


## Chapter 5

# Intersectionality in Transnational Education Policy Research

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*This review assesses intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological approach to transnational education policy research. In particular, we are concerned with how the concept is translated and interpreted to interrogate globally circulating education policies and how that transformation might inform the concept within Western and Northern contexts. We acknowledge intersectionality's origins in U.S. Black feminist scholarship, but anticipate transformations as it travels to "Other" contexts and is translated to theorize systemic inequality in particular albeit interconnected spaces. Examining Eastern and Southern Hemisphere English-language, Chinese-language, and Spanish-language peer-reviewed publications, we ask how intersectionality translates to languages other than English and to Eastern and Southern contexts, and what analytic insights are gained from intersectionality's travel and translation that may contribute to its reconceptualization in Northern and Western contexts. Intersectionality coupled with transnationalism provides theoretical and methodological might toward understanding complex systems of inequality through/in which education policy travels, critiquing how inequality continues to flourish within nation-states and global-level hierarchies and privileging non-Western/Southern struggles for equity.*

### RESEARCH TOPIC AND GOALS

The purpose of this review is to assess intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological approach to transnational education policy research. In particular, we are concerned with how the concept is translated and interpreted to interrogate globally circulating education policies and how that transformation might inform the concept within Western and Northern contexts. We acknowledge intersectionality's origins in United States' Black feminist scholarship, but anticipate transformations as it travels to "Other" contexts and is translated to theorize systemic inequality in particular albeit interconnected spaces (Collins

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& Bilge, 2016). “Translation is an integral element of transnational knowledge production” (Choo, 2012, p. 41), and so we wonder how intersectionality has been translated to examine education policy’s travels through transnational spaces or networks (Ball, 2016; Ball & Junemann, 2012; Nagel, 2010). Intersectionality coupled with transnationalism, we hope, provides theoretical and methodological might toward understanding complex systems of inequality through/in which education policy travels, critiquing how inequality continues to flourish within nation-states and global-level hierarchies and privileging non-Western/Southern struggles for equity.

### Questions

We will examine non-Western and Southern Hemisphere English-language, Chinese-language, and Spanish-language peer-reviewed education policy analyses. The questions guiding this review are the following:

1. How does intersectionality translate to languages other than English and to Eastern and Southern contexts?
2. What analytic insights are gained from intersectionality’s travel and translation that may contribute to its reconceptualization in Northern and Western contexts?

### Key Concepts and Argument

Initially, intersectionality was conceptualized as “a way of framing the various interactions of race and gender in the context of violence against women of color” in the United States (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1296). The concept has traveled within the U.S. academy (e.g., Asher, 2007; Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013; Cole, 2009; Collins, 2000; Gillborn, 2015; Gonzalez, Tefera, & Artiles, 2015; Grant & Zwier, 2011; Patil, 2013; Pillow, 2017; Posey-Maddox, 2017) and has recently been translated. Transnationalism, we argue, creates an urgent need for multiscaled intersectional analyses because of the role the nation plays in the formation of differences and inequalities (Grzanka, 2014; Mohanty, 2013) and because of the changing role of the State in policymaking. Nation is “transmogrified into an independent variable, rather than a historical process that is produced within and by local and global gender, sexual, economic, and racial politics” (Grzanka 2014, p. 197). We build on what Patil (2013) and other scholars have argued to articulate a more complex understanding of nations, borders, and migrations in this review of research that applies intersectionality to analyze education policy in transnational context.

Specifically, we present Choo and Ferree’s (2010) three practices<sup>1</sup> of intersectionality as both theoretical and methodological frameworks. Their three practices of intersectional analysis for sociology translate well to the interdisciplinary field of education policy analysis and the transnational policy context. They are group-centered or inclusive of multiply marginalized persons; process-centered or capturing analytic interactions of oppressive regimes; and systems-centered or institutional complexity. As a theoretical framework for this study, the practices imbue intersectionality with meaning, illuminating the complexity and the multiplicity of ways inequality is produced as identity, in relation to and with others, and institutionally.

The practices also serve as our methodological framework because it potentially provided the analytic view needed to understand policy at the multiple levels that it is enacted. In other words, we explore methodological approaches that are associated with the theoretical meaning of intersectionality and its analytic application. We do not force the practices on the literature but rather seek out how the authors have framed their analysis theoretically and methodologically. Our intention in understanding these practices of intersectionality is grounded in the importance of furthering transnational education policy analysis focused on challenging long-standing inequalities. In framing our review and discussion in this way, we advocate for envisioning intersectionality as methodology for transnational education policy analysis as it relates to conceptualizing social and educational inequalities not as segmented, but rather, as multiply determined and intertwined.

### **Organization of the Review**

We begin by explaining how we understand and apply intersectionality in our review. We continue by elaborating our search process and selection criteria. Next are the findings from our analysis of 32 articles. The articles were first sorted into Choo and Ferree's (2010) three practices of intersectionality and short titled: group centered, process centered, and systems centered. This means we looked within the articles to find how the authors designed their study to examine education policy. Within these three main sections, we first explain how the articles reflect a group-, process-, or systems-centered approach. Next, we explain how the articles reveal the complex ways multiple forms of inequality intersect. In other words, what combinations of inequality are revealed by the analyses? And how do the multiple forms intersect? This is followed by a description of the ways inequality continues to flourish in the policy context. How, if at all, has policy addressed the complexity of inequality identified? Each section concludes with a discussion of what Western and Northern scholars might learn from the interpretation or translation of intersectionality in the "Other" context. What might be learned from the analyses to be applied to the U.S. context, specifically? The subsections are a restatement of our goals for this review and are short titled complex combinations, inequality flourishes, and interpretations beyond. In conclusion, we revisit the two guiding questions. Finally, we place our review in conversation with the special issue's focus.

### **INTERSECTIONALITY AS THEORY AND METHODOLOGY**

Globally circulating education policies merit systematic analysis within and across transnational spaces (e.g., Fimyar, 2014; Powers, 2014; Robert, 2017) as an evolving global and local hierarchy. Thus, this review is concerned with the ways "multiply marginalized persons and groups" (Choo & Ferree, 2010) intertwined in a "matrix of domination" (Collins, 2000) are situated within multiple, larger institutional and geopolitical contexts and across spaces that we refer to as transnational. The spaces where intersectional analysis is needed are tangible and virtual, existing within and across nation-states (Purkayastha, 2012). Within them, ideologies, interactions, and institutions sustain and expand in new ways multiple axes of inequality and control of people.

