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Handbook of culture and glocalization, edited by Victor N. Roudometof and Ugo Dessì (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022: pp. 400)

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Introduction

This is an ambitious collection that sets out to explore the analytical value of “glocalization” for varied academic inquiries across the humanities and social sciences. Varied inquiries here are understood in terms of disciplinary borders as well as thematic entry points, and the handbook is well-organized to showcase both clearly and sometimes simultaneously. A wide range of disciplinary perspectives are offered, from archaeology to youth studies, with some approaches having less established research habits around the use of glocalization than others. This is intentional, as editors Victor Roudometof and Ugo Dessì explain in their introduction, and it makes for interesting reading on the reach of glocalization, as well as introducing novel discussions on the concept’s relationship to more established analytical frames in these less charted disciplinary spaces. Thematically organized sections of the handbook help to showcase interdisciplinary applications of glocalization, and further our understanding of some important differences in emphasis and interpretation. Overall, the effect is genuine deepening of glocal analytics and an expanded sense of its explanatory horizon.

Organization and conceptualization

The handbook is organized into four parts with five to six chapters in each. In Part I, “Humanities” (p. 28–122), chapters showcase the application of glocal analytics to discrete disciplinary approaches: archaeology (*Matthew Adam Cobb*), literature (*Sandhya Rao Mehta*), philosophy (*Bruce B. Janz*), legal studies (*Salvatore Mancuso*), studies in art and culture (*Nikos Papastergiadis*), and food studies (*Franciscu Sedda* and *Simona Stano*). The chapters in Part II “Social Sciences” (p. 123–216), by contrast, examine glocalization in relation to more interdisciplinary fields of inquiry, such as tourism studies (*Joelle Soulard* and *Noel B. Salazar*), religious studies (*Ugo Dessì*), urban studies (*Yi Sun*, *Tzu-Yuan Stessa Chao* and *Jia Ling*), criminology (*Gema Varona Martínez*), education (*Jean Francois Emmanuel*, *Claire Ramsey*, and *Nowfal Samkari*), and sport (*Habibul Haque Khondker*). In Part III “Communication and Media” (p. 217–321), the chapters offer thematic analyses of digital glocalization (*Barrie Axford*) and glocalizing organizational culture (*Fabrizio Maimone*), as well as case study explorations of glocalized hallyu (*Ingyu Oh* and *Wonho Jang*), film (*Bala A. Musa*), news production (*Jonathan Ilan*), and Netflix in Italy (*Paolo Sigismondi* and *Giovanni Ciofalo*). The concluding

Part IV “New Research Frontiers” (p. 322–399), includes five chapters that explore some important limitations to glocalization, as well as conceptual connections that extend its horizons for understanding social realities, such as its relationship to the “translocal” (*Victor Roudometof* and *Nico Capentier*), World Society Theory (*Ravit Mizrahi-Shtelman* and *Gili S. Drori*), and decolonial priorities (*Viviane Riegel*), as well as its methodological implications (*Giampietro Gobo*), and relevance for understanding youth cosmo-culture in aesthetic capitalism (*Vincenzo Cicchelli* and *Sylvie Octobre*).

The works of Roland Roberston, George Ritzer, Jan Nederveen Pieterse, and Arjun Appadurai provide common, yet unsettled ground from which most contributors in this handbook work with “globalization.” This rich literature relates the complex and fluctuating cultural dynamics of globalization: as convergence and compression, hybridizations, loud defiant nationalisms, and the standardization of differentiation, to name a few. “Glocalization” does not negate globalization, however conceived. Rather it zooms in on these cultural dynamics of globalization to specify their global/local entanglements. In this volume, Roland Roberston and Victor Roudometof’s writings on glocalization provide a connective touchstone for almost all the contributions here. Analytically, glocalization leads us to examine the interaction and influence between the local and the global in a manner, as Roudometof and Dessì write, that accounts for local agency (p. 8). Yet, beyond this commonality, the handbook does not attempt to concretize a singular understanding of glocalization, or tightly delimit a field, or way to do, “glocalization studies.” As Cobb (who draws on Susan Sherrat) writes, a standardized definition and approach to glocalization would have little heuristic value (p. 29). Instead, we have the pleasure of reading across contributors’ different working understandings of glocalization, affording deeper insight into the idea’s flexible relevance. These variations in authors’ application of glocalization are perhaps also reflective of the oscillating and contingent influence of globalization.

