The glocal and Global Studies

By

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Abstract

This article offers an overview of engagements with the glocal and traces the consequences of this research agenda for Global Studies. First, it compares the emergence of the global and the glocal in the literature. It tracks the uneven impact of the business use of the glocal and argues that this genealogy has obscured alternative accounts. Second, it offers a thematic overview of the uses of glocalization in the literature. It highlights publication clusters in specific areas of interdisciplinary interest. It further addresses key criticisms against glocalization. Finally, it explores the vicissitudes of research on glocalization on the scope and definition of Global Studies. Trends in Global Studies appear to move in an opposite direction from the one suggested by glocalization. This could lead to the emergence of a separate field of Glocal Studies, causing further fragmentation in the field.

KEYWORDS: global, glocal, globalization, glocalization, Global Studies, Glocal Studies
In light of the debate that ensued with Pieterse’s (2013) agenda-setting article, this discussion pertains to a relatively understudied dimension of globalization scholarship—namely, the notion of glocal and glocalization. Although the concept is invoked in Pieterse’s (2013) article and in several responses (Juergensmeyer, 2013; Khondker, 2013; Steger, 2013), the treatment offered is far from comprehensive. That is in large part due to the nature of the responses (which are short commentaries on Pieterse’s 2013 article). So, the debate has not fully addressed the extensive terrain that Glocal Studies occupies in the literature. Moreover, current trends in Global Studies, as well as the expanding scholarly production and institutional consolidation of Glocal Studies, might lead to the future emergence of Glocal Studies as distinct from Global Studies. This notion is implicitly in line with aspects of Pieterse’s (2013) proposal. This particular angle has not been explored in the various commentaries that have appeared in this journal’s pages.

In order to offer a comprehensive overview of the relationship between the glocal and Global Studies, this article is organized as follows. In the opening section there is a comparison of the different genealogies of the terms global and glocal. This helps clarify some widely diffused but factually inaccurate impressions and demonstrates the terms’ different origins and uses. Next, a thematic overview of the uses of the term glocal in the literature is presented, alongside the identification of specific clusters of publications and criticisms. Finally, an overview of the practices in Global Studies suggests that engagements with the glocal conform to a different research agenda. Consequently, the possibility of distinct fields of Glocal and Global Studies is explored.

Glocal and Global: Origins and Divergences

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (Tullock, 1991, p. 134), glocalization derives from the Japanese notion of dochakuka, originally the agricultural principle of adapting farming techniques to local conditions. In Japan, the concept of ‘global localization’ is often attributed to Sony Corporation’s CEO Akio Morita. Sony employed it in corporate advertising and branding strategies in the 1980s and 1990s (Edgington & Hayter, 2012). From a 2014 EBSCO Host search, between 1966 and 1987 there should be 11 entries containing the word glocal (of which only two are in academic journal articles). Interestingly, in none of these entries does the word glocal actually appear. The Japanese word dochakuka – which according to Tullock (1991, p. 134) serves as the inspiration for glocal – appears in an interview of Michael Schrage (1989) with Yoshihisa Tabuchi, president and CEO of
Japanese giant Nomura Securities. In the interview Tabuchi uses *dochakuka* and Schrage adds that it means ‘becoming deeply rooted’. The term glocal is not used, and that suggests that the association between *dochakuka* and glocal was not a given at the time. It thus seems that Tullock (1991) is the first authoritative source associating the two words. But more important, the lack of reference to the word glocal in the 1980s literature suggests that there is good cause to doubt the suggestion that the word originated in business circles—a claim that has achieved the status of canonical truth in most discussions.

