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# Glocalisation

## An international communication framework?

#### MARWAN M. KRAIDY

[T]here has been a growing consensus in the literature ... that previous models of international communication may be abandoned in a process of linear intellectual development that has moved through theories of international communication as propaganda, through to modernization and free flow, to dependency and cultural or media imperialism, supplanted in turn by theories of the 'autonomous reader' and culminating in discourses of globalization that play upon an infinite variety of 'global' and 'local' ... intellectual development in the field of international communication appears not to proceed on the basis of exhaustive testing but lurches from one theory, preoccupation, dimension to another with inadequate attention to accumulative construction.

#### Oliver Boyd-Barrett, 1998, p.157

[T]he global is best seen in contrast to the local. Just as there can be no 'them' without 'us' or no 'other' without 'self', so there can be no global without the local ... In sum, there are good reasons to presume that the inroads that both globalization and localization have made into national states and societies are sufficient to justify downgrading the analytic relevance of national phenomena.

#### James Rosenau, 2003, pp.85-87

For two decades, international communication has lacked a unifying conceptual framework. While this situation, as the first epigraph states, is not new, the past 20 years have witnessed periodic discussions on the core issues of the field. Today, international communication scholarship has — to some extent — lost the impetus towards international development and the overarching concern about inequality that characterised much of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) debate (Gerbner, Mowlana & Nordenstreng 1994). As a result of the changing global political economy, shifting intellectual trends, and unresolved conceptual and empirical questions, the field of international communication has broken out of the duopoly of 'development/modernisation' and 'dependency/imperialism' into a variety of relatively disconnected factions. The paucity of efforts to theorise international communication and the lack of consensus on the field's core issues have exacerbated its fragmentation.

Engaging this fragmentation, this article addresses important international communication issues that were raised in the inaugural issue of this journal (Mowlana 1994; Robertson 1994a). More specifically, it explores *glocalisation*, an idea advanced by Robertson (1994) as 'a refinement of the concept of globalisation' (p.33), as an international communication framework. This entails an explicit articulation of the notion of glocalisation with the theoretical diversity of international communication research. Recognising the benefits of considering multiple levels in international communication (Mowlana 1994; Straubhaar 1997), this article attempts to map out the central *problématiques* on the plates of international communication scholars. It begins with a summary of theoretical formations in international communication, followed by a selective survey of the globalisation literature, and then by a review of research on localisation. The notion of *glocalisation* is then introduced, and explored as an alternative international communication theoretical formation, a global-to-local theoretical matrix<sup>1</sup> based on mutual articulations of the global, regional, national, provincial and local contexts of international communication.

Finally, using glocalisation as a framework, I suggest an international communication research agenda for the 21st century, guided by ontological, epistemological and axiological principles. Exploratory in nature, this article seeks to provoke reflection about the issues it raises rather than claiming to provide a solid framework to be adopted without debate. In addition to this heuristic dimension, this article has a pedagogical intent, presenting a broad picture with accessible language in a nondogmatic tone. As such, it engages the notion of glocalisation without fully embracing it, raising questions such as: Is the elaboration of such a framework possible? To what extent is it necessary? To what extent is such a theoretical formation helpful? In the conclusion, I will therefore restrict myself to broad recommendations, with the hope that other scholars engage the issues raised and draw on the suggested framework to build innovative research designs and construct new theories.

In the field of international communication, the geopolitical and intellectual changes of the last quarter century have led to the emergence of several conceptual and empirical variations out of the development and imperialism heavyweights, including a variety of revisionist trends in international communication that Sreberny-Mohammadi referred to as an 'ill-defined cultural pluralism' (1987). An examination of our scholarly journals clearly reveals the subparadigmatic proliferation of international communication theory and research. A look at recent issues of the *Journal of International Communication* and journals with related content reveals historical, descriptive or comparative research, international and cross-cultural media effects studies, transnational media flows and reception studies, in addition to discussions of structural issues, human rights, and other themes. Does this diversity of approaches reflect fragmentation or is there dialogue and ferment between different research 'factions'? Do these approaches share a set of central concerns, and if so, what are these core issues?

