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## INTRODUCTION

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### Local Histories and Global Designs in International Education

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The intensification of economic and cultural globalization, as well as remarkable shifts of geopolitical alliances and strategies, raise questions about global centers and peripheries; create new social imaginaries about globalization, knowledge, and education; and challenge research in social foundations of education and in international and comparative education. A complex set of theories has been established to understand the changing world order and its implications for education. In the 1980s, theories of globalization(s) came up to analyze globalization as a process of historical transformation, which includes the worldwide interdependence of communication, the rise of a single world market, and the homogenization of cultures and education standards. But *The Global Age* (Albrow, 1996) was not the beginning of a monolithic world society and the advent of a world state. Instead, new global players such as transnational corporations and organizations like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) entered the stage and intensified hegemonic struggles in politics, economics, culture, and in education (Davies et al., 2015; Holton, 2011; Reid, Gill, & Sears, 2010).

Since then, the term *globalization* has been criticized as a mere euphemism of a new Western imperialism (Harvey, 2003; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2001; Tikly, 2009) and, disparagingly, as a buzzword of the political and public discourse that should be replaced by more analytical categories such as the concept of empire (Coloma, 2013), which focuses on hegemonic struggles over global power and education. For this reason, the term is carefully used in academic writings to avoid the reification of a hegemonic Western perspective:

First, globalization does not explain global transformation, but needs to be explained. In conversation with Santos (2007), Robertson (2006) stresses the absence of a critical theory of space and knowledge production.

Second, globalization is not only about the so-called *time-space compression* and the intensification of global interdependencies. Rather, a careful reading of social foundations of education is necessary to frame the effects of the entanglement of education with political economy and new strategies of social engineering, as well as the correspondence of human capital approaches with political strategies in gender and diversity politics. On the one hand, changes in education policies are the result of neoliberal dynamics, but on the other hand, evidenced-informed policies on schooling and the privatization of higher education are considered to be important boosters of neoliberalism (Forster, 2014).

Third, theories of education need a shift toward a systematic analysis of the colonial structure of power (Andreotti, 2011). Succeeding the Euro-centered colonialism, the colonial structure of power represents “an association of social interests between the dominant groups (‘social classes’ and/or ‘ethnies’) of countries with unequally articulated power, rather than an imposition from the outside” (Quijano, 2007, p. 168). The struggle for hegemony over knowledge production and education also generates various kinds of resistance and countermovements, which have to be addressed in educational research (Flesher Fominaya, 2014; Santos, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2014a).

Finally, because the social sciences are an important player in a globalized world and in globalizing the world, educational research has to reflect its role within the colonial structure of power and knowledge production. What kind of pedagogical and scientific knowledge will be produced? By whom and for what reasons? What is the frame of reference and what is their founding epistemology? In short: Where do we think from? What is our locus of enunciation and who is the *we* of thinking and acting? Finally, what are the limits of our research? To think of an unlimited research is, itself, an idea of modern progress that has to be challenged (Tuck, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2014b).

The aim of the special issue on *Local Histories and Global Designs in International Education* is to contribute to these challenges of globalization and to generate new perspectives for a research in social foundations of education. We borrow the title from Mignolo’s (2012) book, *Local Histories/Global Designs—Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. In an interview with Mignolo, Delgado and Romero (2000) understand *Local Histories/Global Designs* as “a political and ethical manifesto that forces us to think about the ethics and politics of teaching and research, the institutional production of knowledge, and our own investment (as academics) in perpetuating both colonial differences and social injustices” (7). According to Mignolo, local histories are everywhere, but only some local histories are in the position of imagining and implementing global designs such as development, modernization, and marketization. Mignolo himself concentrates more on local histories and on the space where local histories adapt, adopt, reject, integrate, or ignore global designs.

The concept of *local histories/global designs* changes the direction of theorizing globalization toward colonial difference. “The colonial difference is, finally, the physical as well as imaginary location where the coloniality of power is at work in the confrontation of two kinds of local histories displayed in different spaces and times across the planet” (Mignolo, 2012, p. xxv). Colonial difference is a space of multiple confrontations and conflicts, of dominance and control, and of resistance and border thinking. Global designs are no longer situated in one territory and not only created by nation-states. Therefore, educational studies need a complex and nuanced theoretical reflection of the social foundations of education and the role of international education

and its impact on social sciences and humanities. The articles of this special issue contribute to the analysis of spaces created by the intersection of local histories and global designs where 'other' thinking and acting are possible.