Each contributor necessarily begins by clarifying their understanding of glocalization, which inevitably generates some overlap and repetition across the handbook. Yet this is worth it, especially when we acknowledge that each interpretation of glocalization is uniquely situated in a specific collection of research literature; whether on glocal food semiotics, legal studies, youth pop culture, the age-friendly city, and so on. Conceptualizations of glocalization are ground and bound by these research scopes. In this sense too then, the handbook is an extremely useful resource of 24 condensed literature reviews on glocal processes in key areas of interest to the humanities and social sciences.

As Janz details in Chapter 4, there are a “constellation of concepts” that give meaning to our use of glocalization. Concepts that refer to imagined geographies and their properties—such as globe, world, place, local, locality, context, culture, interculture, alterity, particularity—and others to the processes in and among those spaces—such as, globalization, universalism, pluriversality, cosmopolitanism, localization, provincialization, contextualization, intercultural encounter, translation, hybridity, transculturation, creolization, and so on. This is the handbook’s vocabulary. As contributors apply glocalization to their unique research concerns, these constellation concepts are distinctly

interpreted, historicized, situated and sometimes stretched. This aspect alone is interesting and revealing to follow, I am sure that others who work with one or more of these concepts would be just as curious to track their development across the handbook as I was.

Despite the varied topics and conceptualizations, these chapters speak to each other, offering multi-perspectival deepening of glocal analytics and clarifying its applications. Therefore, rather account for each chapter individually, the remainder of this review highlights what I think are some important insights interwoven across the collection, as well a few limitations. The discussion inevitably reflects my research interests, methods, and bias, as a cultural studies and philosophy scholar who is interested in conceptions of “the intercultural” and works mainly with Latin American archives of anti-colonial and decolonial thinking.

Insights and limitations

Glocalization directs our attention to the boundary between the local and global: to the different instantiations of these local/global zones, their points of distinction and their entanglements. As the contributions in this handbook demonstrate, the fact that the local and global are entwined in the making of our social realities does not diminish the significance of that boundary. The local/glocal boundary is a site of multilevel cultural and spatial interplay, mixture, and friction. It directs inquiry to the dynamic material and temporal conditions of (inter)cultural flows and connection; sometimes identified as sources of conflict and domination, but also, of creativity and renewal. In fact, a few chapters here demonstrate the value of the glocal border zone as a generative liminal imaginary: a space, Janz argues, “[...] in which creative thought and action, and the emergence of human subjectivity can happen” (p. 65). Studies on glocalized realities and phenomena, in other words, reveal the local/glocal border to be a valuable hermeneutic device to help us interpret and imagine interculturality structurally, existentially, and according to a geography of scale.

The contributions in this handbook attest to the ways glocalization complicates and nuances our understandings of intercultural interplay at the local/global border. There are many instances when glocalization offers a vital correction against totalizing accounts of global flows, and essentialized accounts of local culture. As Axford writes in Chapter 14 (“Digital glocalization”), the existence of glocalization intervenes in “[...] any sense of globalization as an abstract and totalizing process, it also qualifies equally stark localist solutions to the pressures of global convergences [...]” (p. 219). Glocalization of course complicates “globalization as homogenization” by drawing attention to the interpretive and creative power of local agency through which global flows are refracted, imagined, and re-embedded (see chapters from Roudometof and Dessì; Cobb; Riegel; Roudometof and Carpentier in the book). There is, then, throughout this handbook a commitment to examining and detailing the power of localized culture.

Many of the case-studies demonstrate glocal processes, and their forms of local agency, as strategies that generate more heterogeneous forms of global culture. Yet others complicate

and nuance this paradigm. Riegel's contribution (Chapter 24) for example, reminds us that colonial and racializing logics are embedded at all levels of social life, global and local. The pluralization of global culture, therefore, is not necessarily a step against totalizing or dominating logics; that requires decolonial politics of action.

Other chapters reveal local agency as multiple: multi-levelled and multi-interested. The chapters from urban studies and glocal sport (Chapters 10 and 13) offer us analyses of top-down (state) and bottom-up (grassroots) versions of local influence. Dessi's discussion of glocal religion (Chapter 9) for example, demonstrates how the local in the glocal can skew toward state-endorsed nationalisms, bolstering chauvinistic particularisms at the local level to the detriment of heterogeneity; local or global. Others demonstrate instances of locality as unyielding separatism, or simply overrun by globalized organizational structures. Axford in Chapter 14, for example, draws our attention to local/glocal manifestations of popularism and their attempts to represent the local/global border as a source of crisis in need of policing. Ilan's discussion on glocal news production (Chapter 18), evidences the micro local/global negotiations that occur *within* an organization; here the glocal is seen in much smaller acts, negotiations, and processes, operating within and despite the global organization of local news production.