[Patricia Hill Collins] . . . hoped [intersectionality] would travel beyond the U.S., not as yet another American export to the world, but part of the beginnings of a dialogue with similarly subordinated groups in a global context as well as those who wish to build vibrant multiethnic societies. (Choo, 2012, p. 40)

Intersectionality has moved well beyond the United States, as a fast-traveling theory, embraced by a global community of activists (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Hancock, 2016). Still there is a necessity for women of color theories within critical policy analysis (Pillow, 2017). Perhaps intersectionality can be applied to analyze different contexts and the paucity of “third-world women” in knowledge production (e.g., Ang, 2003; Bunjun, 2010; Mohanty, 2003; Mohanty, Russo, & Torres, 1991).<sup>2</sup>

Intersectionality is more than just an explanation for the manifestation of multiple forms of oppression; it is a way to examine the complex processes by which oppression is produced on multiple levels. Thus, when we sought out a means to understand the ongoing production of education inequality around the world, we also needed to find a means by which that production could be isolated in policy analyses that may be focused at the level of persons or groups, may be reflected in the interactional nature of policy enactment (Braun, Maguire, & Ball, 2010), or at the level of complex institutions or systems through which policy travels. We turned to Choo and Ferree’s (2010) practices of intersectionality to facilitate our desired view of intersectional inequality resulting from education policy.

### **Three Ways to Practice Intersectionality**

#### *First Practice: Group-Centered or Inclusive of Multiply Marginalized Persons*

The first practice is characterized as giving voice to perspectives of silenced persons. This practice brings individuals and the groups they “represent” to the fore though often fails to challenge hegemonic categories or capture how the categories work simultaneously and beyond the micro level. Moreover, the outcome is often an explanation of oppressive groups’ experiences to the mainstream. There is often a failure to critique that very mainstream or advantaged position that exists as a result of disadvantage within society. Additionally, its methodological emphasis on inclusion sometimes “fetishizes study of ‘difference’ without necessarily giving sufficient attention to its relation to unmarked categories” (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 133). Thus, it is referred to as the less complicated (though not less complex) methodological approach to intersectional research and as such the most common in literature.

#### *Second Practice: Process-Centered or Capturing Analytic Interactions of Oppressive Regimes*

The second practice is typified by comparative and contextualized examinations of “relational” (Glenn, 2000) interactions that are sometimes inter- and at other times anticategorical (McCall, 2005). The emphasis is on the dynamic multilevel forces constructing inequality, or regimes and patterns in which we can identify a collusion of persons’ agency and institutional constraints producing advantage/disadvantage. The challenge to its application—it is more complicated to apply to studies than the first practice—lies in methodological design. For example, where might a

researcher “look for” or “find” this process? Also problematic for methodological application is the tendency to overemphasize abstract institutions or personify institutional tools such as policy at the expense of agency and persons.

### *Third Practice: System-Centered or Institutional Complexity*

The third practice illuminates “how inequalities span and transform structures and activities at all levels and in all institutional contexts” (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 135). Differences exemplified by categories are jettisoned for relational and complex understandings. The challenge is to “identify the local and historically particular configurations of inequalities” (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 136). A limitation is the inability to disengage systems of inequality from a particular “level,” for example, gender only explained as a personal attribute rather than a complex and transnational system of inequality or class as an economic “problem” part of a global economic system. There are no additions to analyses of inequality when this approach is pursued.

Our intent is not to critique or point out flaws when we apply the framework to the articles found. Like Choo and Ferree (2010), we “attempt to show how and when these three meanings become deployed” (p. 131). We speculate that by reading for the three approaches within the literature selected, we will be able to reveal how the concept is translated and interpreted to interrogate globally circulating education policies. In a sense, the adoption of the practices is an addition to the toolbox needed to theorize education policies in Latin America (e.g., Beech & Meo, 2016) and the many other locations included in this review.

Intersectionality has been theorized and retheorized into academic talk, used less for acting on inequality, a critique and a challenge we do not necessarily overcome with this review. We are wary of contributing to and participating in a process that perpetuates and extends a limited application of intersectionality as a “buzzword” (Davis, 2008) into education policy analysis, but acknowledge our location within the talkative academy, not within a social movement or grassroots organization. Thus, we set as our goal an honest, analytic one, pushing and pulling intersectionality toward clarity in its application in policy analyses and to learn from colleagues located beyond the U.S. academy.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Search Criteria

While Choo and Ferree’s (2010) three practices of intersectionality did not require translation, the development of selection criteria entailed a complex process of translation between authors. We had to come to “terms” with transnational and intersectionality, both of which are a bit slippery. In the case of intersectionality, inequality or any number of systems of inequality from ability to xenophobia may be combined as focal concepts within a study selected for review. We initially limited our searches to the term *intersectionality* (more on this below).

Transnational education policy presented similar challenges to define. At times, it appeared as a signifier for globalization or even neoliberalism or just simply, global

policy initiatives. We do not wish to conflate transnationalism-to-globalization-to-neoliberalism, nor do we aim to deflate the imagined nation at the behest of a “global.” The literature included these various terms often with an explanation of traveling and/or adopted and adapted transnational education policies.

We limited our searches to peer-reviewed articles and to 2006 to 2017 to capture the significant changes in the transnational policy arena. The Millennium Development Goals emerged in 2000 with a goal of completion in 2015, representing significant commitments on global and national scales to address intersectional inequality in education. The delayed timeframe is an acknowledgment of publishing timelines for research and then the peer-reviewed articles produced afterward.

### **Searches in Multiple Databases and Multiple Languages**

We first searched for literature in English, our shared language, using the following terms: *transnational education policy* and *intersectionality*. We used Google Scholar and U.S. academic databases (Academic Search Complete, ERIC, and Education Source). We repeated the search adding on *Southern Hemisphere*, *non-Western Hemisphere*, *Global South*, and *specific nations*. With each search, we sifted through the “hits” for peer-reviewed articles.

Next, we individually conducted searches in Google Scholar, academic databases, and regional or linguistic-specific databases for Chinese and Spanish. Robert conducted the search in Spanish and Yu conducted the search in Chinese. However, before conducting the actual searches, we referred to regional scholars to identify translations for the terms. Spivak (2000) warns against “‘convenient’ translations, produced without real understanding of the source materials and their cultural history . . . [The translations] signal the danger of generalizing about other cultures from one, powerful (in recent years, Anglo-American) perspective” (von Flotow, 2011, para 12). Meanwhile, K.-H. Chen (2010) argues that translation

gives us a way to conduct reinvestigations that allow the organic shape and characteristics of local society and modernity to surface . . . translation is not simply a linguistic exercise but a social linguistics, or an intersection of history, sociology, and politics. (p. 244)

Heeding these lessons, we consulted Latin American scholars and Chinese scholars for translations for intersectionality and transnational education policy. With the translations, we then conducted searches described below.

For Spanish-language literature, we did not limit the focus by nation, or region. We included articles in Spanish that focus on Latin American contexts and on Spain. The Spain-based studies were included because they also represented analyses of transnational populations, examining the movement of Latin Americans to Spain. We searched with the terms *interseccionalidad* [intersectionality] and *políticas educativas* [education policy] in Google Scholar, Education Source, ERIC, Academic Search Complete, and the Database of Research on International Education as a means of verifying our search results, using English and Spanish terms within them.<sup>3</sup> We also searched within the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), which is a regional Open Access repository.