So, the story of the term’s Japanese origins is not without some reservation, especially if one takes into account an alternative genealogy that is however not widely discussed in the social sciences. The term glocal was originally used in the Global Change Exhibition (opened 30 May 1990) in the German Chancellery in Bonn. Heiner Benking built an exhibition piece in the form of a three-dimensional orthogonal cube, called ‘Rubik’s Cube of Ecology’ (François, 1997; see also ‘Cube’ Grafic Purpose, Context, Background, n.d.). This hyperlinked Eco-Cube aimed toward better understanding and communication about multi-disciplines like ecology. It offered a representation of embodied cognitive space, a ‘pointer to possibilities’ for applications ranging from knowledge organization to ecological awareness. The main objective was to offer a representation of links along and across spatial scales in relationship to the goal of developing bridges relating local to regional to national to global levels for the purposes of environmental research and management. Dr. Manfred Lange, the director of the touring exhibit development team at that time and head of the German National Global Change Secretariat, called the depth dimension of this cube glocal in order to provide a word for a magnitude ranging from micro- to meso- to macro-scales. This second line of interpretation suggests quite different origins, far removed from commercial practices and more in tune with ecological efforts to connect the global and the local in order to create awareness and enhance rethinking of frames of action.

It is also important to note the difference in the historical emergence of the terms glocal and global. Glocal is a term that has emerged relatively recently and, as such, it did not exist before 1990. It is true nevertheless that the related notions of hybridity, fusion, creolization, and mixture have a long history. Although glocal is not simply another word for any of the above terms, it can be used to describe some of the social and cultural phenomena that fall under these terms’ scope.

In contrast, global is a term with a considerably longer history. In business circles the credit for the use of the term ‘globalization’ is conventionally given to T. Levitt’s (1983) article about the globalization of markets. However, Robertson’s (1983) first publication on
globality was published simultaneously with T. Levitt’s article. Consequently, the perception that globalization as a concept originated in economics or business administration and only subsequently transferred into the social sciences is not entirely correct—rather, ideas about globality and globalization initially emerged in the context of the sociology of religion and debates about the seemingly unexpected rise of Iran’s Islamic fundamentalism in the late 1970s.

In terms of origins, Scholte (2000, p. 43) dated the first occurrence of the word global back to 1944. But MacGillivray (2006, p. 10) reported that its earliest occurrence dates back to 1892, in the pages of *Harper’s Magazine*, in reference to Monsieur de Vogue, a Frenchman whose love of travel made him global. Of course, if one moves beyond the linguistic barrier of the word, then it is apparent that many civilizations employed notions of ‘the world’. Such notions cover a wide range, from the Ancient Greek *cosmos* to the Christian *ecumene* and the Chinese *Tian xia* (which literally means ‘all under heaven’).

What is important to note with regard to both terms is the wide perception that these terms originated in business and/or economics. As a result of this perception, reaction and response to these terms is conditioned by the academics’ reaction to the neo-liberal agendas prominently displayed in these fields. But although this perception does not correspond to reality, it is widely shared, even across the social sciences; often, social scientists seem content with their role of critic or detractor to interpretations advanced by economists or business authors while at the same time tacitly accepting claims coming from these fields. Use of the term globalization exploded in the post-1989 era and, as Alexander (2007) has insightfully remarked, it represented a means for making sense of the painful trauma of communism’s collapse. Gradually, social scientists came to a pragmatic understanding of glocalization that grew out a notion of globalization originally put forward by Robertson (1992, p. 172, 1994), who argued that

the global is not in and of itself counterpoised to the local. Rather, what is often referred to as the local is essentially included within the global. In this respect, globalization, defined in its most general sense as the compression of the world as a whole, involves the linking of localities. But it also involves the ‘invention’ of locality, in the same general sense of the idea of the invention of tradition. (Robertson, 1995, p. 35)

That is, ‘globalization is not simply dissolving local life worlds in their traditional local structures and settings, but is interacting with them in a sort of localization, or
“glocalization” (Schuerkens, 2004, p. 2). The local–global problematic outlined above sums up the central issue involved and debated under the rubric of glocalization. The centrality of the local–global problematic is enshrined in Castells’s (1996–1998) trilogy of the rise of the ‘network society’. The new forms of ICT (information and communication technology)-based interconnectivity bind actors to each other without requiring physical co-presence. These new networks create a ‘space of flows’ that restructures urban contexts around the globe. The space of flows does not replace the traditional geographical space; rather, by selectively connecting places with each other, it changes their functional logic and social dynamics. For Castells, the emergence of the space of flows signifies a historical watershed and our entrance into a new era. Although the space of flows is the new spatial model, people continue to live in places, that is, in condensations of human history, culture, and matter. Castells’s analysis offers a stark juxtaposition between the global space of flows and the local ‘space of places’ but no resolution of the binary opposition. And Bauman (2013) concurred: ‘One of the prominent effects of glocalization is however a human condition suspended between [these] two universes, each of the two subject to sharply distinct set of norms and rules’ (p. 3).

