Systematic Review

A Critical Systematic Literature Review of Global Inclusive Education Using an Affective, Intersectional, Discursive, Emotive and Material Lens

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Abstract: We conducted a critical systematic literature review on global inclusive education and law. The critical review questions were: (1) how have scholars theorized, conceptualized, and studied global inclusive education? (2) How do scholars define global inclusive education? (3) And what do scholars cite as prominent international inclusive education law? We ask such questions given the ongoing global crises that situate historically marginalized groups in even more precarious positions—including students with dis/Abilities. Given this framing, we employed a critical systematic literature review that is cognizant of our positionalities, writing from the Global North, so that we can identify lines of inquiry related to global inclusive education that can disrupt global cultural hegemony. Global inclusive education was defined broadly from access to employment through a human right, systemic change, academic, social and emotional frameworks for students with dis/Abilities' inclusion of all "regardless" of markers of difference. International inclusive education law was approached by affirming the aspirational visions of numerous United Nations' conventions and policies that focused on social justice for Black, Indigenous and Youth of Color with dis/Abilities in education and global society, without necessarily accounting for the interactions between how macro (legal), meso (local contexts) and micro (student voices) are or are not considered in the global inclusive space.

Keywords: international inclusive education law; global inclusive education; global disability studies in education; critical systematic literature review; global inclusive education policy and praxis; global inclusive legislative framework

1. Introduction

We conducted a critical systematic literature review on global inclusive education and law. We sought to answer three interrelated questions within each study reviewed: (1) how have scholars theorized, conceptualized and studied global inclusive education? (2) How do scholars define global inclusive education? (3) And what do scholars cite as prominent international inclusive education law? In answering these questions, we discuss not only what the literature has documented, but what can be reimagined using a dynamic lens that not only considers our research questions, but also interrogates how *macro* (legal), *meso* (local contexts) and *micro* (student voices) levels *are* or *are not* considered in the global inclusive space. We do this in order to move beyond the technical dimensions of policy and practices, so that we account for the contextual and critical dimensions that would help us do justice to how people experience international inclusive education law and practice. The contextual aspects include the people and local and global contexts and the critical ones include issues of fairness and justice relative to their voice and intentionalities. These are key so that students with dis/Abilities at their intersections of power and identities are included into the institutional policies and practices of the history of the institutions and

we are able to practice our ideals of global inclusive education along the macro, meso and micro dimensions of praxis.

We also ask these research questions given the ongoing global crises (aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental destruction and climate change) that situate historically marginalized groups in even more precarious positions—including students with dis/Abilities. We use the term "dis/Abilities" to signal the emotional, social, political, historical and economic construction of both disability and Ability. We do this since we center an interdisciplinary and intersectional Disability Studies in Education paradigm to our knowledge construction about what counts as both disability and Ability. Such a paradigm counters medicalized or scientific paradigms that seek to find, remediate and fix people with dis/Abilities. We capitalize the A in Ability to counter-narrate White and ability supremacy impacting Black, Indigenous and Youth of Color who have been misdiagnosed by master narratives of special education within the U.S. and global contexts. Accordingly, how we construct, conceptually and practically, Ability as entangled with other systems of oppression such as race is important to re-thinking and re-feeling in order to disrupt the technical ways in which dis/Ability in general and special education has been siloed with other mechanisms of oppression. Given how we conceptualize and practice inclusion relative to the meaning(s) of dis/Ability are not neutral or purely technical, but it is important to account for the contextual and critical dimensions of practice at the macro, meso and micro levels of human interaction. The values of inclusive education include "a positive sense of belonging, identities, health, safety, acceptance, learning, recognition, and friendships, as well as meaningful societal participation and contribution, including employment opportunities" [1]. These values are challenged in the current global climate [2]. We find it imperative to understand how global inclusive education has been studied to better understand if current conceptualizations of the topic are responsive to the dynamic context within which we find ourselves. Given this framing, we employed a critical systematic literature review that is cognizant of our positionalities, writing from the Global North (i.e., specifically from the United States). The "Global North and South" describes how the dominant hegemonic division of "developed" and "developing" countries relative to the socio-political and economic status quo, so that we can identify lines of inquiry related to global inclusive education that can possibly disrupt global cultural hegemony.