For the Chinese literature, we focused on education research in mainland China. We searched China Academic Journals Full-text Database (CNKI) and National Social Sciences Database (NSSD), and looked within journals included in the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI). It is worth noting that “intersectionality” [jiaochaxing 交叉性] is new to many scholars in mainland China (e.g., Su, 2016) and many Chinese articles do not necessarily use the term *intersectionality* when bringing, for example, class and ethnic inequality in conversation with gender. Thus, we selected articles with combinations of the following keywords: education policy [jiaoyu zhengce 教育政策], education equity [jiaoyu gongping 教育公平], education equality [jiaoyu pingdeng 教育平等], gender [xingbie 性别], female [nǚxing 女性], ethnic minorities [shaoshu minzu 少数民族], and class [jieceng/jieji 阶层/阶级]. The search for English-language and Spanish-language studies was fruitful. However, the search for Chinese-language publications initially was not, which is why additional terms were combined to pull forth the studies reviewed.

A full account of addressing the anxiety of “representing Asia” and challenging a biased, circumscribed understanding of Asia via scholarship from mainland China is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the imbalances exacerbated by different colonial experiences and corresponding national tendencies (K.-H. Chen, 2010). We recognize the politics of location and identity shaped by contemporary Chinese society’s similar but also unique historical power structure compared with other Asian societies. The educational and social experiences of different groups in China do not represent multiple inequalities that exist regionally. We aim instead to tease out historical transformations within the specific context of lived experiences of invisible groups and varied combinations of systemic inequalities.

The findings are subdivided by intersectional approach—group, process, and systems centered. The three approaches are subdivided to address our three goals—examine three different approaches to intersectional research, identify combinations of inequality, how inequality flourishes in the policy context, and insight from translations.

### Selection Criteria

We searched each database using the same combinations of search terms. We then reviewed the hits, selecting articles that met the following criteria. First, we excluded hits that fell outside the 2006 to 2017 timeframe. Then, we selected non-Northern- and non-Western-based researchers, writing about non-Northern and non-Western locations. We actively sought to bring to the fore colleagues’ research beyond the metropolises though must acknowledge that within the Southern Hemisphere there are power hierarchies and privilege too.

Then, we sifted through the hits again for peer-reviewed articles. Non-peer-reviewed papers such as those in newsletters and university or faculty bulletins were excluded though often found in the Latin American/Spanish searches. Also found though not included were nongovernmental organization reports and publications. Books and book chapters were excluded. They were catalogued in the databases unevenly. Taylor & Francis dominate but we were unable to ascertain if this is because

Taylor & Francis dominate publishing on related topics or because of the databases' inclusion criteria. We excluded theses, though acknowledge that like books and edited compilations, there is rigor and a review process. However, like books and book chapters, there is an unevenness to their cataloguing in databases. When theses were found in searches, we searched by title and author for peer-reviewed articles to try and include new scholars' work. Finally, we excluded articles that did not focus on an education policy or policies. Our searches and selection process yielded a total of 32 peer-reviewed articles. Each article is identified and summarized in the findings below according to the practice of intersectionality adopted by the authors.

Our analysis of how intersectionality is applied to examine transnational education policy was guided by four questions. First, we identified the intersectional approach employed: group centered, process centered, systems centered. (a) How do scholars attend to the complexity and specificity of intersectionality in relation to transnational education policy? Then, we read the articles for the three goals we alluded to in the review's first paragraph, reworded as questions here and in parentheses we include the shortened subtitle used to identify our responses to the questions in the findings: (b) How does intersectionality help advance our understanding of complex systems of oppression through/in which education policy travels? (Complex combinations), (c) How does the intersectional approach adopted critique whether and how inequality continues to flourish within nation-states and global-level hierarchies? (Inequality flourishes?), (d) How are non-Western/Southern struggles for equity privileged within the intersectional analysis of transnational education policies? (Interpretations beyond). Thus, in short, the findings are organized into three sections, titled as the three practices of intersectionality, and each section contains four subsections.

## FINDINGS

### **Group Centered: Voicing Multiple Experiences of Transnational Education Policies**

Three articles were found that applied the first practice of intersectionality to policy analysis: Dieltiens, Unterhalter, Letsatsi, and North (2009); Santamaria (2016); and Serrano Riobó (2014). From its inception, "part of the utility of an intersectional analysis . . . was to give voice to the particularity of the perspectives and needs of women of color who often remained invisible *as women*" (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 132, italics in original). Methodologically, the emphasis was on bringing multiply marginalized groups to the center, representing an oppressed position or standpoint that contrasted a mainstream or hegemonic one.

There is a strong tradition of testimonials [*testimonios*] in Latin America, which are first-person narrations of experiences and perspectives. The method has importantly brought the voices of women into the region's literature and historical narratives especially indigenous and politically active (radical) women. Surprisingly, there were only three studies found that applied the first intersectional practice to



transnational education policy. Not surprising was the focus of Santamaria (2016) and Serrano Riobó (2014) on bringing the voices of indigenous women to bear on education policies. Santamaria (2016) shares the life trajectories of two Arahauco leaders, who are women, Ati Quigua and Luz Elena Izquierdo, as they negotiated a variety of education barriers from outright exclusion to epistemological dissonance. The article aims to understand how in the context of inclusive and indigenous education contexts the indigenous and women leaders navigated exclusionary Colombian and indigenous culture toward public leadership roles. Serrano Riobó (2014) introduces the educational trajectories of four indigenous women who rose to leadership positions within their communities and within the broader society: Rosa Manuela Montero, pueblo kankuamo leader; Mildred Patricia Montero, pueblo kankuamo leader; Beatriz Saniceto, pueblo nasa; and Abigail Piñacué, pueblo nasa. Despite inclusive education policies—addressing ethnicity and gender—the pervasive constraints of intersectional inequality create significant barriers to education capital all the while that capital was crucial to their self-fulfilment and to leadership roles. Within testimonios and their analysis are insights on how indigenous and nonindigenous schools and education policies that create them continue a vicious cycle of oppression while at the same time also offering paths toward education capital.

Dieltiens et al. (2009) also reflected elements of the first practice (and the second and third) but not by bringing forth the voices of multiply marginalized local populations. Rather, the researchers bring to the literature the voices of South African policy actors who are differentially advantaged on a global scale of transnational policy flows. They reveal the limitations of abstract global ideals (in this case the Millennium Development Goals) when enacted as local gender equity policies in the national constitution and in the department of education, ignoring “legacies of gender, race, or location” (Dieltiens et al., 2009, p. 367).

### *Complex Combinations*

There is a “coloniality of power” and “colonization of the mind” (Korol, 2007, as cited in Santamaria, 2016, p. 17) written into the studies in this grouping. Ethnicity and/or racism affect the Arhuaco, Nasa, and Kankuama women’s struggles for educational capital despite 25 years of legal and policy acknowledgments (Santamaria, 2016). Naming gender, race, or locational inequality in laws and policies does not address ongoing oppressions within postcolonial contexts. Nations may adopt language and take simple measurements based on headcounts but that does not equate to equality and most certainly not equity. Histories of oppression are not erased by the erasure of exclusionary policies. How many U.S.-based quantitative and qualitative researchers would similarly count boys and girls to illuminate the success of a multitude of transnational educational policy ideals? This question is not meant to give the South African policy actors in Dieltiens et al. (2009) a “break” but to underline the lack of intersectional knowledge among transnational educational policy actors and to question simplistic notions of policy transfer and translation.