Cynthia B. Dillard's article, "Turning the ships around: A case study of (re)membering as transnational endarkened feminist inquiry and praxis for Black teachers" opens the special issue by presenting a case study of Jacqueline, a young Black woman educator from southern United States, who encounters African knowledge, culture, and womanhood in Ghana, West Africa. This journey substantially transformed her selfhood and opened a way to a new vision of responsibility in teaching Black children.

Johnnie Jackson, in his article, "Meditating gunrunner speaking," offers a decolonizing counterstory of teaching as a Black American man in a teacher education program in South Korea. Here, the concepts *local histories* and *global designs* allow one to identify complex hierarchies of intersecting elements of colonial power like race and gender, but also of global/local patterns of schooling, curriculum, and teaching.

Language politics is the focus of the article "Language policies and language certificates in Spain—What's the real cost?" by María Tabuenca-Cuevas. English as the *lingua franca* in the European Union and the idiosyncrasies of the role of Spain within the perceived Western hegemony have created a unique situation: Language policies affect the official national language and the political and cultural significance of the Spanish co-official regional languages. Language politics has to be viewed as one element of the Spanish struggle over the neoliberal design of the European Union, which causes a significant impact on national curricula and the certification system.

Rosalyn Eder's analysis of the management of labor migration in the Philippines, and Nima Sobhani's research on the "shifting conditions of education aid and postcolonial possibilities for education reform" in Pacific Island nation of Samoa explore local histories and global designs from a governance perspective. Using the example of nurse education, Eder's research on "I am where I think I will work: Higher education and labor migration regime in the Philippines" concentrates on the role of the Commission on Higher Education in the labor migration industry of the Philippine government. Her analysis of policy papers shows the government's understanding and articulation of *international*, respectively *global*, standards for competition in the *international labor market*. In the historical line of colonialism and postcolonialism, Eder explores the role of higher education as an institution of government control in the production of the subjectivity of Filipina's and Filipino's global workforce and the complicity of higher education and government institutions in perpetuating colonial difference.

In "Global tides, Samoan shores: Samoan policy actors' responses to the shifting conditions of education aid and postcolonial possibilities for education reform," Sobhani examines effects of education aid to the Pacific Island nation of Samoa, which has changed fundamentally over the past decades. Analyzing data from semistructured interviews with various policy actors across different sectors of Samoan society, Sobhani gains valuable insights of the local engagement with the normative discourse and associated standards and practices of international organizations and donors. The "current confluence of global designs of education vis-à-vis the local context" (p. 477) creates a space of challenges and opportunities for a Samoan way of living.

By exploring the physical and imaginary spaces of colonial difference, the special issue responds and contributes to three influential discursive tracks in educational studies: How do the

articles of this special issue challenge concepts of globalization and the research imagination? How do they contribute to the research in social foundations of education? Finally, how do the articles bring new perspectives into the research field of international education?

## GLOBALIZATION AND RESEARCH IMAGINATION

Theories of globalization are a noteworthy research tradition to analyze the global, national, and regional transitions of economies, cultures, and education (Rizvi, 2006; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014; Subedi, 2010). Following Tikly (2001), Rizvi (2004) argues “that while the notion of globalization needs to be approached cautiously, it nonetheless represents something new about the manner in which the world is now organized and the ways in which local and national communities relate to each other” (p. 158). In a first step, Rizvi (2004) discusses the impact of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath on society and education from a post-colonial perspective. Education knowledge has to be developed outside the dominant hegemonic orientation of the West and should include a set of guiding principles of political practices, which are morally committed to identifying and transforming the conditions of exploitation of a large section of the world’s population.

In a second step, Rizvi (2006) widens the research on globalization and education by introducing the concept of social imaginaries. A collective social fact, a social imaginary is a common understanding of our practices and expectations and a widely shared sense of the legitimacy of practices in everyday life, in politics, and in social sciences (Taylor, 2004). Promoted by transnational organizations like the OECD, the neoliberal imaginary appears to have become globally convergent in education policies (Schugurensky, 1999). There is an unmistakable trend toward the acceptance of similar policy solutions to educational problems by a variety of nation-states, which otherwise have very different social, historical, and economic characteristics (Rizvi, 2006). This observation might be true for some aspects of schooling such as the introduction of common standards of competencies or international assessments, but the articles in this special issues show a more complex picture of globalization:

The language politics in Spain refers to the struggle for the hegemony of a *catch-up modernization*. In the case of Spain, the English language serves as a signifier for the imagined access to a desired world of wealth and privileges. More general, it symbolizes a shift from the European South to the center of Western modernity. The subtle privatization of education is its downside; students have to pay for certification by international organizations. On the national level, curricula have to be adapted to the standards of certification. At the same time, the Spanish language politics threatens the fragile equilibrium of the diversity of regional languages and cultures and the frangible unity of the Spanish nation-state.