Ferment in international and intercultural communication has occurred for at least a decade. Heuristic conceptual efforts include the introduction of Islamic and other non-western worldviews to international communication (Mowlana 1994), the critical application of western mass communication theories to post-Soviet Eastern Europe (Downing 1996), and notions such as asymmetrical interdependence (Straubhaar 1991), among others. In intercultural communication studies, ferment is palpable in concepts such as third-culture building (Casmir 1993), in theorising communication and culture from a dialectical-dialogical perspective (Martin & Nakayama 1999), and others. Scholars have also connected both international and intercultural communication to postcolonial thought (Drzewiecka & Halualani 2002; Kraidy 2002a; Parameswaran 2002; Shome & Hegde 2002), blended political economy with screen studies (Miller et al 2001), and articulated media ethnography with globalisation theory (Murphy & Kraidy 2003a, 2003b). Clearly, these are only a few examples of renewal (see Kraidy 2002c) that are endogenous to the field, but that also significantly draw on the social sciences and humanities, where several prominent works have exhibited a keen interest in the global dimensions of communication (Jameson 1999; Hardt & Negri 2001). The international communication 'canon' is indeed undergoing an expansion.

While interdisciplinary ferment continues, these discussions have not yet coalesced in a coherent disciplinary agenda that would integrate the most pressing theoretical, methodologicai, ethical and topical concerns in international communication. This agenda would not be based in a monolithic and exclusionary paradigmatic framework stifling interdisciplinary scholarship, but would inclusively connect hitherto isolated factions, thus turning a somewhat sterile eclecticism into a more productive pluralism. Granted, there is no consensus on the necessity and desirability of such a broad and unifying agenda. In my opinion, however, such a framework would accomplish two beneficial tasks. First, it would sharpen the debate on the core issues in international communication, ideally moving towards a consensus. Second, it has the potential to establish a productive dialogue between the different approaches to these core issues. This is feasible if we conceptualise such a framework metatheoretically, as metatheory is 'a body of speculation on the nature of inquiry that is above the specific content of given theories' (Littlejohn 1996, p.32). In this spirit, this article explores a modified version of Robertson's idea of glocalisation (1994a, 1994b), exploring it instead as a meta-theoretical framework - a second-order model - for international communication theory, research and criticism. According to Craig (1999), 'a constitutive metamodel of communication pictures models of communication as different ways of constituting the communication process symbolically for particular purposes' (p.127).

Can the notion of glocalisation serve as a constitutive perspective for international communication first-order models, organising them in a coherent framework that nonetheless preserves conceptual diversity? What would the contours of such a framework look like? In this respect, Craig (1999) defines a first-order model as 'a

perspective on communication that highlights certain aspects of the process' (p.127). Looking at subdisciplinary areas in international communication as first-order models allows us to integrate them into a second-order model for heuristic, organisational and analytical purposes. First-order international communication models such as cultural imperialism, development communication, transnational reception studies, comparative media systems research, and political economy, are thus interconnected. The benefits of integrating first-order models into a second-order framework reside mainly in (1) a holistic perspective on international communication processes and outcomes, (2) a multi-perspectival understanding of core issues in international communication, and (3) a heuristic dialogue between separate traditions in international communication scholarship. It is hoped that this metatheoretical integration would sharpen theory construction, facilitate research, and stimulate intellectual growth in international communication. At the same time, it would foster the construction of a body of knowledge whose dynamics are simultaneously cumulative and dialectical. To establish the historical and conceptual background to this metatheoretical proposal, it is helpful to briefly review the main approaches, what I call 'theoretical formations', to international communication.

#### THEORETICAL FORMATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

For analytical purposes, international communication scholarship can be organised into three broad theoretical formations: development, imperialism and pluralism (see Sreberny-Mohammadi 1987). I use 'theoretical formations' instead of 'paradigms' because international communication, like the field of communication at large, has always been in a 'preparadigmatic' condition (Craig 1993; Pearce 1977; Tehranian 1999). As a result, as I will argue later in this article, the three international communication theoretical formations co-exist, and even overlap in significant ways, spawning hybrid conceptualisations and research designs.

#### Development communication

Tehranian (1999, also see Fair & Shah 1997) provides a concise overview of development communication's three phases. The first phase includes the early work by Lerner (1958) and Schramm (1964). The second phase is one of re-evaluation (also see Rogers 1976) triggered by criticisms of development communication by dependency theorists. The third wave witnessed a fragmentation on three fronts: (1) the information society literature, (2) the New World Information and Communication Order debate, and (3) poststructuralist and postmodernist thought (see Tehranian 1999 for a detailed discussion). Heavily influenced by western social science designs, early development and modernisation models followed a functionalist perspective rooted in a vertical mode of communication, which assumed a somewhat passive audience. Development communication was regarded as an instrument of nation-building, a tool for disseminating vital agricultural and health information, or a means to changing traditional beliefs held to be detrimental to a country's 'development'. Subsequent sections of this article will address recent theoretical advances in development communication.