By postcolonial, the authors of all three articles in this group are referring to a continuation of a colonial project characterized by White, European, patriarchal hegemony. Within this ideological project, education continues to reproduce a racist and sexist society also layered with a classed/modern industrialized one. History is not so easily erased or smothered by a blanket of new language.

Education was still as Serrano Riobó (2014) titled it: A domination project the indigenous leaders struggled against gender and ethnic marginalization to enter and remain within indigenous and nonindigenous education institutions while also navigating the complex interplay of gender, ethnicity, poverty, and colonialism of everyday life. Education inclusion does not address broader societal exclusion that the women had to navigate to get to the school door.

### *Inequality Flourishing*

Education is steeped in real and symbolic violence. In Santamaria (2016), Luz Elena Izquierdo and Ati Quigua, two Arhuaco women from Colombia, “fac[ed] education policies of latent homogenization from indigenous and educational institutions” (p. 17). For married women—and being married was the means to access education—a double burden is borne as she straddles community expectations and navigates institutional racism and exclusion. Serrano Riobó’s (2014) participants, Rosa Manuela Montero and Mildred Patricia Montero (both from the Nasa Community) and Beatriz Saniceto and Abigail Piñacué (both from the Kankuama Community), insist that access to Indigenous educational institutions is quite limited; there is an important need, they explain, to acknowledge how limited access is for indigenous women and men to the few institutions meant to open up paths toward education and that rather than open up opportunities intersectional inequality is intensified based on gender, based on the indigenous community, based on location, based on poverty, and based on access to the colonizers language. Similar constraints to girls’ access to education are not addressed by gender parity or gender equality policies in South Africa. What is overlooked is the marginalization in the nonschool arena that constrains access and opportunity within the school for girls.

Additionally accessing educational capital “costs” the women physically, psychologically, historically, and symbolically (Serrano Riobó, 2014). The women had to make difficult choices of divorcing so they might continue their journey of self-actualization and despite the dominant organization of society and women’s place within it constrained to marriage and family. The women separated from their children for long periods of time to complete education while living in poverty. The indigenous women who shared their educational trajectories (Santamaria, 2016; Serrano Riobó, 2014) negotiated policy spaces that offered an elusive education capital, constrained by a lack of space within indigenous institutions already isolated and marginalized within the overall Colombian educational system. Attending nonindigenous institutions marginalized the women on a smaller, more personal level.

However, it also pays for access to new labor markets, political communities, and growth. Education also pays back to their families and communities as they return to be leaders or to support siblings and children. In the end, higher education is a prerequisite to self-actualization for women called to lead within the community (though not an expectation). The continued inequality experienced by the indigenous women is a negotiation of trade-offs and transactions, a transformation of historic systems of oppression layered with new ones.

### *Interpretations Beyond*

Like Collins and Choo (e.g., Choo, 2012) desired, intersectionality can be interpreted into contexts beyond the United States to theorize the multiplicity of oppressions women experience. Both Serrano Riobó and Santamaria's studies combine Bourdieu (1997) and Bourdieu and Passeron's (2001) work with Latin American theorists Quijano (2000) and Segato (2010), specifically to theorize intersectionality within transnational, colonial, and postcolonial education projects. This suggests a move toward addressing imbalances in knowledge production necessary to recalibrate equitable transnational education policy knowledge. Unfortunately, Dieltiens et al. (2009) did not integrate other South African theorists or African Feminists, with Nancy Fraser's (1997) theory for recognition and redistribution of power for an emancipatory citizenship.

The three articles challenge inclusive educational discourses. Writing language of equity or equality does not make it appear in everyday educational experiences. Such ideals should be viewed with skepticism as to whether or not they alleviate *the White man's [and woman's] burden* that evolved from previous colonization projects into contemporary postcolonial and/or global ones. As educational policy researchers, do you know the history of the educational institutions and their role within the society that you study?

Intersectionality's travel beyond the United States is quite rich when the first practice is applied. Voices from local contexts are crucial for not only revealing marginalized experiences and perspectives, they are crucial to identifying local manifestations of and critiquing transnational education policy ideals. The three articles applied intersectionality theoretically and methodologically to understand the multiscaled power dynamics of transnational education policy without overlooking the historical legacies of oppression. The shortcomings of globally embraced language to address intersectional inequality is highlighted in each study. These studies reveal the diverging policy interpretations among global, national, and local education policy actors (and researchers for that matter) when transnational policies are interpreted into new contexts without critical and locally grounded reflection of what the ideal might mean in that context. Still, the three studies present policy researchers with the challenge of digging deeper into spaces to include and to learn from local actors' experiences of national and global policies and about local histories of education.

### **Process Centered: Comparing Interactions on Multiple Levels of Transnational Policies**

Six articles were found that applied the second intersectional approach: Brandão and Hill (2014); Dieltiens et al. (2009); Olmos Alcaraz (2016); Balsera (2015); Song (2016); and Torres Corona (2014). The second practice of intersectionality is described as methodologically more complicated than that of the first. The reasons are that it requires comparison and multilevel views of inequality (Choo & Ferree, 2010). For example, Brandão and Hill (2014) situate their study of implementing intersectionality into higher education courses in Ecuador's adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and The Salamanca Declaration of Education for All (1994). How might educators engage in intersectional, not discriminatory, practices through self-reflection and interaction with students? Also, researchers who aim for this approach must move beyond voice to reveal the processes through which oppression is culturally constructed and institutionalized, for example, via policies, normative value systems, or *social imaginaries* (Castoriadis, 1975, 2005, as cited in Torres Corona, 2014). In the case of Torres Corona, it is the processes of parents choosing to send their children to an elementary indigenous school in Mexico that require confronting histories of educational marginalization and reimagining and building new relationships to indigenous culture and to schools. This last concept, social imaginaries, refers to the very process that such an approach "captures" methodologically and theoretically, a dynamic, relational construction, for example, of the school, by social actors in conversation with the "magma" of historical, politicoreligious, socioeconomic, and linguistic images of society (Torres Corona, 2014). The second practice, however, requires explanations of dynamic processes that are not abstracted away from persons. Balance between varied levels of sociocultural constructions is the demand. Song (2016) frames the global-to-national-to-local linkages through transnational policies of inclusion and the adoption of Universal Design for Learning, a Northern and Western-centric philosophy and method for supporting diverse learners and implementing inclusive education. Her study focuses on South African townships, specifically. Balsera (2015) and Olmos Alcaraz (2016) confront the relationships of the colonized and the colonizer. Both examine the case of Ecuadorians who have moved to Spain.

#### *Complex Combinations*

Song (2016) succinctly critiques the ongoing application of Universal Design for Learning in the absence of knowledge about disability in the Global South. Her study is designed to bring discourses of disability into conversation with the material and economic conditions in schools on the periphery of global power. What is brought to the fore is the ways that disabilities are embodied by inhabitants of lands that have a history of colonialism, bringing to our attention the domination of Northern and Western epistemologies without regard for context. Unfortunately, Song also finds that receptive South African township teachers (teachers teaching historically marginalized

populations with less resources available) are cultivating their own versions of inclusive education that are context specific but not regarded by policymakers or by the teachers themselves as such, reflecting the hegemonic power of globally privileged perspectives.