Uniquely, Oh and Jang's analysis of the glocalization of *hallyu* (K-Pop) reveals how this success story of globally embedded local culture depends on a sense of "female universalism" to drive its appeal; a fascinating case study into glocalization as complex feedback loop of influences between local and global flows. Similarly, Sedda and Stano's analysis of the global circulation of food (Chapter 7) reveals global/local interplay to be multidirectional, multilayered, and contingent processes of intercultural and inter-semiotic translation rendering the "alter" familiar and consumable.

There are also examples of academic fields of inquiry in which "the local" has become invisible and requires reclaiming. For example, Janz's discussion of certain trajectories of philosophy, and Martínez's on criminology, present us with disciplinary practices that have willed their own globalism/universalism to the extent that they have forgotten how to access their localizations; how to identify and think from their particular epistemic locales.

Other contributions here reveal the value of glocal analytics for redefining, salvaging, or stretching some of glocalization's constellation concepts. Rao Meththa's application of glocalization to literary studies (Chapter 3), brilliantly demonstrates its usefulness for challenging essentialist accounts of "third space," paving the way for our continued use of third space as a diasporic imaginary, productive of its own literary representations. Papastergiadis' reflection on global art (Chapter 6) argues that the glocal can lead us to a decolonial reconceptualization of cosmopolitanism. Here the glocal is an important step in seeing the nexus between place and culture as world-making, and cosmos as the dialogue between those interpretive worlds. Cobb in Chapter 2, applying glocalization to antiquity, takes us to historical relations in which global connections and their imaginaries had little to do with Euro-centricity. Cobb offers us an archaeology of migrating objects across the ancient Indian Ocean World, in which

glocal interpretive practices translate objects in foreign contexts. Cobb argues for a renewed sense of transculturality: "material transculturality." Similarly, Roudometof and Carpentier carefully explicate the "translocal" in relation to the glocal in Chapter 20, convincing us of its value as a "mirror concept" that can draw our attention to the directionality of global flows, and to local/local entanglements.

Nonetheless, there are some perspectives and research genealogies that are missing here, and while no text can or should cover everything, I want to signal a few perspectives that I can't help but think would have greatly enriched the discussions in this collection. I am surprised, for example, at the overall absence of perspectives from human geography, and especially from streams of critical and feminist geography. These research fields have strong traditions of carefully attending to place- and space-based reality-making processes and their implications for social and culture power incorporating analyses of geographic connections. Khondker in Chapter 13 calls for more nuanced studies on the effects of glocalizing processes (in this case in the arena of sports) on gender regimes (p. 212); I am sure feminist geographers would have made a significant contribution to this line of inquiry.

Absent too is any mention of "enculturation" (*inculturación*) a concept long used to analyze the localizations of colonial/global religions in Latin American places and historical junctures (Fornet-Betancourt, 1992; Beorlegui, 2010); and widely adopted to examine the dynamic anchoring of other cultural imports, especially "global" philosophy (Fornet-Betancourt, 1992, 1994; Quintanilla Coro, 2009; Beorlegui, 2010). To my reading, this too is an important "constellation concept" that like the others featured in this handbook, would help to specify our understandings of glocalization.

This absence is more notable because there is in fact a lot of conceptual vocabulary in this handbook from Latin American and Caribbean lineages of cultural studies and critical thinking—which have long theorized how to creatively resist totalizing cultural flows: *mestizaje*, hybridity, creolization, and transculturation to name a few. Yet there could be more careful and respectful engagement with the source literatures, as these ideas can appear stripped of their contextual theories of power and then made malleable source material for reconceptualization. Gobo's Chapter 22 is emblematic of these practices, in which some very contentious claims are made about Indigenous methodologies globally, and the promise of reconceived "creole methods," that hinge on very limited engagement and misrepresentation of Latin American genealogies of Indigenous knowledge practices as well as its cultural studies traditions of theorizing mixedness.

Aside from these few limitations the handbook succeeds in arguing for the broad appeal and interpretive value of glocalization; establishing glocalization as a concept that cuts across academic disciplines, thematic interests, historical periods. As such, it contributes a genuine multi-perspectival deepening of glocal analytics, while also demonstrating the value of expanding its explanatory horizon. This is a wonderful resource for the study of the entanglements and cultural spatial connections that constitute our social realities and reality-making practices.

Author contributions

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