In contrast, Robertson introduced glocalization into social-scientific discourse as a means of abolishing the opposition between the local and the global. Robertson and White (2007) wrote:

> The alleged problem of the relationship between the local and the global [can] be overcome by a deceptively simple conceptual move. Rather than speaking of an inevitable tension between the local and the global it might be possible to think of the two as not being opposites but rather as being different sides of the same coin. (p. 62)

Robertson’s goal for introducing this neologism was to render the duality of visible global processes: Global processes are not happening against or outside local forces; on the contrary, both global and local are mutually constituent concepts. Glocalization offers the means to bridge the divide between the space of flows and the space of places. It brings forth the possibilities of using the ‘space of places’ (Blatter, 2004) as a basis for empowerment.²

According to Khondker (2005, p. 187) glocalization is similar to a sophisticated version of globalization.³ This viewpoint has been endorsed by Robertson (2013; Robertson & White, 2007), who have further argued that globalization is a self-limiting process. This view adopts Turner’s (2007) ‘enclave society’ thesis and suggests that globalization involves
not only the construction of new models or units of integration but also the systematic fragmentation of pre-existing units and the construction of new units and groups that exist behind new barriers to unrestricted communication and movement. Globalization therefore does not deliver a new singularity but a multitude of fragmentation—hence, it is in effect glocalization (see Steger, 2013, p. 775–776).

Followers, Fellow Travelers and Critics

On 20 February 2014, a search of the databases of EBSCO Host yielded 4079 entries using the word glocal in text. There are a total of 31 entries from between 1966 and 1995 (although, as was already mentioned, the 11 entries between 1966 and 1987 do not in fact contain the word glocal). In contrast, between 1996 and 2003 there are 511 entries and over 3000 entries appearing between 2004 and 2014. It is clear that a silent glocal turn has been taking place in academia since the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Sometimes the word glocal is used in passing, whereas in other cases, the concept of glocalization is more extensively employed. With regard to scholarly output, glocal and glocalization have been employed in the following fields: popular music and musical cultures and subcultures (Kim & Shin, 2010; Seago, 2004), education (Caena, 2014), social work (Hong & Song, 2010), language and translation (Colbey, 2004; Riemenschneider, 2005; Tong & Cheung, 2011), sociology of sport (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007; Jijon, 2013; Weedon, 2012), cultural studies on hybridity and creolization (Cohen, 2007; Kraidy, 2005; Moore, 2011), social geography (Short, 2001; Soja, 2000; Swyngedouw, 1997, 2004), urban studies (Flusty, 2004; Lin & Ke, 2010; Paganoni, 2012; Sassen, 2004), consumer culture (Lam, 2010; Matusitz, 2010; Ritzer, 2003; M. J. Smith & Hu, 2013), social movements (Lindell, 2009; Urkidi, 2010), research methods (Gobo, 2011; Salazar, 2010); art (Duve, 2007; Glynn & Tyson, 2007), religion (Roudometof, 2013), mass communication (Dowd & Janssen, 2011; Moran, 2009; Waisbord, 2004), international marketing (Hoogenboom, Bannink, & Trommel, 2010; Sinclair & Wilken, 2009; Svensson, 2001), environmental science (Gupta, van der Leeuw, & de Moel, 2007), public health (Kickbush, 1999), criminology (Heeres, 2011; Hobbs & Dunnigham, 1998), and terrorism (Marret, 2008). The above offers only a glimpse of scholarly production and has been generated by selecting works that explicitly use the word glocal in their texts. If the parameters are expanded to include authors who have suggested formulations that imply a similar notion but without using the neologism of the glocal, the list could be expanded further (for example, see Robertson, 2013). The emergence
of new journals that explicitly invoke the glocal—such as *Glocalism* and the *Journal of Glocal Studies*—suggests a future increase in scholarly production.