The result of Song (2016) and of Dieltiens et al.'s (2009) studies is a "more methodologically appropriate and theoretically productive" study of equity and inclusion policies because their "assumptions about intersectionality were made explicit" (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 146). By making explicit the complex systems through which transnational education policy travels, the reader learns of policies relational intersectional qualities. At the same time, the authors, as well as Balsera and Olmos Alcaraz, reveal the symbolic violence of a continued "imposition of meanings that overtly legitimize power relations of historical colonial oppression" (Balsera, 2015, p. 159).

Gender is foregrounded by Dieltiens et al. (2009) somewhat reflecting segmented inclusion; however, it is not confined to "microlevel group[s] or individual social psychological-level processes" (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 135). Gender is not a simple headcount. Gender is an analytic tool for understanding education policy (Stambach & David, 2005). And gender equity is the connective policy tissue for illustrating the lack of attention to the intersectional legacies of gender–race–location within transnational education policy spaces. Both South African studies "critically interpret assumptions about free and equal citizens which do not consider such legacies" (Dieltiens et al., 2009, p. 367) and thus also bring in a critique of the ways that inequality continues to flourish.

Seeking a trifecta of intersecting inequalities was not the default methodological framework. While a multiplicity of constraining disadvantages was often mentioned, most studies critiqued the interplay of two such as perceived nationality and poverty (Balsera, 2015) or migrant and multilingualism (Olmos Alcaraz, 2016). Studies in this set beautifully illuminated the movement and interplay of complex combinations of oppression with transnational education policies of inclusion such as the relational qualities of antidiscriminatory education (Brandão & Hill, 2014); intercultural/multilingual education to immigration (Olmos Alcaraz, 2016); migrant education to economic and social integration (Balsera, 2015); and Universal Design Learning to disabilities (Song, 2016).

### *Inequality Flourishing*

Legacies of colonialism emerged as a defining factor in the continued reproduction of inequality (Balsera, 2015; Dieltiens et al., 2009; Song, 2016; Torres Corona, 2014). With the demands of this intersectional approach for interactional explanations within local spaces, we are introduced to the enduring effects of colonization, for example, through Ecuadorian youth living in Spain (Balsera, 2015). While Ecuadorian youth share the same language with Spanish youth and teachers, they nevertheless experience marginalization and othering within their schools due to what the youth describe as visible (racial profiling) and less visible (curriculum) factors. A similar regime of othering overshadows the Mexican parents' decision whether

or not to send their children to an indigenous elementary school (Torres Corona, 2014). Parents framed the nontraditional education as second class or “poor” compared with traditional schools. Still they send their child to indigenous school because of the better relationship with indigenous teachers or because as indigenous students themselves, the parents recalled the poor treatment at the nonindigenous school by nonindigenous teachers. In both instances, the parents are negotiating educational institutions in which they are marginalized and their own experiences of marginalization shape the schooling decision.

This set of six articles accomplish a difficult task, struggling to put multilevel data in conversation, to compare dynamic processes, and to avoid abstraction like Choo and Ferree (2010) warned. Dieltiens et al. (2009) and Song (2016) are situated in dynamic policy flows of global-to-national-to-practice levels. In both studies, the global is bridged to national level and policymaking is constructed through local practice. Dieltiens et al. (2009) frame the global level through the Millennium Development Goals for gender equity. At the national level, they point out that the “Constitution and the South African Schools Act promise to build a democratic, non-racist and non-sexist education system” (p. 365), adaptations of internal and external policy demands. At the practice level are South African policymakers translating policy for the education system. The authors critique all three levels for overlooking intertwined systems of uneven gender inequality. They urge an awareness that girls’ experiences are different among girls: There is no one version of a “third world girl,” to rephrase Mohanty (2003), and affirmative action measured by access or attainment does not equalize girls and boys struggles for education. Similarly, Song (2016) puts multilevel data in conversation to contextualize what is presumed to be natural, neutral, and applicable to all children around the world. She raises questions about the production of meaning in such terms as disability that often are overlooked or just ignored.

Brandão and Hill (2014) begin with a promising setup to process-oriented studies of intersectionality with a concern for disrupting the production of multiple inequalities within higher education. While offering strong, concise multileveled policy linkages and discussions of theoretical constructs, there were limited data and analysis of the micro-processes through which such policies are enacted (or not); there were no primary data. Historically and theoretically astute presentations of the polemic were not compared with or critiqued in conversation with the everyday production of intersectional educational inequality at the interstices of educator to student. How in everyday pedagogical engagements is discrimination constructed, or transformed, and practiced in spite of or in relation to the ideals of Education for All? It is clearly not enough to have national policies that embrace equality (as seen in all the cases); it is necessary to look within schools at talk, at curriculum, at practices to deconstruct and transform toward the new/alternative education model. Otherwise, the older framework remains.

Rather than finding only critiques of continued oppression, we also learned from the literature how to change pedagogical practices, support for teachers who wish to reflect on antidiscriminatory (Brandão & Hill, 2014) and intercultural–multilingual

(Olmos Alcaraz, 2016) education. Such contributions to the literature reflect the applied goals of intersectionality to bring change to systems of oppression.

### *Interpretations Beyond*

Authors crafted intersectionality from globally situated, local contexts. In fact, gender–race–class is not the default trifecta/option in this set of articles. Torres Corona (2014), for example, elaborates the intersection of socioeconomic conditions, previous school experience or lack thereof, and indigeneity to understand how parents construct meaning for a Mexican primary indigenous school. This example, like those offered above under the subheading of complex combinations, vividly illustrates that not all transnational policy dynamics are gender-laden and perhaps not global. Torres Corona explains that the dual system of primary and indigenous primary schooling is a 20th-century creation in and of Mexico. Though links can be made with other contexts and globally shared concerns for brutal colonization of indigenous populations and limited education access, the author makes clear that the polemic of educating a culturally and linguistically diverse and unequal population and the challenge of overcoming the marginalization stemming from the very term *indigenous* should be confronted by Mexico, as a nation, a bound system.

Theoretical frameworks driving the studies were predominantly derived from Southern Hemisphere and nondominant locales. While some Northern/Western and White scholars were drawn on (e.g., Harding, Fraser, Foucault, Goffman), there was an epistemological depth and breadth. Freire (1970/2000) and Connell (2007, 2014) represented theorists whose work is embraced across the hemispheric divides. There was only one mention of Crenshaw, a founding mother of intersectionality (Olmos Alcaraz, 2016). This particular article's mention of intersectionality was as a conclusion too. Perhaps the demands of the second approach demand local theory and methodology to bring forth findings.

### **Systems Centered: Continuity of Complex Historically Bound Systems**

Everything interacts and “societies are theorized as historically constructed, arbitrarily bounded systems” (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 136) whether the society in question is bound by nation or not. These were the dominant attributes of the third practice of intersectionality that we found in five studies: Chan de Avila, García Peter, and Zapata Galindo (2013); Dieltiens et al. (2009); Pazich and Teranishi (2014); Song (2016); and Torres Corona (2014).