Critics argued that development discourse was shrouded in a Eurocentric perspective on communication in developing countries, raising suspicions about the motivations behind campaigns for social change. Development communication was criticised for failing to understand the complexity of communication processes (Hardt 1988), for being ethnocentric (Golding 1974; Hardt 1988), and ahistorical (Golding 1974). Moreover, as it developed institutionally in the United States in the 1950s, development communication was seen as a continuation of wartime propaganda efforts by the United States, locked in the Cold War with the Soviet Union (Halloran 1997; Hardt 1988). While acknowledging the influence of Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958), Halloran (1997) nevertheless criticises it on the grounds that it had 'more to do with the Cold War politics of the time than with issues at the heart of development communication' (p.33).

#### Cultural imperialism

With the intensification of the critiques of early development theories, cultural imperialism emerged as a dominant theoretical formation in the 1970s (Beltran 1978; Mattelart 1979, 1983; Schiller 1973, 1976). Like development communication, cultural imperialism included a variety of strands, such as (1) media imperialism,<sup>2</sup> (2) a discourse of nationality, (3) a critique of global capitalism and (4) a critique of modernity (Tomlinson 1991). Grounded in a radical structuralist conceptual framework which assumed a passive audience of alienated individuals, cultural imperialism's merit resides in its identification of issues of inequalities in global media and cultural dynamics. This paradigm generated a variety of empirical studies, describing inequalities in media flows and cultural exchanges (Beltran 1978; Nordenstreng & Varis 1973; Varis 1984). Those studies shared concerns about the homogenisation of local cultures in a process of westernisation and, later, commercialisation.

Cultural imperialism has been criticised for conceptual ambiguity. Mattelart (1979) conveyed the 'apprehension' with which 'the problem of imperialism is approached', because the concept 'has too often been used with ill-defined meaning' (p.57). Whereas Beltran (1978) defined cultural imperialism as 'a veritable process of social influence by which a nation imposes on other countries its set of beliefs, values, knowledge, and behavioral norms as well as its overall style of life' (p.184), Tunstall (1977) stated that 'the cultural imperialism thesis claims that authentic, traditional and local culture in many parts of the world is being battered out of existence by the indiscriminate dumping of large quantities of slick commercial and media products, mainly from the United States' (p.57). These definitions illustrate the wide range of processes captured by the notion of cultural imperialism.

Partly because of this conceptual confusion, cultural imperialism lost intellectual and ideological ground in the 1990s. According to its critics, cultural imperialism's ideological rigidity failed to take notice of and account for complex developments in international communication (Salwen 1991; Sreberny-Mohammadi 1997; Straubhaar 1991). Sreberny-Mohammadi (1997) echoed earlier reservations when she wrote that 'the concept was broad and ill-defined, operating as evocative metaphor rather than precise construct, and has gradually lost much of its critical bite and historic validity' (p.47). Schiller (1991) contested these charges vehemently and reaffirmed his full commitment to the imperialism paradigm. In a more qualified defence, Boyd-Barrett (1998) and Mattelart (1994, 1998) acknowledged conceptual weaknesses in the cultural imperialism thesis, but advocated rearticulating some of its conceptual bases rather than entirely dismissing it. Since then, a variety of perspectives have co-existed and some recent works have rearticulated the notion of cultural hegemony (see Kraidy 2002c).<sup>3</sup>

#### Cultural pluralism

Cultural pluralism is referred to as a 'paradigm' for purposes of analysis and organisation. In fact, it is an eclectic group of approaches to international communication brought together more by their revisionist stance towards cultural imperialism than by solid conceptual and empirical commonalties. They include a variety of critical, interpretive, historical and descriptive approaches to international communication. Two related developments facilitated the emergence of cultural pluralism in international communication theory and research. First, the advent of critical and cultural theory and the 'posts' such as poststructuralism, postmodernism and postcolonialism, brought new discourses and opened new interdisciplinary avenues for the study of international communication processes and outcomes. Second, the end of the Cold War and the rise of global economic neoliberalism produced global political fragmentation and economic decentralisation. The title 'cultural pluralism' indicates the continuing predominance of cultural issues in international and intercultural relations.

