to it. They, too, are dominated by academics and policymakers largely disconnected from the lived experiences of proximate, on-the-ground practice participants[35]—including those who belong to Indigenous communities. The latter have typically been treated as passive recipients of environmental change and reform, rather than as active agents capable of responding locally and contributing to global agenda- and policy-setting.[36] Their exclusion in global climate justice conversations and policy-making represents a lack of recognition of knowledge-making and knowledge-using agency (and of unique practical and place-based knowledge itself),[37] which itself is another form of injustice.

As in the case of global health, reorganizing our epistemic structures and processes relevant to worldwide climate change discussions and policy is a necessary condition for ensuring that Indigenous communities can both actively engage in these conversations and aid in the (re)shaping of these policies. It also allows us to secure the practical and moral benefits outlined by Abimbola. Thereby, Indigenous and other communities will become likelier to retain the relevant capabilities for enacting practices locally and, as we argued earlier, these practices of local communities will have a better chance of helping them flourish in their current circumstances. In other words, epistemic reorganization is another form of the kind of Indigenous practice community empowerment that we highlighted above.

To understand how Indigenous communities might aid in the (re)shaping of global policy, let us return to the Indigenous notions of kaitiakitanga and rāhui once more. As previously noted, kaitiakitanga conceptualizes responsibilities to protect and enhance human-environment relationships and guides practices through norms of care, use restriction, and restoration. Under that umbrella,

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rāhui imposes radical (albeit oftentimes temporary) restrictions to restore damaged human-nature relationships. Such ideas could have a profound impact on limiting global social practices much more widely (for example, through legal personhood provisions for natural entities across the globe) and shake up some of the mainstream narratives about climate change mitigation policies.

Conclusion

In a highly globalized world, where climate change–induced and other forms of environmental degradation increasingly affect the flourishing of virtually all humans, Indigenous and other local communities continue to be subject to the greatest degrees of social, political, economic, and cultural marginalization. At the same time, these communities' social practices—existing and surviving only through continuous performance of their members—account for much of the richness and diversity of a global practice portfolio. Protecting local practice communities, and enabling them to thrive, is a critical issue of justice. Key obstacles to their ability to thrive include barriers to participating in global decision-making, a lack of recognition of the central role of social practices for charting on-the-ground change, and a subsequent lack of imagination in reconceiving global climate goals and strategies. By reforming global climate policy structures and processes to account for the contributions of Indigenous and other local practitioners, our worldwide climate conversations and the policies they spawn might get us closer to securing flourishing for all in the long term. The shared future of Indigenous communities, and indeed of our entire planet, depends on it.

NOTES

[1] These two types of diversity are sometimes jointly referred to as "biocultural diversity," but we will keep them separate here. See, for instance, Luisa Maffi, ed., *On Biocultural Diversity: Linking Language, Knowledge, and the Environment* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

[2] Axel Honneth, "Integrity and Disrespect: Principles of a Conception of Morality Based on the Theory of Recognition," *Political Theory* 20, no. 2 (May 1992), pp. 187–201; Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996); and Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in Amy Gutmann, ed., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 25–73.

[3] Intergovernmental Science-Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, *Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (Bonn, Germany: IPBES, 2019); and United Nations Development Programme, *The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene*, Human Development Report 2020 (New York: UNDP, 2020), report.hdr.undp.org; and Hans-Otto Pörtner, Robert J. Scholes, John Agard, Rik Leemans, Emma Archer, Xuemei Bai, David Barnes, et al., *IPBES-IPCC Co-Sponsored Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Climate Change* (Bonn, Germany: IPBES, 2021).

4 Mandy Li-Ming Yap and Krushil Watene, "The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Indigenous Peoples: Another Missed Opportunity?," *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 20, no. 4 (2019), pp. 451–67.

5 United Nations, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly, September 13, 2007), www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html; James Anaya, *Indigenous Peoples in International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Krushil Watene and Roger Merino, "Indigenous Peoples: Self-Determination, Decolonization, and Indigenous Philosophies," in Jay Drydyk and Lori Keleher, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Development Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 134–47.

6 Merata Kawharu, "Kaitiakitanga: A Maori Anthropological Perspective of the Maori Socioenvironmental Ethic of Resource Management," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 110, no. 4 (2000), pp. 349–70.

7 Krushil Watene, "Kaitiakitanga: Toward an Intergenerational Philosophy," in Stephen Gardiner, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Intergenerational Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, in press).