### *Complex Combinations*

These studies dislodged gender and race from persons (Dieltiens et al., 2009; Pazich & Teranishi, 2014) and class from the economy (Torres Corona, 2014), for example, and instead aimed to reveal and critique the complex system of intersectionality in which gender and race and location and ethnicity are “fundamentally embedded in, working through, and determining” (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 135) in this

case educational opportunity. Some global-level comparative work is included (Pazich & Teranishi, 2014, explained below). However, systems-centered approaches are not always global. Global power is configured and reconfigured within national contexts such as is seen in Dieltiens et al. (2009) and Song (2016), discussed above. In both instances, researchers question the transnational education goals as a masked perpetuation of global hegemonies.

Transnational policies of inclusion also are questioned and examined through a systems-centered approach revealing further combinations of inequality. Torres Corona (2014) examines the impact on national education projects of such inclusive policies as indigenous education choices in Mexico, which are illuminated by the experiences of indigenous parents. Thus, we learn of the problematics of inclusion by looking across history and across the experience–institutional continuum.

While inclusion seems to encourage a dislodging of systems of inequalities at an institutional level and on a broader geographic scale, Chan de Avila et al. (2013) look at the translation of education inclusion and the expansion of educational opportunity on a regional level. They specifically examine new forms of exclusion produced within successful systems of higher education inclusion. What is revealed is, well, intersectionality: Systems of marginalization are tightly woven multithreaded fabrics. Pulling one thread does not necessarily unravel the piece of cloth. Instead, what is left is a new piece of cloth. In the case of Latin American higher education, “. . . one has to ask which Afro-descendants, which indigenous, which women, which men” (Chan de Avila et al., 2013, p. 133) are included (or excluded).

### *Inequality Flourishes*

Policies for alleviating inequality do not always lead to transformation at global, national, or local levels of systemic oppression. The persistence of inequality despite justice-oriented policies was critiqued in higher education affirmative action in Brazil and India (Pazich & Teranishi, 2014) and throughout Latin America as a region (Chan de Avila et al., 2013), as well as in South African inclusion policies for gender (Dieltiens et al., 2009) and disability (Song, 2016).

Indeed, Pazich and Teranishi (2014) reveal how within bound national systems of racial/caste-based and economic inequality, underrepresented groups’ access to higher education continues to be limited despite quotas. We, specifically, learned of the shortcomings of India’s and Brazil’s affirmative action programs in higher education. Higher education policies do not improve access to quality secondary education, which prepares multiply marginalized students for entrance exams and tertiary-level education. Thus, the heavily subsidized universities benefit those who need the subsidies least. Worse though, the policies are revealed to maintain privileged groups’ access to this important socioeconomic lever. For example, advantaged groups have been able to manipulate affirmative action to maintain privilege through amendments to the policies, which “water down” the quotas, creating fewer seats for more students. In the case of Brazil, an intersectional “light” adjustment to the affirmative



action policy created race- and class-based criteria. The authors explain that the result is less seats for students of color and poor students. The policies are manipulated by groups within power networks (financial, social, political, racial) who continue to attend university in greater percentages than multiply marginalized. This is but one example of many found in the literature detailing how dynamic forces of inequality operate through a “balanced combination of representational, social structural, and power dimensions” (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 145) to perpetuate advantaged positions and disadvantaged ones. And it is not just the power of policy/policymakers as in the case of Dieltiens et al. (2009). For example, the media played a significant role along with a national discourse of a “racial democracy” (a color inclusive society) promoting the amendment to the affirmative action policy such that students of color who would lose potential access cited a concern for being provided charity instead of gaining access due to merit.

Advantaged groups are able to mobilize systems of power to coopt policies (Pazich & Teranishi, 2014). The problem is found throughout Latin America leading to the development of a strategic program, *Medidas para la Inclusión Social y la Equidad en Instituciones de Educación Superior de América Latina* (MISEAL) [Measures for Social Inclusion and Equity in Higher Education Institutions of Latin America]. MISEAL aims to measure statistically, analyze theoretically, and share knowledge via a Latin American network to address the multidimensional nature of exclusion in universities (Chan de Avila et al., 2013).

### *Interpretations Beyond*

We include the Chan de Avila et al. (2013) study less because of its nature as an empirical study and more for its aim to privilege the sharing of knowledge of programs and data collection that are less abstract and more grounded in the bound historical systems in which inclusion and access to a just life and full citizenship is the elusive goal. MISEAL thus represents “a complex intersectional approach that looks for multilevel systems and situates them in local relations of power to expose processes that create and transform inequalities over time” (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 145). This project report, published as an article, acknowledges the nature of national systems of higher education as contingent systems within local and historically particular configurations of inequalities but also nods at the macro-level region as an important system within which knowledge can and should be produced and shared.

### **Conditioning Possibilities of Intersectional Education Policy Research in China**

To resist the “colonization of mind” and “coloniality of power” (Quijano, 2000), a growing number of Asian feminist scholars turn to various methodological and theoretical tools of intersectionality to address multiple axes of inequality within their nation-states (e.g., Choo, 2012; Su, 2016). For example, Choo (2012) and Su (2016) took the initial steps of introducing and translating intersectionality into Korean and

Chinese, respectively. In addition, Su (2016) provides an overview of the current trends of sociology and women's studies scholarship in mainland China to demonstrate the various applications of intersectional analysis even though the term *intersectionality* has yet been used in these texts. Such efforts echo a call from other postcolonial scholars in Asia for overcoming "unproductive anxieties" and developing "new paths of engagement," which propose "a means for self-transformation through shifting the points of reference toward Asia and the third world" (K.-H. Chen, 2010, p. 212).

### *Complex Combinations*

China has a wealth of cultural knowledge and diverse forms (e.g., poetry and folklore) in history that resist mainstream education discourses including people from multiply marginalized positions who analyze the internal hierarchy of Chinese education (e.g., Han chauvinism and patriarchal dominance), discuss conflicting social and political culture, and confront education inequality. This tradition emphasizes individual resistance through personal narratives to critique the systems of oppression at micro and macro levels, echoing certain aspects of intersectionality. In addition, the imperialist invasion, semicolonization, and socialist transformation in China's modern history collide with the subsequent late-socialist and neoliberal ideologies in contemporary Chinese society, which implicate the need for a dynamic set of analytic tools to address multilevel forces constructing educational inequality.

Contemporary discussions of educational policies have shown a different path than cultural resources and concrete needs have revealed. For example, gender discourse in a large number of Chinese education studies have been caught up with a constrained version of a Western feminism focused on representing "her" as a pure victim of patriarchy (X. Li, 2002; Zheng, 2005). Such representations neglect the existence of agency and resistance. They also narrow inequality to gender without attending to intersections with class, age, region, and ethnicity (Duan & Yang, 2008; J. Wang, 2008; Zhou, 2007).