One of the most promising dimensions of cultural pluralism is that it blurs the boundaries between the subdisciplines of international and intercultural communication. International communication, which developed within the fields of international relations and mass communication, has mostly focused on mass mediated communication processes between states, industries and societies. Intercultural communication, a tradition originally placed in speech communication, has historically researched and theorised interpersonal communication processes and effects between people of different cultural or national backgrounds. International and intercultural communication theory and research have recently overlapped substantially, mainly because of three factors: first, the uses and application of cultural, critical and postcolonial theory; second, global demographic, cultural and technological changes; and third, the advent of the interdisciplinary globalisation debate. These three factors have, in my opinion, blurred the distinction, at least conceptually, between what qualifies as 'international' and what is defined as 'intercultural'.

#### GLOBALISATION AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION THEORY

In the 1990s, globalisation has become a transdisciplinary preoccupation - Wallerstein (2000) called it an 'enormous recent furor' (p.xix). The word 'global' is more than four centuries old, but terms such as 'globalise' and 'globalisation' only appeared in the late 1950s, and Webster's was the first major dictionary to define 'globalisation', in 1961 (Waters 1996). Nonetheless, globalisation did not gain significant academic currency until the early 1980s (Robertson 1992). Whereas Giddens (1990) defines globalisation as the 'intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (p.64), Robertson (1992) depicts it as 'the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole' (p.8). As a result, the world has become a global 'ecumene', defined as a 'region of persistent culture interaction and exchange' (Hannerz 1994, p.137) characterised by flow and disjuncture (Appadurai 1994) of people, capital, technology, images and ideologies. Whereas the term 'imperialism' reflects an intentional and systematic endeavour, globalisation is seen as a more complex phenomenon, 'a dialectical process because ... local happenings may move in obverse direction' (Giddens 1990, p.64). Instead of the focus on a structured, one-way dependency, the debate moved to a complex interdependency, referred to as 'asymmetrical interdependence' (Straubhaar 1991), 'interpenetrated globalisation' (Braman 1996), and 'fragmegration' (Rosenau 2003), a neologism blending 'fragmentation' and 'integration'.

The globalisation debate energised international communication theory and research in three substantial ways. First, globalisation became a busy conceptual and ideological crossroads where international communication paradigms borrowed from each other, somewhat mitigating contentious issues and generating new theoretical constructions. This resulted in several interparadigmatic hybrids discussed later in this article. Second, the globalisation debate activated interdisciplinary traffic between communication, the humanities and social sciences, bringing a new influx of concepts and theories from international relations, anthropology, sociology, economics, geography and even comparative literature. Third, because information and media technologies play an essential role in the globalisation process, international communication scholars are given an auspicious opportunity to reach outside of our disciplinary boundaries and impact related fields. Consequently, the emergence of globalisation as a major interdisciplinary debate has generated intellectual energy leading to new developments in international communication theory and research. Many of these developments centred on the articulation of the 'global' with the 'local.'

#### LOCALISATION AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION THEORY

In Local Knowledge (1983) Geertz wrote that 'the shapes of knowledge are always ineluctably local, indivisible from their instruments and their encasements' (p.4). In the two decades since Geertz's pronouncement, interest in the local has grown (Braman 1996; Rosenau 2003), and can be traced to three factors. The first is of an epistemological nature, where the move towards interpretive research and context-bound analysis, such as the case-study method, in the social sciences and humanities in the 1970s and 1980s generated interest in localised, micro-scale processes. The second is ontological, where the local becomes the context of opposition or adaptation to globalisation and its large-scale standardisation of social life. Thirdly, the ability of new information technologies to fragment audiences, thus shifting the debate towards narrowcasting, personalisation and interactivity, has heightened interest in the local as the presumed site of individual agency. More recently, international relations scholar James Rosenau (2003) offered a useful taxonomy which identifies four local worlds: (1) insular locals are those on the sidelines of globalisation, such as some rural people. Unlike insular locals, (2) resistant locals engage globalisation but only to resist the influence and encroachment of supra-local forces. The anti-globalisation movement can be said to be an alliance of resistant locals. In contrast, Rosenau (2003) defines (3) exclusionary locals as those who 'seek to render inconsequential the dynamics of globalisation by closing themselves off' (p.107), and offers Osama bin Laden's rhetoric as an example. Finally, (4) affirmative locals are those who integrate globalising processes without giving up essential local attributes.

The interest in the local is also palpable in international communication and global media studies. In fact, both ontological and epistemological developments have had direct implications on these areas. Ontologically, the site of the local has achieved growing recognition as a space of meaning construction, power struggles and, to a lesser extent, social action in communication research (see Bareiss 1998; Blanks Hindman 1998; King & Mele 1999; Morris 1995; Sampedro 1998). The ontological significance of the local is also underscored in theories of audience activity and the European reception studies tradition and, range from 'uses and gratifications' to the 'active audience' formation in cultural studies.