The invocation of the glocal has had a profound effect on methodology. The traditional ethnographic method is predicated upon the identification of a single locale with the local or the geographically bounded place of a human community. But anthropologists have pointed out that the local does not necessarily refer to a spatially limited or bounded locale. The local is a metaphor for a collectively imagined space – or a *social space*. The local and the global should not be seen as a binary opposition, because the local is constructed in contradictory ways and has always been – at least partly – the product of outside or global influences (Appadurai, 1995; Robertson, 1995). The *social* (and not the geographical) definition of the local is constructed in reference to its antinomies (national, regional, global, etc). Such an interpretation inherently dovetails with the notion of the glocal.\(^5\) Salazar (2010) suggested the notion of *glocal ethnography*, and Holton (2008) adopted a somewhat similar position through his use of the phrase *methodological glocalism*. Glocal ethnography, however, does not employ the model of nested hierarchy that is the characteristic of global ethnography – that is, it does not conceive of the global, national, and local as nested concentric spaces. Rather, it employs a flexible model that allows the incorporation of both global and local influences into a single form.

Beyond methodology, there are two main inter-disciplinary fields or areas in which the impact of the glocal is most readily observed: (1) the study of consumer culture, a vibrant area of inquiry with contributions from sociologists, anthropologists, as well as scholars from business and management; and (2) the cross- or inter-disciplinary area of Urban Studies, an area that combines contributions from geography, sociology, urban planning, and related fields. In these fields, the spatial component is an important focus of inquiry, and the micro-level forces are not viewed solely as passive recipients of large-scale macro-processes but, rather, also as active agencies. In the field of consumer culture, globalization has been examined in the context of the debate on the role, significance, and impact of consumption upon cultures and societies around the globe. Contributions to this debate come from a variety of fields, and the debate is generally polarized between proponents and critics. It is in these fields that studies on globalization appear to overlap with the literature on Global Studies – a theme explored in the article’s next section.

In addition to the scores of authors who have used the concept of the glocal in their research, it is necessary to take stock of those authors who have contemplated using the term but opted for not doing so – or who attempted to express a similar notion but finally opted for
different terms. In Transnational Urbanism, M. P. Smith (2001, p. 5) contemplated glocalization as a term that describes the existing reality of contemporary transnational urbanism. Flusty (2004) also attempted to express a similar notion by differentiating between the ‘top heavy vertical circuit’ of social integration and the ‘lateral circuit of global formation’ involving the ‘hyper-extending practices of everyday life’ (pp. 58–59). Flusty defined the former as ‘Globalization’ (with an upper case G) and the latter as ‘globalization’ (with a lowercase g). This theoretical solution is noteworthy, as it dramatically illustrates the necessity for a conceptual vocabulary that avoids using the same word to designate different processes. Rosenow (2003) similarly contemplated using the word to designate what he eventually called ‘distant proximities’.

Echoing a similar approach, Sassen (2004) argued in favor of a resurgence of local actors in global politics through the emergence of subnational and transnational spaces and actors (organizations and movements) that use effective new technologies to forge new political actors that are anchored locally but networked globally.

What is remarkable in the above is the ubiquitous presence of ideas and concepts that closely resemble the glocal. Therefore, the issue emerges: Why is the use of the glocal relatively limited? Why is it that authors sometimes invent or use different terms or vocabularies to express the same idea? Undoubtedly, one answer would be that authors are propelled to invent their own terminology in order to gain self-recognition within the academic field. That is certainly plausible.