Analyzing the Philippine labor migration policy in the field of nursing education, Eder demonstrates how the international division of labor goes along with the reproduction of shared national imaginaries and the geopolitical situatedness of a country and its people, which affect different levels of society: the higher education system, the migration policy, and the subjectivity of labor migrants.

In the interviews on Samoan education aid, policy actors talk about “the challenges of local engagement with the normative discourse and associated set of definitions, standards, and preferred practices emanating from these global designs; the need for a productive space in which

the demands of globalization and global designs are not accepted or rejected outright, but more effectively engaged with.”

Choosing the method of counterstorytelling from an autobiographical perspective, Jackson unfolds a complex transnational space or borderland: “My body and pedagogical practices arrested the colonialist and capitalist images of Black inferiority in the minds of my Korean students” (p. 433). The terms *local histories* and *global designs* seem too rough to understand how the intersection of racism, gender, and class mediates the clash between global designs and local histories in the specific context of teaching a desired knowledge.

And Dillard wants to explore more globally “the meanings, articulations, and possibilities of an endarkened feminist epistemology and pedagogies as sacred, spiritual and relevant practices of inquiry for Black women from the continent of Africa and throughout her diaspora” (p. 407). Her work on (re)membering is about seeing women of African heritage in the struggle for elimination of oppressions wherever Black women are. This idea of “wholeness” of legacy does not eliminate differences but creates a space of interconnectedness by “seeing who we are and what we’ve produced as Black women globally.”

From different perspectives, the articles of this special issue shift from a general concept of globalization to transnational geopolitical and imaginary spaces. They are created through the mediation of local and transnational histories through the intersection of race, class, and gender, and through education politics. What they have in common is the rejection of the reproduction of dominant imaginaries in the social sciences and humanities such as a neoliberal understanding of globalization and a focus on these ‘spaces in-between’. Anzaldúa (1987) calls these spaces *Borderlands*, and Mignolo (2002) stresses the concept of “border thinking” as an epistemology from a subaltern perspective” (pp. 70–71). Border thinking is inspired by Anzaldúa’s pathbreaking book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, an “autohistoria-teoría,” which is “an innovative blend of personal experience with history and social protest with poetry and myth” (Keating, 2009, p. 9).

Appadurai (2000) envisions an “other” space of research for producing and sharing knowledge through “new forms of dialogue between academics, public intellectuals, activists, and policy-makers in different societies” (p. 18). Research can be imagined as a “social force that is not only specific to time and space but is also always multiple and highly contested within particular and across communities” (Rizvi, 2006, p. 195). Susan Robertson (2006), advancing the ideas of Appadurai, stressed an “apartheid between the academy and local communities” (p. 303), which produces three absences: the absence of a critical spatial analytic in research on globalization and education; the absence of subaltern knowledges; and the absence of addressing the consequences of globalization for education systems in nation-states. The critical assessment of neoliberal globalization includes a critical analysis of the traditional framing of education, which very often is reduced to schooling and curriculum; education is identified with institutionalized settings of learning. A critical theory of education extends education to practices of social and cultural reproduction and to the relationship between education, curricula, and politics (Robertson, Forster & Gödl, 2013). Dillard refers to an extended concept of education when she introduces spirituality and the sacred “as a place from which to ask new questions, to explore ourselves from root to route with a Black-eyed female gaze from which to ‘launch a critique of the status quo’” (p. 408). She provides the necessary conceptual and experiential space for reconceptualizing new relationships within/between African women’s spirits and lived experiences within/between the diaspora and

the African continent. And Jackson uses the critical race currere to frame the multiple points of power, knowledge, and privilege, which he faced in Korea and linked him to the Black radical imagination.

## SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION AND THE QUESTION OF COLONIALITY

Research on social foundations of education includes a remarkable and rich tradition of postcolonial studies. There is no homogeneous body of theory, but a complex and controversial political and intellectual history of “postcolonial sensibility” (Gallegos, Villenas, & Brayboy, 2003, 145; see, Andreotti & de Souza, 2012; Coloma, 2009; Daza & Tuck, 2014; Hickling-Hudson, Mathews, & Woods, 2003). The analysis of colonial difference “complexifies the relationship between colonizers and colonized by focusing on the problems and aporias of veridiction and governmentality . . . at work in any discourse, including hegemonic and counterhegemonic, others and one’s own instances” (Andreotti, 2014, p. 381).