International communication scholars have grappled directly with the concept of the 'local', usually as the dialectical opposite of the category of the 'global'. The regularity with which these two terms appear as a pair, including the second issue of the first volume of this journal, bears witness to how pervasive the local/global articulation has become (see Chan & Ma 1996; Dowmunt 1993; Eade 1997; Ferguson 1995; Gurevitch & Kavoori 1994; Hall 1991; Thussu 1998a, 1998b; Kraidy 1999; Roome 1999; Sreberny-Mohammadi 1987; Lie 2001). In this literature, the local is accorded importance as 'a resistance ... the source of particularities and variety, as the ground of meaning for individuals and communities' (Braman 1996, p.27). In other words, the local is an arena where processes of 'resignification' (Mattelart 1994, p.222) occur. In

addition to transnational media reception studies and comparative media research, this area also includes work on alternative media (Downing 2000; Rodriguez 2001).

Renewed attention to the local has also had epistemological repercussions. Researchers who turned their lenses to the local, harnessed methodologies suited to study phenomena that are context-bound, culturally specific, and rooted in a geographically distinct locale. For example, ethnography emerged as a preferred methodology for international communication researchers in their attempt to capture the distinctness of the local, in line with Arjun Appadurai's defining of the task of ethnography as 'the unraveling of a conundrum' which he summarises in a question that in itself is a research agenda: 'what is the nature of locality, as a lived experience, in a globalized ... world?' (1991, p.200). With its focus on details, emphasis on observation and participation, and commitment to rendering specificity, ethnography has been a productive methodological choice to study the local. For several decades, comparative and media systems research has relied on personal interviews with local individuals and participant observation in media institutions for first-hand information about events and processes. Ethnography has extended this localised approach to the study of audiences, and has been more theoretically inclined than the comparative method. A full comprehension of the local is arguably difficult to achieve using quantitative methods, with their commitment to generalisation and replicability. These macrological methodological orientations are perhaps more suited for the study of the large-scale processes of globalisation. In contrast, the usefulness of ethnography as a method resides more in its capacity to comprehend the local as it articulates the global, and not in its supposed ability to understand the local in isolation from largescale structures and processes. Ethnography then is a methodological and conceptual choice that is well suited to the intricate entanglement of the local and the global (Murphy & Kraidy 2003a, 2003b).

#### GLOCALISATION AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION THEORY

#### The history and development of the concept of glocalisation

Giddens (1990) has argued that globalisation is a dialectical 'stretching' of local events because 'local transformation is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space' (p.64). But with its connotations of standardisation, homogenisation and universalism, the term 'globalisation' falls short of rendering the complexity of international dynamics. By accounting for both global and local factors, *glocalisation* was advanced as a more appropriate notion than globalisation in conjunction with international communication (Robertson 1994a). According to Robertson (1994a, p.36), the concept originated in Japanese agricultural and business practices of 'global localization, *a global outlook adapted to local conditions'* (1994a, p.36, emphasis added). Then it made its way to the social and human sciences (Galland 1996; García-Canclini 1995; Robertson 1994a, 1994b) and finally began appearing in communication scholarship (Chang 2000; Kraidy 1999; Mattelart 1998; Sarobol & Singhal 1998).<sup>4</sup>

Most important in these formulations of glocalisation is the notion – sometimes explicitly formulated but more often latent – that the local and the global need not always be opposites; rather they are engaged in a relational and reciprocal process whose dynamics are mutually formative. In short, the local and the global are complementary competitors, feeding off each other as they struggle for influence.

#### Glocalisation as a theoretical matrix of contexts of action

Building on these ideas, glocalisation is here explored as a conceptual continuum, a theoretical matrix with porous categories rather than a conceptual grid with distinct compartments. This conceptual elasticity is a direct consequence of the location at several levels and contexts of forces affecting international communication processes. The theoretical matrix begins with the global level, going through the regional, national, provincial and ending with the local. These are not concentrically aligned subsystems of a larger system. Rather, as illustrated in the examples below, they are overlapping and mutually influencing contexts of action.

The *global* level comprises all international communication processes and outcomes. It includes transnational corporations, international agencies, treaties and agreements, and all global flows of people, information and culture. The *regional* level includes all supranational arrangements and interactions in a given region of the world such as North America, the Middle East, Southeast Asia or South America, typically in a shared cultural sphere which includes language and/or religion, ethnicity or other factors. These can be institutionalised by regional political organisms and trade blocs, such as the Arab League, MERCOSUR, the European Union, NAFTA or ASEAN, or can be less formalised as in the cultural regionalisation in Asia, the Arab world, and Latin America (see Chan & Ma 1996; Galperin 1999; Kraidy 2002b; Lewis 1996; Straubhaar 1997; Straubhaar & Viscasillas 1991).