However, there is also an additional consideration. When Thornton (2000) wrote that glocalization ‘tellingly has its roots in Japanese commercial strategy’ (emphasis added, p. 81), the insinuation is that a notion that is used as a marketing tool is guilty by association. Uncovering its origins offers confirmation to Marx’s dictum that in each era ‘the dominant ideas are the ideas of the dominant class’. From a neo- or post-Marxist or critical perspective, the concept itself can be easily identified with the interests of corporate elites as an instrument designed to co-opt the local into the circuits of global capitalism. So, it is hardly surprising that the glocal is cast in a negative light: glocalization ‘serves capitalist globalization by naturalizing it, rendering it acceptable by rendering it numbingly familiar. [It] puts the wolf in sheep’s clothing, albeit in a designer brand’ (Thornton, 2000, p. 82). From this point of view, glocalization ‘amounts to an inoculation against further resistance’ because it
demythologizes locality as an independent sphere of values. . . . The danger is that this ‘glocal’ invention of difference may operate at the expense of more ‘revolting’ but
ultimately more resistant strains of difference. Glocal theory, that is, may too easily resolve the critical tension between global and local values, thus abetting global commercial interests. (Thornton, 2000, p. 81)

Glocalization is dangerous: it is a ‘word that there is good reason to abolish’ because it ‘has all the makings of Trojan horse, in whose gut globalization can be wheeled in without resistance’ (Thornton, 2000, p. 87). Using glocalization as a concept exposes the researcher to the criticism of delivering a Trojan horse into academia, of being a wolf in sheep’s clothing, and so on. For academics dependent upon peer review to have their work published, the risk is rather self-evident: one’s work can be shelved, with all the negative repercussions this entails.

Of course, this is only one of the possible genealogies of the glocal and a rather spurious one; this claim is actually not supported by the evidence presented in this article’s opening section. Even more so, the glocal is used in other fields (environmental science, information technology), and it is not clear whether one should privilege its business use over its ecological interpretation. Regardless, for critical theorists the glocal is seen with great skepticism or suspicion. In spite of the above reservations, within the span of a few years after its initial formulation, the term was in circulation both in social sciences and business. Its use in both fields grew side by side, and is not a business import into other fields.

**Glocal Studies versus Global Studies?**

It is clear that there is increasing interest in the glocal; and given the trajectory of its use, it is highly likely that use and visibility of both the term and the concept will further increase. Pieterse’s (2013) agenda-setting article has effectively complemented the idea that the glocal – that is, the problematic that centers on the global/local binary and its transcendence – might be located outside Global Studies. Pieterse has suggested that Global Studies emerges as a consequence of global-level data, e.g. data that are about the world as a whole. To make the point more explicit, the various international social survey programs [EVS (European Values Study), ISSP (International Social Science Program), WVS (World Values Survey), ESS (European Social Survey)] deliver new objects of inquiry that make it possible to study social relations in a manner hitherto impossible. The emergence of such ‘new objects of study’ (Pieterse, 2013, p. 5) is partly the result of greater interconnectivity (greatly facilitated by ICTs), as well as multiple and increasing interactions of different actors upon each other.
Such a perspective inevitably stresses the *integral* notion of the global – and not the idea of globalization as a *self-limiting* process.

There might be no way to settle the difference between the two; and it might be the case that both of these represent different facets or dimensions of globalization. That is, it is possible to argue that globalization is both *integral* (that is, it signifies a trend or movement toward a complete unit or a whole) and *interactive* (that is, it involves multiple interactions among local actors). These are two analytically distinct dimensions. Integral globalization brings forth new empirical objects (e.g. institutions, mentalities, and processes) under consideration. Though the emergence of such new empirical realities might be the result of greater interconnectivity and speed (greatly facilitated by ICTs), the other dimension consists of the multiple and increasing interactions among different actors. Interactive globalization raises precisely the issue of the relationship between the global and the local, the construction of the glocal, and glocalization as a theoretical and empirical object of inquiry.