I want to highlight some aspects and elements of decoloniality that are relevant in this special issue, starting with Bernardo Gallegos’ (1998) American Educational Studies Association’s presidential address on imperialism, memory, and postcolonial educational studies in 1997. He discusses the “narratives of the subaltern, the colonized, [and] their intersection with academic discourse” (pp. 233–234). Sofia Villenas (2015) continues this line of thinking in her 2010 presidential address by exploring the possibilities of working through difference as articulated in the transnational, border and decolonial perspectives of Chicana/Latina feminisms.

One example of research that contributes to this vision is the special issue on *De/colonizing, (Post)(Anti)Colonial, and Indigenous Education, Studies, and Theories*. According to Rhee and Subedi (2014), “Postcolonial inquiry refers to ways in which we ground our analysis in the continuing work of colonialism as the historical, cultural, and political context and conditionality” (p. 341). The authors offer a postcolonial reading of transformative spirituality.

Transformative aspects of spirituality not only critique how spirituality of the Others has been appropriated within the neo/colonial and neoliberal imagination for the salvation of the Western/neoliberal Self but also speaks about how spirituality can be a space of possibility or recovery for different marginalized communities. (p. 339)

Their concept of transformative spirituality moves beyond a parasite form of critique of the empire. “Here a radical question is if religion and spirituality can be used as a site of resistance and an epistemological terrain that involves a more trans-rational way of functioning and engaging meta-realities” (p. 349). As a critical category of analysis, spirituality opens up a space beyond Eurocentric/modern/colonial knowledge.

Research in social foundations of education refers to a double critique: criticism of the structure of colonial power; and criticism of the social sciences and humanities insofar as they reproduce these power structures. Dillard develops the concept of the endarkened feminism to enter her field of inquiry. Endarkened feminist epistemology takes “research as responsibility”: “answerable and obligated to the very persons and communities being engaged in the inquiry” (p. 407). And

Sobhani's research on Samoa is a specific way of exploring the field of Samoan education reform: Whom is he interviewing (and who is absent)? Who is encouraged to talk? And what are the invisible rules that guide an interview (and which produce absences)? Sobhani places emphasis on the locus of enunciation, and the editors of *Educational Studies* indicate the importance of the awareness *where to speak from* in their 2015 *Vision Statement*:

We encourage the meaningful inclusion of marginalized knowledges to explore the relationship between education, schooling, and society and to engage questions of equity and social justice locally and globally. We call for submissions that recognize the interlocking dynamics of difference, power, and knowledge across time and space and that considers historically marginalized knowledge and populations (Indigenous, cultural, etc.). We would like the journal to be a space for examining and debating local-global and/or transnational themes. (Coloma et al., 2015, p. 2)

Promoting this special issue, we do not intend to introduce a new general theory of local histories and global designs as a frame for theorizing colonial difference. Colonial difference, decoloniality, and decolonization, or global design and local histories are no catch-all terms. Patel (2014) and Tuck and Yang (2012) criticize the metaphorical use of decolonization, which, as an empty signifier, can be adopted to other discourses even if they are critical. In their work, decolonization is about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life. "The United States is a settler colony, and although other forms of colonization are present here, the primary structure of people, land, and relation is through settler colonialism" (Patel, 2014, p. 359). A metaphorical use of decolonization, in contrast, blurs the struggle over land and life.

To summarize, an outline of decolonial and postcolonial analysis of social foundations of education critically debates the following elements: First, decoloniality is about material conditions of life, as well as of social imaginaries and epistemology. Both dimensions of decoloniality are important, but no one can substitute the other. Second, decoloniality is not about the past and the period after colonialism, rather it is a field of tensions between the past, the present, and the future, i.e., between the "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation" (Koselleck, 1985, p. 255). Dillard illustrates the significance of experience and expectation in her article. Jacqueline's journey to Ghana connected her to the heritage of her community. Her journey of (re)membering changed the meaning of her experiences, allowed her to articulate a deep but elusive belonging, and transformed her expectation of being a teacher.

Third, education goes beyond institutionalized forms of education, knowledge, and learning. As Patel (2014) puts it: "Educational researchers must, as one example, answer to ways in which the field has allowed for learning to be lost in the pursuit of test score-driven achievement" (p. 372). Using critical race currere, Jackson provides an example of doing curriculum as an "autobiographical inquiry project." Curriculum is not seen as planned, assessed, or instructed; instead, it becomes a lived experience.