2. Praxical, Methodological and Theoretical Plurality and Our Conceptual Framework

Our framework encompasses our positionalities relative to the field of global inclusive education and law through theoretical plurality. Theoretical pluralism [3] provided an epistemically diverse analytic lens to examine the complex issue of international inclusive education and to guide our review and analysis. The integration of Disability Studies in Education (DSE) [4], Dis/ability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit) [5], sociological organizational and legal theory [6] and emotion-aware policy prolepsis [7] provided the framework for examining the literature addressing global inclusive education within a micro, meso and macro architecture [8]. The macro level involved analysis of international law and regulation, the meso level included analysis of local policies and practices of inclusive education and the micro level represented the lived experiences of children and families. This conceptual framework anchored in theoretical plurality explored intersectional, discursive, emotive and material accounts of international inclusive education. By intersectional we focus on the intersections of race, language and dis/Ability, given the demographic imperative within and across globalized society and inclusive education. By discursive and emotive we focus on how language and hegemonic emotion discourse (e.g., ableist and racist ideologies, etc.) create exclusionary matrices through legislation, litigation and inclusive education policy, despite stated good intentions. By material, we focus on how policies are locally enacted and experienced by students and how these enactments shape their educational opportunities. The theoretically plural conceptual framework employed in our systematic literature review examined the historical, symbolic, structural and ideo-

logical contexts, which may create and maintain inequities given the educational debts that Black, Indigenous and Youth of Color (BIYOC) students with and without dis/Abilities have and continue to experience.

We mindfully engaged in this work to create our praxical, methodological, theoretical and conceptual framework linkage. This mindfulness drove our co-knowledge construction and our research choices. Central to our theoretical and conceptual framework of pluralism is policy prolepsis as the politics of becoming-policy that centered on emotionality. We do this in order to take up the call from Ladson-Billings (2006) the historical, political, economic and moral educational debts that have shaped the life-chances of BIYOC with and without dis/Abilities [9]. We further conceptualize international law as centering the rules and symbols that are from the dominant group in society. Consequently, how we conceptualize the nature of the law is through the racial, economic, cultural, social and emotional contexts that mediate human interaction at the micro, meso and macro levels of the international educational system. We further did this through the endogeneity of law and policy [10] as the aforementioned forces that impede equality when policies and laws are implemented and (re)interpreted across educational ecosystems [11,12]. Law endogeneity suggests that laws gain meaning and are created from the intersectional nature of social forces that it regulates. The meso level organizational practices, such as academic, social and emotional support systems, policies and practices, mediated by the macro level policies. Dominant practices, that is, hegemonic practices, embedded in the macro and meso level policies and practices of the law are the exogenous mandates that shape the life-chances of BIYOC. Such exogenous mandates through the logic of compliance with law is what Edelman (2016) called a form of legal deference [6]. Deference to whom? Black, Indigenous and Youth of Color with and without are not considered given the color-evasiveness of not only the law, but hegemonic cultural practices and policies. The latter of which do not account for an intersectional nature of the academic, social and emotional realities of BIYOC students. In turn, these constitute the ability and racialized policy master narratives of [13–15] and are (re)produced under the guise of good intentions and civil rights ideals. The very premise of law, policy and praxis remains unchallenged.

Given the damaging effects of the endogeneity of law and the danger of technical policy compliance, we declare an urgent need to move beyond the technical to the law. Through the contextual and critical considerations of practice and policies such as IDEA responsive to the discursive, material and emotive aspects of being human. We center emotion-aware policy prolepsis [7,12] for the future of IDEA and its implementation. Prolepsis is the cognitive sign or communicative sign of a better or ideal tomorrow based on one's representation for that better tomorrow, today [16]. According to Freiberg and Carson (2010):

> Emotion-aware public policy requires policymakers to identify the appropriate role of emotion in the public policy discourse. Suppressing the affective dimension of policy arguments may result in their resurfacing in other forms 'unacknowledged, unexamined, and perhaps unchallenged [damaging outcome] (p. 160) [16].

Emotion-aware public policy prolepsis helps us bridge the gap between the technicalities of the IDEA and the contextual and critical dimensions of the impact of the legislation on people, and particularly on BIYOC with and without dis/Abilities. Our framework is rooted within the principles of disability justice, which requires that white supremacy, colonialism and capitalism are challenged in policy and practice to dismantle ableism and racism [17]. Through emotion-aware policy prolepsis we are able to humanize our students' full personhood as they learn and navigate their academic, social and emotional dimensions of learning contexts.