If Pieterse’s (2013) interpretation is accepted, then the problematic of Glocal Studies (that is, the study of the local–global binary and of the glocal) can be seen as relatively autonomous from Global Studies (that is, the study of integral globalization). Global Studies is already an established inter- or transdisciplinary field (Juergensmeyer & Anheier, 2012). It can be legitimately claimed that it represents part of the current division of labor within academia. In spite of rhetorical overtures, the glocal is grossly underrepresented in the practice of Global Studies. This is reflected in O’Byrne and Hensby’s (2011) *Theorizing Global Studies*. The authors suggested that Global Studies is defined by the coalescence of various research agendas around a short list of specific themes:

- **Globalization:** ‘a process of transformation . . . of becoming global’ (O’Byrne & Hensby, 2011, p. 10) that can be applied to multiple levels, hence the proliferation of various ‘globalization of . . .’ books and volumes. Nevertheless, the key components here are (a) the growth of human interconnections that assume global proportions and are transformative as well as (b) global consciousness (Robertson, 1992, p. 8).

- **Neo-liberalism and growing economic inequality:** This stream of scholarly production centers on contemporary economic developments whereby globalization refers to markets (T. Levitt, 1983). Neo-liberals are joined by centrist and left critics who point out the negative consequences of neo-liberal policies. Sometimes, critics suggest that globalization is but an ideological term that serves to justify neo-liberal
policies. The growing economic inequality and its consequences is the domain of heated debate between the two sides.

- **Americanization and McDonaldization**: O’Byrne and Hensby (2011) differentiated between the two, but they are listed jointly here because they share a critical perspective on the proliferation of consumer culture across the globe. The difference between the two is that Americanization conflates the spread of US culture with that of consumer culture as such, whereas McDonaldization avoids such a pitfall. Both share the view that globalization leads to homogenization.

- **Creolization or hybridization**: competing terms used to designate the production of various forms of heterogeneity under conditions of intensified cross-cultural contact (Cohen, 2007; Pieterse, 2009).

- **Transnationalization**: covers processes whereby connections are established across national boundaries. These do not necessarily evolve into a global dimension, but they might be simply connecting two or more nation-states with each other. International migrants or transmigrants are seen as paradigmatic of such transnational relations, but such relations extend to several additional fields.

The glocal is conspicuously absent from the above classification. It is worth pointing out that glocalization is conventionally seen as the very opposite of McDonaldization or globalization (Ritzer, 1993, 2003). This is quite restrictive and is done in spite of the fact that – as illustrated in this article’s previous section – glocalization is used in several fields beyond the study of consumer culture. Similarly, creolization and hybridization have been used as synonyms for glocalization (Pieterse, 2009). That argument ignores those cases of hybridization that do not involve glocalization. Glocalization involves blending, mixing, and adapting of two or more processes, one of which must be local. But it is possible to have a hybrid version that does not involve any local elements. For example, in the context of higher education in Singapore, Khondker (2005) has argued that a hybridized version comprising the original British model and the US model was accepted.

Within the debates on neo-liberalism and economic inequality, a long-standing criticism of the glocal is that it does not allow the effective treatment of power – especially in the popular reading of juxtaposing the local to the global and reading the local–global binary as a power relationship. Although the local is seen as a depository of communal and social concerns, the global is often viewed as the purveyor of corporate or transnational capitalism (Korff, 2003; Thornton, 2000). Oppositional politics tend to view the local–global binary...
relationship not as mutually constitutive but as redressing the exploitation–resistance binary. Of course, there are counter-arguments: Scholte (2000, pp. 44–45) has argued that the interpretation of globalization as neo-liberalization is redundant, and Fasenfest (2010) has highlighted the extent to which oppositional politics themselves can be ‘glocal’.

Finally, the glocal, as deployed in several studies of social or human geography (Swyngedouw, 1997, 2004), refers to scalar politics, whereby political action and economic restructuring cause the rescaling of hierarchies. In this interpretation, glocal is merely a spatial level; it does not represent a social space of relationships but, rather, an absolute space where economic and political power is extended during the current phase of capitalism. Pieterse (2013) has invoked glocalization in the context of advocating a ‘multilevel approach’ that ‘holds two meanings: viewing global relations at multiple scales of interaction—macro, meso, and micro—and viewing them across the spectrum of class and status’ (p. 11). This line of thinking is actually a combination of scalar politics and global class analysis; but it is not what is referred to as glocalization in the preceding discussion.