The *national* level remains important, because the nation-state persists as an influential player in globalisation. Although weakened by the neoliberal regime, most nation-states retain considerable power over national affairs, devote substantial resources to nation-building, and retain the legal monopoly on the use of violence within their territory. Media policy is one area where, despite considerable global pressure, many nation-states have maintained a high level of autonomy and control. The *provincial* level focuses on those subnational forces and organisms that affect international communication processes. Provincial forces will be more potent in Québec in Canada, Cataluña in Spain and Wales in the United Kingdom, than in states in the United States. This is because ethnic, linguistic and cultural specificity distinguishes these provinces from the nation-state in which they are located. The *local* level here refers to the most narrowly defined context of action and smallest unit of analysis for communication processes and outcomes. In this category we can include community and alternative media and their local context.

#### Glocalisation as points of articulation and interparadigmatic hybrids

It is clear from the foregoing that the local and the global significantly overlap. Often local alternative media sustain their energy through links with other, often distant, similar initiatives and institutions. Media policy, although decided and implemented by national officials, is often influenced by desires to placate or appease powerful neighbours. This is especially the case with small countries, such as Lebanon, who face military and economic consequences if their media institutions attack regional power brokers such as Syria and Saudi Arabia (Kraidy 1998). In this case, policy is shaped by the transnational reach of satellite technology, making the case of media policy in Lebanon a clear entanglement of national, regional and global factors (Kraidy 2001, 2003). An effective framework should be able to accommodate these often unpredictable and sometimes even contingent interactive relations.

For this reason, glocalisation should not privilege any point of articulation or context of action on the global-to-local matrix, either in terms of intellectual space for theory construction or a protocol for empirical research. Cultural imperialism has assumed an opposition based first on dominant and dominated nation-states, and later on dominant transnational capital and dominated cultures (Mattelart 1979, 1983; Schiller 1976, 1992). In contrast, more 'pluralistically' oriented research in anthropology, cultural studies and reception studies has tended to accord the local various levels of agency and meaning-making power (Appadurai 1996; Morley 1980). To be useful, glocalisation should acknowledge the contributions of each one of these approaches, but maintain a focus on the dialectical-dialogical interaction of two or more levels, contexts and theoretical formations. Parallel to the global and local, structure and agency, power and resistance are examined in tandem as relational couples with interactive dynamics.

From this perspective, the contexts of action on the global-to-local matrix are not conceived of as subsystems that neatly fit in the global system. Rather, they are contexts of action that mutually affect each other without being absorbed within each other according to any hierarchical order. Despite government efforts to circumscribe their action to rural areas in south-western Mexico, Zapatista rebels in Chiapas have used media technologies and charismatic leadership to take their rebellion to a global level of awareness (Knudson 1998). This example illustrates how a local issue can reach a global audience at the expense of national control. There are also instances where provincial players (Barcelona) directly intervene on a supranational level (Brussels), bypassing the national (Madrid) centre.

This recognition leads us to look at these sites as points of *articulation*. The concept of articulation was developed by Stuart Hall (1985, 1986) in an effort to understand communication processes and outcomes beyond simplistic binary or causal models. According to Hall (1985), an articulation is 'the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time' (p.53). Hall's concept of

articulation is particularly productive when applied to the global-to-local matrix, because it establishes linkages between any number of levels on the matrix without predetermining the nature, direction and results of these linkages.<sup>5</sup>

These points of articulation follow a dialectical-dialogical continuum – *dialectical* because it simultaneously recognises the role of material forces such as economics, technology and politics, and *dialogical* because it also focuses on issues of culture, textuality and meaning construction. This approach is advocated for two reasons. Firstly, by focusing on articulations of power and meaning, the material and the cultural, it bridges the ontological chasms separating theories. Within the framework of glocalisation, both cultural imperialism, rooted in political economy, and cultural pluralism, inspired by both the humanities and qualitative social sciences, can contribute to our knowledge of international communication processes. Secondly, by considering both material forces and symbolic processes, glocalisation allows for a better understanding of international communication phenomena, since several disciplines, theories and research methods are used, thus generating multiperspectival knowledge.