3. Positionality

Here, we briefly describe our positionality as it relates to the topic of global inclusive education and to our personal and professional biographies. We position ourselves in

relation to "the multidimensional nature of power, oppression, and knowledge production" that is evident in the field of global inclusive education, the literature on the topic and those impacted by inequitable systems [18] (p. 312). By making transparent our relationship to the topic, we provide insight into how we understand the purpose and function of global inclusive education while also linking our biographies (both personal and professional) to social justice aims.

David. In 1984, I migrated to the United States due to the 1979–1992 Civil War in El Salvador as a refugee with my family. During that migration, I developed a high fever, which resulted in childhood epilepsy and seizures. Within my public education, I would eventually be diagnosed with an auditory learning dis/Ability, placed in more segregated settings during my primary and middle school years and my multiple identities were not necessarily nurtured. In turn, I have experienced psychological trauma because of being in special education.

Catherine. Catherine's family came to the United States in the 1950s. Her father arrived as a young boy after spending several years in a German concentration camp and temporarily settled in Louisiana, where his family was sponsored by a sugar plantation farmer. Her mother's family, also from Ukraine, settled as refugees in rural North Dakota. Catherine's continued connections to Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora have influenced her understanding of dis/Ability and global inclusive education—inclusive of personal and familial ties to dis/Ability, meeting children affected by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Susan. My scholarship has been influenced by my 30 years as an Administrative Law Judge and my interest in the cultural study of law—a theoretical framework for conducting legal inquiry which examines law as lived experiences through a phenomenological construction of legal meaning. The cultural study of law takes into account the unique historical, political, sociocultural and educational factors that influence how legal policies and practice are constructed at the local level and impact the lives of students with dis/Abilities and their families.

4. Critical Systematic Literature Review Methodology

The methodology for our review was adapted from the PSALSAR Framework [19], which includes specifying the:

(1) Protocol, which defines the scope, purpose and research questions of the study,
(2) Search, which defines the strategy for searching databases for studies,
(3) Appraisal of Literature, which defines the inclusion, exclusion and quality criteria,
(4) Synthesis, which defines the data extraction into categories of interest,
(5) Analysis of Data categories in findings, discussion, conclusions and recommendations in response to the research questions, and
(6) Report writing and publication.

Our introduction included our protocol, which defined the scope, purpose and research questions. That is, our introduction to this review laid out the overview of our problem of practice and topic (e.g., inclusive education law and global inclusive education policies and practices), goals and function of our review that were tied to our research questions. The protocol was anchored with our theoretical and conceptual framework. Our search strategy involved searches on *Google Scholar* and *OneSearch* databases for articles. The keywords utilized in the search strategy were:

(1) *Global Inclusive Education,*
(2) *International Inclusive Education Law,*
(3) *Inclusive Education,*
(4) *Students with Disabilities,*
(5) *Students of Color with Disabilities,*
(6) *Intersectionality, and*
(7) *Global Context.*

With the above keywords, we were able to conduct nine searches using the search engine or type of search, year range, keywords, OR and AND results, and which were the usable articles from the searches.

There were 30 peer-reviewed articles, 20 dissertations and 10 book chapters and four research reports included in the review for a total of 64 pieces of literature, We evaluated each study against our inclusionary and exclusionary criteria, below, within the timeframe of 2010–2023. We defined the timeframe from 2010 to 2023 in order to find the latest empirical and theoretical and conceptual research base.

(1) **Topic**: Our topic for this systematic literature review is a global inclusive education and law that focuses on empirical studies and theoretical and conceptual framework articles on the educational experiences of Black, Indigenous and Youth of Color with dis/Abilities in the Global North and South contexts.

(2) **Type of Publication**: We only included (a) peer-reviewed journals, (b) dissertations, (c) book chapters and (d) other relevant research reports from a plurality of social science research designs for examining the breadth and depth of global inclusive education and law, consisting of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodological studies and reports and publications that were theoretical and conceptual pieces (see Table 1 for a Breakdown of the Total and Individual Number Type of Publication and a list of the citations that go with each of the types of publication included in the overall database).

(3) **Population**: We purposefully were interested in how a global inclusive educational and legal context impacted students with dis/Abilities, as well as informing and perhaps constraining the experiences of Black, Indigenous and Youth of Color with dis/Abilities within the global north and south.