All of the above suggest that conceptual and empirical opportunities exist for inserting the glocal into Global Studies. It seems that existing practice in the field does not entirely capitalize on the available possibilities and that there is considerable space for growth. Still, it is practice that defines fields of study, and practice should be taken seriously. Table 1 offers a schematic representation of existing tendencies that are pronounced within dominant practices in Global and Glocal Studies.

Table 1 demonstrates the application of an ‘either/or’ logic in thinking about globalization and glocalization. It is possible and perhaps advisable to view this representation not under the light of ‘either/or’ logic but instead in terms of a ‘both/and’ logic. In such a case, one should not have to make choice between the different tendencies highlighted under Glocal and Global Studies; both are equally possible theoretical eventualities. There is much to be gained from maintaining an inclusive strategy in Global Studies and avoiding further fragmentation through the creation of Global and Glocal Studies. Several responses to Pieterse’s (2013) article have pointed precisely to the necessity of incorporating the glocal into Global Studies (Juergensmeyer, 2013; Khondker, 2013; Steger, 2013). So, this either/or logic might not be the only possible outcome.
Of course, Glocal Studies might also become another interdisciplinary field at some point in the future. In this regard, Pieterse’s (2013) proposal might be seen in accord with the efforts of various pioneers around the globe to establish programs of Glocal Studies. The reasons that operate in favor of separation along the lines listed in Table 1 are pragmatic.

First, intellectual fields coalesce around individuals with shared perspectives and mentalities. As shown above, the practice of Global Studies is not entirely congruent with the problematic of the glocal. Moreover, if Global Studies becomes exclusively associated with critical perspectives, then Glocal Studies might come to be known for more reformist stances. For example, the public policy group Glocal Forum (founded in 2001) has argued in favor of a ‘reformed globalization’, whereby the attempt is to build city-to-city cooperation in an effort to turn the unified and networked major cities into essential players for reforming the current regime of global governance (see the Glocal Forum, n.d., website). Since 2002, the group has organized a series of international conferences with the participation of policymakers.

Second, individuals and institutions are globally under pressure to ‘innovate or perish’, and that adds pressure for the never-ending production of new terms, concepts, and other scientific forms of ‘innovation’. Roudometof (2012) has noted that it is unlikely that a single umbrella term could successfully include all the various research agendas and publication streams involved in the study of globalization. Increasingly, reality offers confirmation of this prediction. In fact, one of the possible outcomes is that entire debate on globalization, or what used to be called ‘globalization studies’, might eventually settle into four partly overlapping but relatively coherent networks or groups of like-minded scholars: Global Studies; Glocal Studies; Transnational Studies; and Cosmopolitan Studies (for overviews of the last two fields, see P. Levitt & Khagram, 2007; Delanty, 2012).

Third, there is a geographical component in Glocal Studies, with continental Europe and Asia being far more willing to engage with the concept than are North American and/or British academics. There is already a Glocal University in India, a private, coeducational institution based in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh. In Italy, Japan, Israel, and Scandinavia, institutions and centers have been created that explicitly address the problematic of glocalization. Most of them center on Media Studies or Urban and Community Studies.

Finally, the glocal might be a factor influencing the very shape of higher education worldwide. In international education, researchers refer to glocal students – those who might have global aspirations but prefer to stay in their home country or region, thereby generating demand for new educational opportunities (Zang, 2013). The Association of South East Asian
Nations’s (ASEAN) higher education system, with 6500 higher education institutions and 12 million students in 10 nations, aims to create a common space of higher education in the region, thereby capitalizing on the new trend. These developments suggest that the rise of the glocal is also related to policymaking. Given the future expansion of educational institutions in Asia, Glocal Studies might become a means for asserting institutional power globally.