In actuality, 'paradigms' have for a long time influenced each other. For example, research in development communication has increasingly addressed issues of power and inequality in terms of access and participation, gender, race and/or postcolonial status (Escobar 1995; Servaes, Jacobson & White 1996; Fair & Shah 1997; Servaes & Lie 2001; Steeves 1993; Valdivia 1996; Wilkins 1997, 1999). This combination of functionalist, interpretive and critical perspectives indicates that the area's growth is relational, and not only cumulative. Other studies show a rapprochement between media imperialism research and the active audience formation, underscoring interparadigmatic borrowing between structuralism, interpretive research and critical theory (Park 1998). In a similar vein, entertainment-education research combines elements of development communication and popular culture studies.<sup>6</sup>

The existence of interparadigmatic borrowing is therefore not in question. What is at stake in the burgeoning of inter-subdisciplinary research is the absence of a guiding agenda for international communication and the concomitant lack of agreement on the core issues facing our field. The inexistence of a broad and integrative framework is not necessarily a negative situation; however, the burgeoning of international communication related journals focused on narrow aspects of the field risks enshrining the field's fragmentation, hardening theoretical pluralism into islands of dogma separated from each other by the heavy waters of institutionalisation. There is therefore something to be gained from exploring agendas that can potentially mobilise the field, because this stirs debate on the central issues confronting the field, even if it does not bring about a consensus on what these issues are. Glocalisation is a potentially inclusive framework that could help us identify core issues in international communication, facilitate dialogue between different factions, and organise diverse research efforts examining those core issues from multiple perspectives. This would ideally move international communication scholarship forwards by generating theoretical ferment and stimulating meaningful empirical research. The final section of this article proposes a general outline of a broad research agenda framed by the metatheoretical realms of ontology, epistemology and axiology/power.

#### GLOCALISATION: A RESEARCH AGENDA

This article has explored the desirability and broad conceptual contours of glocalisation as an international communication framework. As Rosenau (1993) argues in this article's second epigraph, there is much to be gained from exploring the nexus of globalisation and localisation. By taking both the global and the local into consideration, *glocalisation* accounts for the increasing complexity of international communication processes and effects. Glocalisation recognises and conceptualises social decentralisation, cultural hybridisation and political fragmentation as both factors and outcomes conceptualised as articulations along the global-to-local theoretical matrix. As we continue exploring potential guiding theoretical formations, the following conceptual, epistemological and power issues are worthy of consideration.

For glocalisation to be a useful framework, it must recognise the complexity of international communication processes, lest it acts as a paradigmatic straitjacket. Instead of reflecting a binary opposition between the global and the local, *glocalisation is proposed as a continuum of mutually articulated contexts of action*, ranging from global, to regional, to national, provincial and local. In order to understand the multifacetedness of international and intercultural processes, we need to redirect our efforts on all levels of articulation, focusing on their relational intersection.

By taking into account the variegated nature of international communication, glocalisation assumes no direct correspondence between global forces and local effects. The articulation between globalisation and localisation contains a variety of approaches: between modernity and tradition, the West and the Rest, power and resistance, the mainstream and the margin, the centre and the periphery, the industrialised world versus the developing world, the urban versus the rural. All these approaches, which we see embodied in various international communication studies, are different lenses for examining interactions between the global and the local, the universal and the particular. The problem with some international communication research is that it assumes a necessary correspondence between the local and the global, with some critics of media imperialism arguing that the global dominates the local, while some active audience research in cultural studies conceives the local to resist the global. Glocalisation should recognise the unpredictable nature of global/local interactions. More than the mere incorporation of material and symbolic forces affecting international communication, glocalisation articulates the material in conjunction with the symbolic.

Glocalisation requires international communication scholars to rethink their area's epistemological foundations and methodological approaches. First, research must consider all the contexts in which international communication processes occur.

As an example, glocalisation would examine the production, message and reception contexts of international communication. It would foster research examining simultaneously the contexts of production, distribution and reception, in addition to the political economic structures of ownership, financing and regulation of mediated messages, and to the messages and texts themselves. This may be a daunting task, and designing adequate methodologies to tackle these mediations is a logistic challenge. But they are the sine qua non condition for meaningful theoretical development and empirical knowledge.

Second, scholars must go beyond paying lip service to the recognition that any orientation to research produces partial and incomplete knowledge. This entails designing creative multimethodological studies able to yield complete data that give a holistic view of the communication phenomenon under study. This would mean the adoption of a hermeneutic perspective on international communication, focusing on the whole and the parts and their interaction at the same time. For instance, research on the local reception of western popular culture grounded in glocalisation would at the same time use large-scale survey research to yield demographic and psychographic profiles, and ethnographically grounded participant-observation and in-depth interviewing to understand nuances of meaning and power imbricated in statistical data.