Table 1. Type of Publication.

Type of Publication	Number of Type of Publication Included
Peer Reviewed Articles	30
Dissertations	20
Book Chapters	10
Relevant Research Reports	4
Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks	0
Total Number of Publications	**64**

The publications meeting this criteria were included in an *Excel Google Sheet* table and divided across the three authors for interrater reliability, review and synthesis. Our synthesis extracted data from each article into categories of interest that not only summarized each of the elements of the research study, but also the framing of Global Inclusive Education, the integration of International Inclusive Education Law with emphasis in how dis/Ability was conceptualized and defined through an intersectional lens and the country featured in the literature. These categories served as a priori topics that purposefully examined our theoretical and conceptual framework [20–22]. To assure trustworthiness of the synthesis coding, we conducted an intercoding consensus for two selected articles, which resulted in 100% agreement across the three author coders. The analysis of our data was reported in response to the research questions and involved a critical reflection against our framework.

5. How Have Scholars Theorized, Conceptualized and Studied Global Inclusive Education?

How have scholars theorized global inclusive education? There were a variety of ways of how the studies theorized global inclusive education. Some studies used system theory through models of human development that centered on (a) Bronfenbrenner's human development theory [23–25] and (b) a phenomenological variant of ecological

framework [26] and systems thinking that include multiple actors and factors such as students, teachers, school personnel and local, state, federal and international contexts [24].

Several studies theorized inclusive education through critical and post-structural, and decolonial theories such as critical theory and pedagogy [27], social reproduction theory such as Bourdieu's social, cultural and symbolic capital [26], critical race theory [28], Disability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit) [13–15], decolonial theories [29] and Disability Studies in Education (DSE) [30,31] that included other theories such as resistance theory of dis/Ability [14] that accounted for global intersectional dis/Ability cultural studies and politics [15].

Three studies across Canada [30], Zimbabwe [32] and South Africa [33] used multiple paradigms of dis/Ability ranging from the medical, biomedical, social and human rights models to approach global inclusive education in their research contexts [33,34].

A few of the articles used existing global institutional framing of dis/Ability in education. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, Singal et al. [35] used existing United States special education dis/Ability categories and infrastructure (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, etc.) from the medical model of dis/Ability, while [36] in the United States, focused on the existing conceptualizations of transition programming, planning and outcomes for Black, Indigenous and Students of Color from IDEA [20,21]. In turn, both Singal et al. [35] and Kucharczyk et al. [36] did not include any specific theoretical framework.

How have scholars conceptualized global inclusive education? Several studies conceptualized inclusive education by accounting for separate vectors fof difference such as race, gender and socio-economic status among others that without addressing these inclusive education policies and practices would not be fully addressed [30,37,38]. Further, each study operationalized a philosophy of inclusion that "promotes social cohesion, a sense of belonging, and active participation in learning: it is a complete school experience and positive interactions with peers and others in the school community" regardless of markers of difference [39] (p. 243). In turn, the de-politicization gave the discourse of "regardless" of social identity markers. Such a tension is perhaps at the heart of the discourse of "regardless" of markers of differences since one can argue that without ideological clarity of the conceptualization and organizational purpose of inclusive education policies and practices would be rendered impractical and, thus, hegemonic. We believe it is important to trouble the discourse of "regardless" since it would reproduce a "identity-evasive" discourse and a "non-identity-responsive" understanding of the meaning of international and national inclusive education for historically multiply marginalized people, globally and locally.

How have scholars studied global inclusive education? Three additional studies explored other in/out of school contexts towards in inclusion in society and education that focused on the (a) *curriculum* camp [39] for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender youth [40], (b) the importance of *collaboration* [34] and (c) theories of change in *mentoring* [41] in systems.

There were an additional three themes that emerged from how the researchers across the studies framed their research questions and studied dis/Ability in relation to global inclusive education. Similar to the above studies related to how the researchers theorized global inclusive education, the three themes converge and diverge given the factors, contexts and relationships [30] between the constructs that served as their units of analysis for their studies and asked **WHAT** and **HOW** questions to evaluate the implementation of inclusive education and law [23,35].

There were four studies that explored global inclusive education through a student voice [15,28,42]. Whitburn [31] explored a situational analysis of inclusive schooling through the perspective of students with dis/Abilities and their educational needs in Spain. Supple [28] asked about student voice by examining what "strategies and resources [are] supporting or hindering [international students with dis/Abilities] academic and social development, and achievements [that] . . . practitioners [do?] . . . How can the knowledge gained from this research be applied in other higher education institutions?" (pp. 19–20).