**Conclusions**

This article is an effort to recontextualize current debates about the scope, character, and orientation of Global Studies by inserting the question of the glocal into these debates. As this article shows, global and glocal are distinct terms with different genealogies. Both of them suffer extensively from the academic perception that these terms emerged from economics or business – an assertion that is in truth more an exercise in academic clout than an assertion of fact. The increasing scholarly output that demonstrates a silent glocal turn at the dawn of the twenty-first century was reviewed, and specific clusters of publications were identified. Criticisms leveled against the glocal were also appraised.

Finally, the argument that the growth of Glocal Studies through institutional settings and scholarly output might eventually necessitate the creation of distinct fields of Glocal and Global Studies was explored. In such a turn of events, Pieterse’s (2013) proposal offers an excellent complementary definition of a more narrowly construed field of Global Studies. However, such a field – as well as a possible field of Glocal Studies – in effect would restrict the range of inquiry into a much more narrow focus than the ‘great debate’ on the nature, causes, processes, and possible futures of globalization. There is much to be gained from having intellectual conversations with people who have different meta-theoretical assumptions and opinions – and much is lost when fields narrow their scope into a more coherent and like-minded group of scholars.

That turn might lead the way to ‘normal’ science (Kuhn, 1962), but it also represents a closing of debate. Perhaps the intellectual field of globalization studies is rapidly approaching the point where normal science might come into play. In this case, the ‘general’ field of globalization studies might be viewed as consisting of four partly overlapping, but relatively coherent, networks of scholarship: Global Studies, Glocal Studies, Transnational Studies and Cosmopolitan Studies. In spite of this fragmentation, scholarship has much more to gain from dialogue and debate *across* these different fields or areas of study. Ultimately,
the construction of fields of study is not dictated *ex cathedra* but is determined by the choices made by hundreds if not thousands of students, administrators, policymakers, and scholars.

**Notes**

1. An earlier version was presented at the 2015 Global Studies Association annual meetings (York St. John University, York, UK, June. 26-28). The author would like to thank Heiner Benking & Manfred Lange for their assistance in confirming the details of the 1990 Global Change Exhibition. The author further thanks the reviewers for their constructive remarks in revising this manuscript.

2. Blatter (2004, p. 545) has argued that cross-border regimes in North America and Europe follow different logics: While North American regimes tend to follow the logic of the spaces of flows, their European counterparts tend to follow the logic of spaces of places.

3. Its main elements are: (1) diversity is the essence of social life, (2) not all differences are erased, (3) history and culture operate autonomously to offer a sense of uniqueness to the experiences of groups (whether cultures, societies or nations), (4) glocalization removes the fear that globalization resembles a tidal wave erasing all differences, and (5) glocalization does not promise a world free from conflict but offers a more historically grounded and pragmatic worldview (Khondker, 2005).

4. The databases searched were: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Communication & Mass Media Complete, ERIC, GreenFILE, Humanities International Complete, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Humanities Abstracts (H.W. Wilson), EconLit, MLA International Bibliography, Political Science Complete & eBOOK Academic Collection (EBSCOhost).

5. In a pioneering article, Helvacioglu (2000) applied the notion of glocalization to describe the construction of Bilkent neighborhood in Istanbul, Turkey. Helvacioglu noted that glocalization involved the construction of lived space out of non-space as well as the unequal non-participatory nature of the process.

6. Rosenau’s thesis is that globalization is best understood as a dual process of integration and fragmentation. In the new global era, there are simultaneous movements toward greater localization and decentralization, on the one hand, and greater centralization and interconnectedness, on the other. The globalizing forces of the information revolution, free markets, and expanding American influence interact with the localizing forces of nationalism, religious fundamentalism, and anti-Americanism. Rosenow explores no less than 12 local and global ‘worlds’ emerging within this complex system.

7. Indicatively, see the Glocal Program, funded by the EU’s 7th framework program (see Agence France Press, n.d.).

8. To be fair, O’Byrne and Hensby (2011) have used the term *Balkanization* to refer to processes of fragmentation but also do not seem to have taken note of the increasing scholarly production addressing the glocal. In any case, using Balkanization leaves the authors vulnerable to the charge of Balkanism (see Todorova, 1997).

9. On the difference between absolute or geographical space and social space, see Pries (2005).

**References**


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