8 Nicholas James Reo and Kyle Powys Whyte, "Hunting and Morality as Elements of Traditional Ecological Knowledge," *Human Ecology* 40, no. 1 (2012), pp. 15–27; Nicholas J. Reo and Jason W. Karl, "Tribal and State Ecosystem Management Regimes Influence Forest Regeneration," *Forest Ecology and Management* 260, no. 5 (July 2010), pp. 734–43; Donald M. Waller and Nicholas J. Reo, "First Stewards: Ecological Outcomes of Forest and Wildlife Stewardship by Indigenous Peoples of Wisconsin, USA," *Ecology and Society* 23, no. 1 (2018), art. 45; and Priscilla M. Wehi and William L. Wehi, "Traditional Plant Harvesting in Contemporary Fragmented and Urban Landscapes," *Conservation Biology* 24, no. 2 (April 2010), pp. 594–604.

9 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), p. 187. See also Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity: An Essay on Desire, Practical Reasoning, and Narrative* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

10 While a person's nonbasic (or complex) action is one that he or she performs by carrying out some other action, a basic action is one that does not involve carrying out another action. See Frederick Stoutland, "Basic Actions and Causality," *Journal of Philosophy* 65, no. 16 (August 1968), pp. 467–75. See also Donald Davidson, "Agency," in Robert W. Binkley, Richard Bronaugh, and Ausonio Marras, eds., *Agent, Action, and Reason* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), pp. 3–37; and Jane R. Martin, "Basic Actions and Simple Actions," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1972), pp. 59–68.

11 Less prominent and less narrow theories of practice—expounded by Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-François Lyotard, and Charles Taylor—are rather heterogeneous, and no authoritative or synthetic version has established itself yet. See Theodore R. Schatzki, *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

12 Marco Grix, "The Ethics and Politics of Consumption" (doctoral thesis, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 2019), hdl.handle.net/2292/49071; Schatzki, *Social Practices*; and Andreas Reckwitz, "Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 2 (May 2002), pp. 243–63.

13 These performances include speech acts.

14 These attributes include person-internal resources such as physical energy (labor) and mental energy.

15 Included in these resources is time.

16 Kyle Whyte, "Settler Colonialism, Ecology and Environmental Injustice," *Environment and Society* 9, no. 1 (September 2018), pp. 125–44; Kyle Whyte, "Our Ancestors' Dystopia Now: Indigenous Conservation and the Anthropocene," in Ursula Heise, Jon Christensen, and Michelle Niemann (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities* (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 206–15, kylewhyte.marcom.cal.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2018/07/Our_Ancestors_Dystopia_Now_Indigenous_C03.pdf; and Watene, "Kaitiakitanga."

17 Manfred A. Max-Neef, Antonio Elizalde, Martín Hopenhayn, and Sven Hamrell, *Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections* (New York: Apex, 1991).

18 Māori Marsden and Te Aroha Henare, "Kaitiakitanga: A Definitive Introduction to the Holistic Worldview of the Maori" (Wellington: Ministry for the Environment, 1992); Krushil Watene and Mandy Li-Ming Yap, "Culture and Sustainable Development: Indigenous Contributions," *Journal of Global Ethics* 11, no. 1 (2015), pp. 51–55; and Watene, "Kaitiakitanga."

19 Nicola Wheen and Jacinta Ruru, "Providing for Rāhui in the Law of Aotearoa New Zealand," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 120, no. 2 (June 2011), pp. 169–82; and Nigel Scott, "Does the Commercial Fishing of Antarctic Toothfish Have a Future? A Critical Assessment from a Ngāi Tahu Tikanga

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31 For a classic version of the Catholic version of the principle, see Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), sec 3.1.2.1.

32 Seye Abimbola, "The Uses of Knowledge in Global Health," *BMJ Global Health* 6 (2021), pp. 1–7.

33 Abimbola refers to these groups as "plumbers," but we find this label unsuitable.

34 Abimbola, "The Uses of Knowledge in Global Health," pp. 1–2.

35 Given that Abimbola's focus is on global health and its institutional structures specifically, his four-type classification of practice participants does not lend itself to being applied to social practices in general. For our purposes, it lacks local community practitioners (who make up a large portion of proximate, on-the-ground practice participants) in particular. Due to scope, we will develop and discuss a modified classification elsewhere.

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Abstract: Communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as reduced access to material resources and increased exposure to adverse weather conditions, are intimately tied to a considerable amount of cultural and biological diversity on our planet. Much of that diversity is bound up in the social practices of Indigenous groups, which is why these practices have great long-term value. Yet, little attention has been given to them by philosophers. Also neglected have been the historical conditions and contemporary realities that constrain these practices and devalue the knowledge of their practitioners. In this essay, we make the case for preserving a diverse range of social practices worldwide, and we argue that this is possible only by strengthening the communities of practitioners who enact them in the contexts in which they are adaptive. By concentrating on Indigenous communities, we show how focusing on practices can transform how Indigenous and other local communities are represented in global climate-change conversations and policy as a matter of justice. More specifically, we argue that practice-centered thinking and local practices provide critical insights for determining the extent to which climate policies protect and enable transformative change.

Keywords: Social practices, climate change, justice, diversity, Indigenous communities, Indigenous philosophy, kaitiakitanga

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