The studies' global inclusive education researchers took the time to contextualize their country's history of inclusive education and policy for national development [39]. The majority of the researchers conceptualized dis/Ability in exploring their research questions about inclusive education through the medical and/or social model of dis/Ability [25,28,33,36]. There were three additional ways in which the researchers conceptualized dis/Ability in exploring their research questions about inclusive education: (1) *educational needs along academic, social and emotional development for belonging and engagement* [27,29,41,43], (2) *dis/Ability along with race, gender, language and other social identities and contexts* [14,15,31] and (3) *inclusive education that only centered one singular social identity such as race* [42,44], *LGBTQ* [43] *or incarcerated youth* [39].

The research designs for the literature on global inclusive education can be organized around six different types of research design approaches: (1) *literature reviews* [14,24], (2) *mix methods* [32,33], (3) *qualitative genres* such as case study, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, interpretative traditions, autoethnography, hermeneutic phenomenology among others [29,40,43,45], (4) *quantitative genres* [41], (5) *policy analysis* [38] and (6) *theoretical analysis* [15]. In addition, some of the studies [39,44] did not clearly articulate a specific research design genre, which would have been helpful.

The data collection procedures ranged from primary to secondary data [46,47] from local, national and international policy documents [29,45,48] and organizations to traditional qualitative research interviewing and focus-groups [27,33,48], observation and fieldwork entries [49–52], researcher observation to literature data [7,53] to gathering information from key people [46,54] and survey response compilation [53,55] in order to answer the researcher's research questions about global inclusive education and law.

There were a total of nine different types of qualitative and quantitative data analysis [40,41,44] procedures used on the information sources collected. These included *content analysis* [30], *narrative analysis* [42], *situational analysis* [31,37], *policy and document analysis* [29,39,53], *theoretical analysis* using critical theories and cultural studies [15,28], *data reduction* [25], *thematic analysis* [34,56] and *qualitative research synthesis* [14].

Given the global inclusive education research questions within and across the studies the findings can be mapped across multiple levels of education and society given that some of the studies called for the importance of support systems for not only students with dis/Abilities [30], but also students with other social identities, like refugees [23] and LGBTQ students [40]. These levels included national and local contexts that involve student, teacher and other staff and service personnel interactions [28] and attitudes [34] as well given inclusive education policies, practices and contexts and the lack of connection between research and inclusive practices, skills, knowledge and professional collaboration [30,34,56]. Such dynamics demonstrated both constraints and affordances given the current ways the educational and societal systems have been historically, culturally and socially constructed regarding dis/Ability along other markers of differences and power relations [29,32], in particular how Global North ideologies dominate and do not account for Global South ecologies [36].

Findings were specific to the purpose of each study, but included descriptions of data trends and themes. For example, several studies reported barriers to inclusive education reform initiatives including negative attitudes and perceptions of stakeholders [57,58], the lack of training, preparation and professional development for administrators and teachers [59] and discontinuity and incongruity between inclusive education beliefs, policies and practices [60].

Similarly, conclusions were unique to individual research endeavors. For example, questions concerning local ownership of inclusive education were raised: "the capacity for local ownership was questioned . . . the answer to these issues can only be found through local solutions and not from imposed programs from external sources" [58] (p. 172).

Our synthesis of the implications presented in the studies found calls for government commitment and fiscal resourcing [55,58,59], community support [58], policy amendments,

revisions and dissemination [59,61], systemic educational reform [52,61] and professional development for administrators and teachers [60,62].

The discussion sections of the studies focused on several important entry points to systemic inclusive education change opportunities in education and wider global society [23,26]. Each study was able to contribute to the literature base, but also imagining how their findings can be translated into the lived realities of education. Nevertheless, this was carried out with the understanding that such research-to-practice contexts remain wanting [24] given the status quo in practice and elements of the systemic change framework themselves not being reimagined (e.g., theories of change not changing, etc.) [29]. Such technicalities also remain siloed from the contextual and critical components that mediate human activity, learning and teaching in educational systems [15,28]. Individually, the researchers were able to make declarative-evidence based statements that not only double-down on *what we know regarding global inclusive education*—the importance of belonging, checking-one's biases, understanding that youth at their intersections navigate issues of power and privilege, the need for funding sources and infrastructure and resource allocation, practicing and implementing civil and education rights, accommodations, collaboration, supports and services for students with dis/Abilities [25,37,38]—but also challenge the status quo [15].