The same constraint exists in research concerning ethnic minority education. As a multiethnic country with 56 ethnic groups, there have been contentious struggles to maintain ethnic diversity within a framework of national integration and unity (H. Chen & Yuan, 2015). China's ethnic minority education policies have adapted Fei Xiaotong's framework of "a unified pluralist," with the Han ethnic group as the core (R. Ma, 2007, p. 17), and a limited multicultural education framework for ethnic minority groups (Wan & Bai, 2008). On the one hand, ethnic solidarity, plurality, and preferential policies are in place to provide education for ethnic minority students (J.-Y. Wang, 2006; Yuan, 2010); on the other hand, recognition of multiple axes of inequalities produced by interrelated identities such as gender, class, culture, language, and dis/ability are often subsumed by ethnic diversity into discourses of national unity and social stability. The goal being assimilation of ethnic minority groups into mainstream society (Cherng, Hannum, & Lu, 2014; Hong, 2010).

*Inequality Flourishing*

A growing number of Chinese education scholars started to pay attention to marginalized groups' different experiences in relation to the multilevel social processes that shape this discrepancy, and try to apply the experiences to address the macro-structures of inequality (Teng, 2009; Wu, 2006). Although these studies have not yet used the term *intersectionality*, many are situated in conversations of gender and class. New studies are emerging that construct dialogues among different categories, for instance, gender, class, ethnicity, migrant status, and so on. Many studies examine the impact of social and political changes in China, marked by the beginning of the reform era in early 1980s, and theorize how dimensions of identities co-construct one another in relation to state power in and symbolic violence of various education policies and practices (X. Chen, 2014; Lü, 2011). As K.-H. Chen (2010) further argues, "The object to be translated has to be subjected to existing social forces and must negotiate with dense local histories if it is to take root in foreign soil" (p. 244). Translation (e.g., Choo, 2012; Su, 2016) and comparison across publications with different foci such as gender–class or gender–ethnicity may allow us to understand intersectionality and to open up a different way of rethinking its characteristics in the Chinese context.

For example, articles by Gong and Luo (2013) and Zhang and Zheng (2016) show ethnic minority women teachers' career pathways and document how their diverse ethnic identities, gender, education background, and class status convey differential advantages and disadvantages "systematically decentering any one process as 'primary'" (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 135). Another article (Y. Li, 2010) shares life stories and education experiences of women teachers from Dongxiang ethnic group and analyzes their professional development trajectories from their perspectives. As one of the most economically and religiously marginalized ethnic minority groups in China, Dongxiang people, especially women and girls, are often the objects of stereotypical social and cultural discrimination. Y. Li (2010) focuses on the stories of one Dongxiang teacher living in remote mountainous areas to analyze how education equality and inequality can be understood through connections with a gendering process of ethnic identity. Yet the inclusion of the voices of marginalized groups is just the beginning step. For instance, Y. Li's (2010) article tells this teacher's education experiences as a Muslim girl enrolling in schools and her decisions of family planning for career advancement, while at the same time attending to larger social understandings of this teacher's life overall and the multiple factors affecting her access to education and career development. The data in these articles suggest that "intercategorical" analysis is in place to "highlight dynamic forces more than categories" that highlight "racialization rather than race, economic marginalization rather than class, gendering rather than gender" (Choo & Ferree, 2010, p. 134).

There are studies that analyze how marginalized individuals and groups at the micro-level become aware of the multistrukures of power and hierarchies within education policies, representative of Choo and Ferree's (2010) first practice of

intersectionality. Such studies pay attention to everyday experiences of power and policy, as well as explore possible ways to engage in conscious forms of resistance within the system (e.g., Lou, 2011; Y. Ma, 2016; Yu, 2015).

A crossover example between the first and the second practices, Lou's (2011) ethnographic study in a rural middle school explores how the lives of a group of rural youth in Northwest China are determined in part by economic and ideological hegemony on global and local scales. She documents the environmental pollution and societal corruption they have experienced due to multiple forms of marginalization, which also penetrate their everyday experiences in school. The discussions demonstrate the various ways they resist the social and educational inequalities reproduced by and in formal schooling.

A similar approach situating multilevel inequalities in local relations of power is evident in Yu (2015). The article concerns how a group of migrant teachers experience and react to their multiple marginalization in urban China but also shows how the mutually constitutive social, gendered, and economic factors inform one another to shape the work and identity of teachers in China's migrant children schools. This article illustrates the links between the patriarchal education system and the neoliberal state in the construction of a social space for women migrant teachers, and highlights the construction of these teachers' resistance and subjectivities in the context of profound personal and structural transformations in their lives. This last example may also blend elements of the second and third approach to intersectionality.

### *Interpretations Beyond*

We see potential for applying the ideals of intersectionality for critical examination of educational issues produced within and by local and global gender, ethnic, economic, religious, and regional politics in China. Not only is there potential for exploring the voices of marginalized groups but also for transforming theory and praxis. Nevertheless, these articles also point to a crucial component necessary for intersectional analyses in China from China. Specifically, multiply marginalized groups are agents of neither the state, nor civil society, since these spaces are overwhelmingly occupied by social elites. Marginalized populations exist at the margins of politics. When they do appear in politics they are framed as out of place, challenging the existing modes of state control. Their resistances and struggles are considered to be illegal. Thus, researchers need to pay attention to the important role of the state and the different spatial relationship between the state and society.

Efforts to redefine the boundaries of intersectionality in Chinese contexts should not simply be regarded as an attempt to be included into knowledge production without complicating "the Eurocentric premises of social science knowledge" (Takayama, 2016, p. 81). Chinese, or Korean, or Japanese scholarship has long been treated as a separate development without possible interactions with the English-language scholarship (Takayama, Sriprakash, & Connell, 2017, p. S6). Rather, as Takayama et al. (2017) argue,

The challenge is to move away from “thin inclusion” or selective incorporation of “diverse” scholars and texts. Such additive models do little to challenge the prevailing hegemony. A “thick inclusion” of Southern, postcolonial theories and scholars in higher education, on the other hand, moves closer toward epistemic reflexivity, a focus on how things can be known. (p. S16)

This project thickens conversations on how intersectionality can be understood in Chinese contexts to facilitate a critical examination of educational issues produced within and by local and global gender, racial, ethnic, economic, religious, and regional politics.

## CONCLUSIONS

This review applied Choo and Ferree’s (2010) three practices of intersectional analysis to examine transnational educational policy research conducted in the Southern Hemisphere and China, published in English, Spanish, and Chinese. We now turn back to the questions we aimed to answer with this review.

### **How Does Intersectionality Translate to Languages Other Than English and to Eastern and Southern Contexts?**

Intersectionality translated to the literature produced from and on the Southern Hemisphere whether written in English or Spanish but not as often as we had anticipated. We had expected to find many more articles in which the concept was applied to examine education policy. The lower number may be the result of search criteria that were too constrained. It also may be that researchers are conducting intersectional research by another name, or perhaps be calling out the multiple systems of oppression they find.