This criticism brings me, fourth, to aesthetic education as an important issue. According to Daza and Tuck (2014), following Spivak (2012), aesthetic education "re/un-trains the imagination of onto-epistemological performativity of what is/becomes intuitive, sense, logic, ethics, judgment and so on beyond one's own immediate urgencies" (p. 309). We do not replace a technological concept of learning, which includes the designability of biography, with aesthetic education. Instead, we prefer the metaphor of the bridge (Aoki, 1991) to conceptualize a "place that connects

and generates spaces of possibility” (Andreotti, 2014, p. 393). For Jacqueline, the study abroad program in Ghana became a space of possibility, and for Jackson, the move to South Korea generated such a space. Using the example of language politics in Spain, space can be thought of differently. Creoleness could define a space of possibility:

Creoleness is a way of thinking in languages, beyond of course the monotopic purity of the national languages. . . . Thus, as far as Creoleness is a mode of being, of thinking and writing in a subaltern language, from the subaltern perspective and using and appropriating a hegemonic language—all this is not only limited to a particular local history but is similar to several local histories made at the intersection with global designs, the coloniality of power, and the expansion of the modern world system. (Mignolo, 2012, p. 243)

Finally, research itself creates spaces of opportunities. Sobhani’s interviews provide information about the education aid in Samoa and create a space where Samoan policy actors develop perspectives on the Samoan way, reflect struggles over global normativity, and imagine alternative ways of shaping society.

As spaces of lingering, rather than of fast crossing, “education can be conceptualized as a process of being taught to live with both the anxiety and risk of possibility of working in the present without scripts of the future” (Andreotti, 2014, p. 393). It cannot be reduced to questions of either aesthetics or ethics.

## COLONIAL DIFFERENCE CHALLENGES COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

A third track of debating local histories and global designs derives from the field of comparative and international education. In their “Critical introduction” to a special issue of *Comparative Education*, Crossley and Tikly (2004) explore postcolonialism as a challenging approach for developing and extending comparative education theory and research. Although Gallegos et al. (2003) mainly address questions of identity, knowledge production, and narratives of the colonized, Crossley and Tikly (2004) recall the implications of postcolonial studies for policy and practice. “At the most general level, postcolonial approaches share a common commitment to reconsider the colonial encounter and its continuing impact from the perspective of formerly colonized countries, regions, and peoples, but within the context of contemporary globalization” (p. 148).

Eder on labor migration policy and higher education governance in the Philippines and Sobhani on education aid in Samoa contribute to a research of the continuing impact of colonial difference on former colonized countries. Eder assumes that the state’s labor export policy of health professionals such as nurses “is rooted in the imperialist relationship between the United States and the Philippines” (p. 454). The higher education system adopts their programs to international or global standards for competition in the international labor market, which are produced by rich countries of the global North. The interpretation of policy papers illustrates the pressures, erasures, and (dis)connections that occur in the process of commodification of knowledge production. But nurse education is also an instructive example of the methodical limitations of the analysis of policy papers. Nursing goes beyond knowledge production; it is about the production



of a specific kind of service that is tight to the production of subjectivity, which reproduces some aspects of the former relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.

Sobhani's research highlights the subjective views of policy actors: their opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of Samoan development after independence in 1962. For critical research, it is important to ask where these Samoan actors speak from: Who do they represent? What is their reference of interpretation? Like Sobhani's representatives, the voices of local actors often represent a tension between global designs and local histories, that is, in the Samoan case, a tension between "challenges of engagement with global normativity" and the imagination of what is called *the Samoan way*. According to Mignolo (2012), every act of saying is a "saying against" and a "saying for" (p. 25). These ways of saying (and not saying) are important at the intersection of local histories and global designs and the intersection of hegemonic and subaltern grounds and undergrounds. The geopolitical locus refers neither to a local history nor a global design, rather, it problematizes these categories.

Crossley and Tikly (2004) come to the conclusion that postcolonialism is a necessary and valuable paradigm of comparative education.

After all, at the most basic and obvious level, the vast majority of the education systems that we study as comparativists have their origins in the colonial era. In this respect, it is hard to conceive of comparative education existing as a field in anything resembling its current form if colonial education had not been so successful in spreading a particular (Western) form of education along with the accompanying disciplinary framework that, whether we like it or not, forms the epistemological basis of much comparative thinking. (p. 149)

There is a growing commitment to challenge colonial structures of power, which still frame social relations, the production of knowledge, and subjectivity (Quijano, 2007). The special issue on *Local Histories and Global Designs in International Education* opens up a space for new social imaginaries "that emphasizes knowledge and knowledge generation as cultural and public and social acts" (Robertson, 2006, p. 313). The postcolonial lens in educational studies promotes recognition of alternative ways of knowledge production and of theorizing space, geopolitics, and subjectivity, and therefore provides a fertile ground for creating alternative approaches for education to tackle global inequalities (Andreotti, 2007).

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