The implication sections from the studies focused on future research and practice. Two examples are Litwiller's [42] and Ladipo's [44] global inclusive education topics that were beyond common-sense assumptions about inclusive education being about special education and/or dis/Ability: *LGBTQ students and Black youth*.

6. How Do Scholars Define What Is Global Inclusive Education?

In our review, we found that global inclusive education was defined broadly and referred to aspects of inclusion such as participation, access, belonging, employment and through an educational and civil and human rights framework for students with dis/Abilities' "least restrictive environment", inclusive of all regardless of social identity markers of difference [25,37,38]. Such an aspirational proposal to education in schools for students with dis/Abilities, in turn, centers on an ethic of care, equality and equity for students with dis/Abilities through global inclusive education systems [32]. Studies indicate that part of global inclusive education entails positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with dis/Abilities in the general education classroom and the beliefs, knowledge and skills associated with inclusive practices. The research also focused on teachers, teacher practices, teacher preparation and/or teacher standards that formalize inclusive ideology within nation states. The studies typically employ critical discourse analysis (CDA) of policy documents and there is minimal engagement with educational stakeholder's experiences (leaders, teachers, students) that inform understandings of global inclusive education [10]. The imperative for global inclusive education is also disparities in outcomes for students with dis/Abilities compared to their non-disabled peers [30,32,35]. Within and across the studies, global inclusive education has been articulated and implemented without truly accounting for student voice [30,35]. Other researchers engaged in critical theory and cultural studies about social justice issues relative to inclusive education [14], while others did not necessarily define global inclusive education and law [14,29,41].

Many of the studies included in our systematic literature review described global inclusive education as a socio-political construct emerging from human rights movements through inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the European Union, with frequent references to the Salamanca Statement and Framework of 1994. Articles included references to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, World Declaration on Education for All of 1990, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006, among others. Of importance to our research, several articles discussed the imposition of global inclusive education construction onto countries without taking into account the historical, political, educational and cultural factors unique to a country [22,26].

7. What Do Scholars Cite as Prominent International Inclusive Education Law?

International inclusive education law was approached by listing and affirming the aspirational visions and missions of numerous international conventions, statements and declarations that focused on access and social justice for people with dis/Abilities in education and global society [25,28]. For example, the United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action for Special Needs Education among others [14,22,63] that layout commitments to welcoming, celebrating, valuing and respecting diversity and being responsive to needs of students by empowering teachers with skills, knowledge and dispositions to serve all learners [24]. Other articles described national inclusive education reform initiatives promoted by national ministries or departments of education [40]. These studies are typically critical discourse analyses or case studies that interpret how the global becomes local through culture and context within varied nation states. A subset of these studies also examine how non-governmental agencies, advocacy organizations and other dis/Ability focused entities shape discourse around inclusive practices [64]. This subset of studies indicates that while inclusive ideology has proliferated across the globe, the ideal is rarely upheld in practice.

Since the 1970s such global inclusive education laws and policies have helped create global inclusive education contexts to fight against barriers to inclusion such as stigma, inaccessible cultures and, in turn, discrimination based on dis/Ability due to forces of globalization and biases based on fear along race, class, gender, sexual orientation and other forms of differences since colonial times [38]. International inclusive education policies of normalization, integration and inclusion provide the discursive practices for the enactment of global inclusive education [31].

We examined law and policy reforms internationally to discern the impact of such initiatives on access to inclusive education for students with disabilities. Our policy analyses revealed international inspiration and national aspirations for inclusive education within cultural and historical contexts. The absence of clear definition, standards and goals for inclusive education programs results in variability in school policies and practice. Despite the intent of the Salamanca Statement to promote inclusion, the lack of strong theoretical framework and conceptual clarify restricts the development and advancement of inclusive school systems globally. However, inclusive education is focused on the transformation of educational systems to assure all students have access to equal educational opportunity. Inclusive education involves three dimensions: the creation of inclusive cultures, the development of inclusive policies, and the implementation of inclusive school practices. The school culture involves the ideology of the organization which "transforms inclusive policy into practice", educational policy provides the institutional framework to "achieve its educational goals and ensure inclusion", with educational professionals implementing practices with "differentiated" approaches to teaching and learning. As an educational philosophy impacted by both the goal of schooling and implementation by practitioners, the goal of inclusion is equity and quality education for all individuals.

