

# DE-GLOBALIZING GLOBAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH: A 'GLOCAL-COMPARATIVE' TAKE ON TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH

Amira Sariyati Firdaus<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This conceptual paper proposes a mode of inquiry that engages with an increasingly glocal reorganization of contemporary globalized spheres. Drawing upon the field of global communication, I discuss existing literature pointing to an emergence of glocalist research. The article engages with notions of 'glocalization' to reconceptualise a notion of glocality that resonates with new forms of locality-bound globalized spaces and cultures. Combining this idea of glocality with the power of comparative analysis to draw out hidden intricacies within transnational spaces, I propose a 'glocal-comparative' research approach that engages with global and local (glocal) contexts simultaneously. This methodology is illustrated by an analysis of the 'glocal-comparative' elements of a study that examined the news practices of local and international journalists operating out of Malaysia.

**Keywords:** glocality, comparative analysis, global journalism, journalism studies, de-westernizing theory

## Introduction

Drawing upon the field of global communication, I wish to begin by highlighting an increasingly globalized turn in social inquiry. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2008) suggest that a contemporary 'global comparative turn' has emerged since the 1990s. This turn in scholarship that is more cognizant of transnational peculiarities points to the importance of global comparative research (see Donsbach & Patterson, 2004; Esser & Pfetsch, 2004; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2008; D. Weaver & M. Löffelholz, 2008).

My goal in highlighting this global turn in scholarship is to set the stage for expanding inquiry to other terrains that may lay hidden between and within geographical sites and attending to ideological-social-cultural traditions of research. This conceptual article aims to contribute to the existing array of conceptual tools that researchers may use to examine the divergences and similarities of journalistic practice in transnational contexts, and for discussing the multiple co-existing news spheres in existence in our current global age. To that end, this article proposes what I call a 'glocal-comparative' approach to scholarly inquiry, wherein I build upon and marry the notion of 'glocality' with the practice of 'comparative analysis'.

## 'Glocalist' Scholarship

Notably, cultural studies, anthropology, and social and urban geography are traditional sites of 'glocalist' research (Held & McGrew, 2007:167). These scholarly fields pay more attention to matters of identity, community and social configurations of space when compared with other strands of humanities and social sciences. In particular, these fields relate very well to debates regarding cultural globalization (Bhabha, 1994; Hannerz, 1990; Pieterse, 1995; Robertson, 1995) and global-local spatial scales (Brenner, 2004; Sassen, 2007b). Within the field of journalism studies, established and emerging forms of theorizing global journalism suggest a similarly distinct 'glocalist scholarship'.

In her work on global communication, Volkmer (1999) brings Robertson's (1995) notion of global-local dialectical relations into the news sphere through her focus on interactions between global news media and local political spheres, for example in the facilitation of the flow of local political issues carried by global media from outside state borders back into the local public sphere. She highlights the emergence within the global public sphere of 'microspheres' (Volkmer, 2003), enabled via transnational network connectivity afforded by new media technologies, and bound by particular subject interests. The challenges that such political 'spheres of influence' pose to nation-state's 'informational sovereignty' (Volkmer, 2007) enriches debates concerning the interactions between global informational flows and locality, and the rise of glocal spaces. In essence, Volkmer's work (1999, 2003, 2006, 2007) represents a research turn towards what we might call a 'glocal model' of global communication.

Subsequent works drawing upon the dialectical global-local relationship, also contribute to the conceptualization of global journalism within a glocal model. For example, Clausen's (2003, 2004) study of national 'domestication' processes of international news, or McNair's (2006) contentions regarding the 'cultural chaos' of contemporary globalization of news and its implications upon the 'democratizing' of authoritarian political systems. More self-evidently, Rao (2009) proposed the use of Roland Robertson's (1995) 'glocalization' ideas as an organizing framework for studying transformations in Indian journalistic norms and content. Similarly, Capoana (2011:161) presented an empirical case study of a 'glocal (global + local)' South American news program developed and operated upon a combination of local resources and virtual global resources.

In addition to self-evidently glocal scholarship, even 'sceptic' interpretations of global news reporting observe the interfacing of the global with the local, for example Stanton's (2007) work on the 'localization' of global news events – which he claims equates to there being no such thing as global news or global media. With apologies to Stanton for interpreting his notion of 'localization' in a manner that contradicts his thesis, even in this dismal view of the global public sphere and global news media (insofar as Western media dominate the global media system), a 'glocal model' of global news is apparent. Glocal scholarship thus represents a distinct line of discourse within the more general field of global journalism studies and the 'global comparative turn' that has served the development of this field.

## Global Comparative Analysis

A particularly notable facet of the aforementioned 'global comparative turn' and 'glocalist scholarship' in research is the engagement with some form of transnational comparative analysis. This is no accident. Comparative studies allow us to draw upon a rich scholarly tradition which

emanated from Enlightenment Era Europe to reach virtually all regions of the world today, to develop a scholarly and nuanced understanding of society, politics and media in their diverse manifestations. The diverse manifestations of the global communication sphere include media and politics in non-Western regions and under political environments different from the liberal-democratic traditions of 'the West' (e.g. authoritarian political environment). As Reese (2001: 185) argues:

The many opportunities available for cross-national research have the potential for providing important new insights into global journalism particularly as US and British media sociology is compared and tested against experience and evidence from other systems.