Scholars using the framework of glocalisation should not use it to dismiss the disparities between the global and the local. Once we recognise that boundaries between the global and the local are fluid and mercurial, we cannot escape axiological concerns of values and ethics, nor can we avoid the power relations that pervade international affairs. Empirical knowledge, theoretical orientations, and research methods are all determined to a large extent by the researcher's positioning on the global-to-local matrix. For example, a scholar from the western world and a researcher from a developing country may interpret the global popularity of American popular culture differently. The former may see it as a natural extension of the market system and as a harbinger of values such as individual freedom and democracy; the latter might see it as a harmful cultural encroachment on local traditions. Clearly, scholarly and intellectual work ought to steer a path that avoids both ascriptive dominant representations of the non-West by western worldviews, and nativist exclusivist selfrepresentations from the non-West. It is useful here to remember that categories such as 'West' and 'East' are themselves fragmented and unmonolithic. It follows that glocalisation should emphasise the importance of local-to-local connections, lest it reinscribes the more Eurocentric versions of modernisation theory. This vision of translocal dynamics (see Kraidy & Murphy 2003) in culture and communication is crucial if glocalisation is to be a true alternative to globalisation, and must be fulfilled before we can delete the question mark in the title of this article.

At any rate, by opening up intellectual space for a multitude of local perspectives, glocalisation adds an important ethical dimension to international communication scholarship.

As an international communication framework, glocalisation seeks to theoretically ground the paradoxical forces of fusion and dispersal, control and decentralisation, homogeneity and hybridity, diversity and uniformity. As a consequence, centres and peripheries, the global and the local, are continuously rearticulated. *Glocalisation integrates a variety of theoretical approaches while preserving their diversity*. It calls for *new*, *creative multimethodological approaches to the study of international communication structures, processes and effects,* reaffirming the necessity of interdisciplinary borrowing, methodological diversity, and collaborative research. These essential ingredients to disciplinary growth could hold the promise of an exit from the peripatetic international *communication theorising lamented by Boyd-Barrett (1998) in the epigraph heading* this article.

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#### NOTES

- In 'Configuring the Future: Framing International Communication within World Politics in the 21st Century', presented at the Global Symposium on International Communication at American University on 17 October 2003, Chitty reported he had been developing the matrix view since 1998, and into subsequent publications (Chitty, 2003).
- 2. 'Cultural imperialism' is usually seen as more inclusive term which accounts for the myriad ways in which cultural influence is exercised. Some, however, have insisted on 'media imperialism' to maintain a focus on media and communication issues (Boyd-Barrett 1998). The two terms are often used interchangeably in the literature.
- 3. One of the new developments that Boyd-Barrett (1998) proposes to incorporate into the framework of cultural imperialism concerns notions of cultural hybridity and audience members as autonomous subjects. This is quite remarkable, because hybridity and audience activity have been perceived to be diametrically opposed to the tenets of imperialism. Mattelart (1994, 1998) joins Boyd-Barrett (1998) in advocating the inclusion of cultural hybridity in international communication theory and research. This shows that interparadigmatic borrowing is indeed a strong trend in international communication theory and research. This can also be interpreted as an indication that cultural imperialism is not as rigid and obsolete as some critics have argued. For more recent conceptualisation of cultural and media hegemony, the reader can refer to Miller et al (2001) *Global Hollywood*, and Mosco and D. Schiller (eds) (2001) *Continental Order: Integrating North America for Cybercapitalism*. Elsewhere, I discuss both books systematically and critically (Kraidy 2002c).

- 4. Interest in the notion of 'glocalisation' is not restricted to scholars and has attracted the attention of marketers for whom glocalisation has become a motto as they strive to adapt global campaigns to local niche markets. It is also notable that glocalisation is the title of a major World Bank initiative.
- 5. The notion of articulation used by Stuart Hall in cultural and media studies has a long history in the left-leaning social sciences and humanities. See, among others, Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Althusser and Balibar (1970). For a detailed review of Hall's concept of articulation, I refer the reader to Slack (1996).
- 6. I am not suggesting here that 'entertainment-education' and 'popular culture studies' have strong theoretical or ideological affinities. I am simply pointing out that 'entertainmenteducation,' rooted in the functionalist bases of the development paradigm, has drawn on insights from popular culture studies, which have usually been nonfunctionalist in both theory and research.

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