8. Discussion, Conclusions and Implications

Research exploring how countries have conceptualized and implemented inclusive educational practices should adopt an analytical framework which includes a *macro, meso and micro* architecture [8] and a discussion of how these three levels "influence each other" [62] (p. 48). This analytic framework synthesizes the dynamics and interactions between individuals, school structures and practices, and the legislation and regulations governing inclusive education. This multi-analytic design draws on both interpretive and critical paradigms [65], draws on linkages between the individual identities, structures and practices, and system rules [66] and traces the evolution and constructive effects of law and policy [49]. In turn, this would include understanding a systemic approach of the working of international inclusive education teaching and learning and policies and practices so that we are able to implement it into practice. A systemic approach would allow local actors such as students, parents, teachers and all service providers to center the

technical, contextual and critical components of practice to implement inclusion in their daily actions. These daily actions would be centered on what, how and why their actions would make sense for them in enacting inclusion for all in specific ways that make sense to them. Therefore, a systemic approach would include the interrelationships between the macro, meso and micro levels of educational practice, that is both global and local.

Macro Level. Our analysis revealed some studies used critical discourse analysis of international and national law, regulations, policies and initiatives. However, they did not critically discuss power or the hegemony of ability and rights frameworks found in the majority of literature reviewed. Without such an analysis, the discontinuities and disconnections between inclusive education law and policies and the actual implementation practices cannot be revealed. By linking language of national law, regulations, policies and initiatives to the broader social, emotional and political context, CDA can explore what discourses are articulated and privileged, what interests the discourses reflect, what gaps and silences in the discourse leave issues unproblematized, what hidden assumptions and ideologies can be discovered and what contradictions are evident [50,54,67–70]. For global inclusive education and education law, examining the discursive constructs which may marginalize students with dis/Abilities at their intersections may assist in the analysis of national reform initiatives. Education policy language has layers of creation, interpretation and appropriation, which might be constructed as global, national, state and local.

Meso Level. While the articles reviewed indicate that there is a robust *meso level* analysis of global inclusive education across contexts—the meso space being the site where educational policies are translated to practice—the literature reviewed does not sufficiently engage with the voices and experiences of the myriad of educational actors within the meso space. The studies do not consider how power, privilege and global hegemonic understandings of inclusive education through a rights framework may be at odds with the lived experiences of meso level actors in school systems. There is a further need to understand how global inclusive policy is interpreted, and implemented, at the local level in day-to-day school practices while also accounting for discriminatory aspects of policy implementation that are at odds with inclusive ideology. Furthermore, at the meso level, there is a need to recognize that law is the cultural enactment of rules and symbols in social life that are laden with power differentials and global hegemonic understandings of what is global inclusive education [50,67–70].

Micro Level. After reviewing the extensive literature on global inclusive education and law, we affirm the importance of honoring student voices at their multiple social identities in educational and societal contexts for transformative inclusive praxis. There were only a few articles that centered student voice not only in their education, but in the macro and meso level process of the educational system. It is vital that we reimagine the future of global inclusive education and law first and foremost with students with dis/Abilities as multidimensional human beings in systems. *How can we do this in authentic praxis?* One way is to make sure that all actors within the system are cognizant of their biases and develop the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to provide high quality education and support systems that are critically grounded to the lives of their students and their voices and human development.

9. Limitations

Although the systematic literature review provided a critical overview of the status of international inclusive education, limitations must be presented. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the selection of articles from databases may have narrowed the scope of the study. We did not include books or conference presentations which may have contributed to the findings. We relied on a citation index of published articles within the selected databases using selected search terms, which may have excluded articles published in alternative database options or not affiliated with the pre-selected/defined search terms. While methodologically acceptable due to the number of articles reviewed, these restrictions may have excluded additional articles on the topic of international inclusive education.

Each author was assigned articles to review and analyze with our evaluation criteria. While an initial, positive interrater reliability (IRR) index was established for a pilot article, assigned articles were analyzed by only one author. Regular, systematic IRR was not conducted. Selective outcome reporting may also be identified as a limitation, although the authors framed the findings according to each research question.

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