Our findings revealed a balance across the three practices for the literature in English and in Spanish, while the Chinese literature leans more on group- and process-centered practices. This is a finding considering that one of the reasons offered by the framework’s authors (and the hunch of this literature review’s authors) was that the first practice would be overrepresented. It is considered to be a bit easier theoretically and methodologically to accomplish. This was not the case. As for the Chinese research literature, the historical contexts of the development of intersectionality might be seen as differing in certain respects—Chinese scholars complicate practices by demonstrating how to bring multiple axes of inequalities into conversation with one another without using this relatively “new” term. Through the review, it is also important to keep in mind that rather than merely considering the complex political system as “an independent variable,” one should pay attention to how state policies and politics actively shape the challenges and possibilities of engaging critical scholarships, in this case, intersectional analysis of systematic inequalities in different contexts.

### **What Analytic Insights Are Gained From Intersectionality’s Travel and Translation That May Contribute to Its Reconceptualization in Northern and Western Contexts?**

A large body of comparative education scholarship uncritically accepts Northern and Western epistemology “as a coherent, bounded entity that has given rise to

special events, concepts, and paradigms that are now diffused throughout the world” (Takayama et al., 2017, pp. S4–S5). Scholars have proposed decentering the global North in knowledge production (Anzaldúa, 1987; Carney, Rappleye, & Silova, 2012; K.-H. Chen, 2010; Connell, 2007, 2014) to undermine the uneven power relations that naturalize the intellectual division of labor, provincialize the universalist ontology and epistemology that underpin official knowledge, and revalue knowledges that have been subjugated by global hegemony (e.g., Fischman & Gandin, 2016; Takayama, 2016). This review aimed to complicate the “framing and selling” of global education policy and its underlying logics and systems (Verger, 2012) that enhance inequality and introduce new forms of oppression simultaneously on multiple scales.

Analyzing for the three practices—group centered, relation centered, or systems centered—was quite difficult. Conducting rigorous intersectional analyses is a mighty difficult task as is a review of such analyses. Patricia Hill Collins, one of the scholars credited with coining the concept, suggested as much at the American Educational Research Association’s annual conference (April 29, 2017). She confessed that bringing into focus the multiple axes of oppression is difficult and that often one axis is foregrounded while others are backgrounded.

Still this endeavor has reinforced our concern for conducting theoretically and methodologically rigorous research of transnational education policies. In fact, the literature review has proved to us that one does not just decide to take on intersectionality as a theoretical framework for looking at policy. Researchers must take on the methodological challenge of constructing education (policy) studies and critiquing data through an analytic lens attuned to the multiscalar production and experience of intersectional inequality.

### **How Have Scholars, Practitioners, and Activists Used Intersectional Approaches to Address Complex Educational and Social Problems and Promote Interventions That Foster Equity and Social Justice?**

This review aimed to contribute insight to the issue’s third key area, providing insight as to how scholars, practitioners, and activists in the Southern Hemisphere and China used intersectional approaches to address complex educational and social problems and promote interventions that foster equity and social justice.

Southern and Eastern contexts are transnational spaces of knowledge made invisible and colonized multiple times albeit under a different guise (e.g., Takayama et al., 2017). Colonization is layered and the colonization of indigenous groups continues into the 21st century. Within knowledge production arenas and public intellectual networks, the power dynamics between scholars is complicated too; it is not unidirectional. There are advantages and disadvantages at play within the institutional systems of academia and publishing and far too infrequently the system is questioned. We deploy intersectionality as a productive theoretical and methodological tool to examine transnational dynamics and to seek new forms of knowledge production.

With this project, we suggest that the North and West can learn much from Southern and Eastern contexts, but that learning endeavor requires three fundamental processes. First, from the North and West, it is necessary to look at the conditions of knowledge colonization that developed over the course of centuries (e.g., Connell, 2007; Said, 1978). That begins for us with an awareness that intersectionality is a theory from the North and West though with the purpose of pointing out the inequities within hegemonic contexts, specifically African American women's experiences to bear on legal systems, acknowledging that gender and race (and class, etc.) acted simultaneously to shape experiences, not separately. This calls into question essentializing systems that treat all women as equally unequal (e.g., Mohanty, 2003). Has intersectionality as theory been translated and transformed to understand the multiplicity of oppressions experienced within the transnational policy contexts we seek to learn from?

Second, from the South and East, there is a need for decolonization processes so as to cultivate regional knowledge without doing so in relation to the North and the West (e.g., de Sousa Santos, 2008; Mignolo & Escobar, 2010; A. L. Muñoz García, personal communication with Robert, May 4, 2017). How, if at all, has intersectionality been linked to or compared with knowledge from the South? Or within China? How have scholars beyond hegemonic locales transformed the theory for critiquing transnational education policy? Or what are the forms of intersectional theory within these contexts?

Third, it is important to acknowledge that theories are not simply reproduced in different contexts. There is always a process of appropriation, rereading, and modification. Still theories require a dialogue, not a monologue, in any transnational conversation. Theories must be thought through in terms of zones of privilege (who is privileged, where, when, why, by what/whom) not only in their site of origin but also in the temporal context in which they are interpreted and from whose pen they emerge and travel to a new transnational space. What zones of privilege are interpreted within and across transnational spaces and across the history of those spaces?

Not only is our deployment of the term *transnational* theorized, it is practiced. We, the authors, traveled to multiple continents, engaging in dialogues with scholars about this literature review, seeking feedback. We wish to be a part of a public intellectualism that is transnational and we wish to cultivate it collaboratively. Guzmán-Valenzuela and Muñoz García (2018) elaborate three current forms of academic partnerships: among advanced-economy countries in which every country has a similar role and position; another between advanced- and emerging-economy countries with a logic of "dominance of Western hegemonic research models to research dependent" (Naidoo, 2008, p. 258); and a third form involving learning and critiquing in "real time" and over time, creating and developing spaces to produce knowledge through encounters beyond hegemonic metropolises (see the work of the Inter-American Symposium on Ethnography and Education). For scholars located within advanced economies, this entails seeking out scholarship beyond our work locations and our research sites as we attempt to do in this literature review.

We found a broad range of social categories of inequality in the crosshairs of the policy research. This represents the multiple combinations of oppression globally. However, read another way, it also suggests that scholars, practitioners, and activists are attuned to the local conditions of oppression that globally circulating education policy is meant to address and may or may not be doing so. Thus, literature like what was reviewed here merits reading by a broader audience that includes policymakers and others in/with power to reform policy or formulate it to address inequity. In particular, our application of a framework that sought out the production of intersectional inequality on multiple scales (personal, interpersonal, and institutional) addresses the complexity of the contemporary education policy environment where local/national communities interpret and practice global policy idea(l)s. Rigorous intersectional analyses may prove to be invaluable tools for transnational policymaking and policy analyses.


### NOTES


<sup>1</sup>We use the terms *practices* and *approaches* interchangeably in the article to refer to how we sought and analyzed intersectionality in the literature.

<sup>2</sup>We also keep in mind the danger of constructing third-world women monolithically and as victims, ignoring their agency and voice. Mohanty (2013) also reminds us of the “representational politics” characteristic of hegemonic feminist knowledge production within neoliberal landscapes. Our task is not to claim a voice for third-world women. Instead, this project allows us to learn from their work.

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