In a dynamic and increasingly differentiated globalized media ecology, the relative stability over time of cross-national variances allows us to explore, analyze and comprehend current and emerging media practices even as they continuously transform. In their review of online news production literature, Mitchelstein and Boczkowski (2009: 577), for example, suggests more research take advantage of the 'heuristic power of looking at phenomena across nations and regions'. Thus a transnational comparative approach is not only relevant, but highly useful, for theorizing and researching communication across diverse media spheres and cultures.

In their study of media systems across Europe and North America, Hallin and Mancini (2004:2), argue that comparative analysis allows the researcher to step back from the national context:

Comparative analysis is valuable in social investigation, in the first place, because it sensitizes us to variation and similarity, and this can contribute powerfully to concept formation and to the refinement of our conceptual apparatus [. . .] Because it 'denaturalizes' a media system that is so familiar to us, comparison forces us to conceptualize more clearly what aspects of that system actually require explanation. In that sense comparative analysis, as Blumler and Gurevitch (1975: 76) [sic] say, has the 'capacity to render the invisible visible,' to draw our attention to aspects of any media system, including our own, that 'may be taken for granted and difficult to detect when the focus is only one national case.'<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Reese (2001:185) proposes a comparative approach to guard against the prospect of taking the national context 'for granted, as a static and universal feature'.

Most existing comparative studies, however, reduce the national into a single non-differentiated media sphere defined by a homogenous media culture. This is understandable as most existing studies involve cross-national comparisons between several countries, as presented earlier. Cross-country studies are not only methodologically complicated and difficult to organize, but are also conceptually complex, and require engagement with conceptual vagaries involving political and cultural journalistic differences. Thus, the reduction of diverse local media cultures into a single national media sphere lends a measure of simplicity to cross-national research.

These issues notwithstanding, cross-national comparative analysis continues to be the de facto research mode of the aforementioned 'global comparative turn'. The idea that just one country can suffice for global comparative research has yet to take hold, and few studies attempt transnational comparative analysis in *within*-country settings. This is actually rather surprising given the relative ease of conducting such localized research when compared with the extensive

resources and complicated coordination efforts that accompany cross-national field work. More importantly, a focus on cross-country comparisons that ignore within-country transnational comparative research is highly unfortunate when we consider the amount and quality of rich data that can be gained from research contexts that are simultaneously global and local at the same time.

While one may argue that this privileging of 'the global' and 'the glocal' may be just as inadequate as dominant approaches that use 'the national' reference frame, in terms of capturing social complexities, this argument for a glocal approach at least acknowledges the possibility of alternative frames of reference for research.

## A 'Glocal-Comparative' Approach

Taking into consideration the highly 'glocalized' nature of many aspects of our contemporary globalized world in general, and the global media sphere in particular – for example the transnational structures and reach of powerful media organizations – I argue that the global turn in research resonates more with glocal contexts, than merely with global comparisons of different local settings. I propose that 'glocal-comparative' is an apt term for describing transnational comparisons in a 'within-country' context (versus the 'cross-country' context of 'global comparative' inquiry).

As opposed to the expansive geographic and sociopolitical contexts surrounding cross-national research, 'glocal-comparative' analysis focusses the analytical strengths of comparative analysis towards a single converged locality. In other words, it facilitates transnational research within the boundaries of just one country.

The common geographic locality acts as a constant feature, allowing transnational nuances to become more noticeable than they would be if approached from the more expansive and variable contexts of a cross-national perspective. Inverting Hallin and Mancini's (2004: 2) earlier-quoted argument for a comparative analysis, a glocal approach thus 'renders visible' peculiar and distinctive 'variation and similarity' in different media spheres that may otherwise be 'taken for granted' or remain 'invisible' in a geographically expansive research setting. In similar vein, I argue that a 'glocal-comparative' approach is needed in order to engage with – and to theorize – the increasingly glocal reorganization of transnational journalistic flows.

But what exactly do we mean by such an approach? What makes it distinct from the 'global comparative turn' in research?

The former can only be answered by addressing the latter. And the answer to the latter question can be appealingly simple in the argument that a 'glocal-comparative' approach is a subset of 'global comparative' research. After all, globalization is commonly accepted as a 'central theme for social theory' (Featherstone, Lash, & Robertson, 1995:1), and remains an overarching assumption underscoring scholarly inquiry of globalized transformations within a myriad of media and communication fields, including global journalism studies and its attending global turn.

However, whereas scholars merely point to a noticeable 'turn' or *trend* where researchers reach beyond traditional Western (i.e. US, UK) models and research sites and conduct cross-country comparisons, the approach discussed here does not merely identify current research trends per se, but instead represents an alternative *perspective* in theorizing, analyzing and understanding social phenomena arising from the intersections of the global and the local. It goes beyond mere comparisons to uncover and theorize the specificity of glocal dimensions

which are rooted in specific and identifiable local spatialities and cultures, (as opposed to general, less-clearly defined 'global' phenomena commonly subsumed by 'global comparative' research).

This approach as discussed here gives equal emphasis to both 'glocal' and 'comparative' dimensions of research, hence the hyphen connecting the two words. I am referring to an approach that simultaneously engages with global *and* local (glocal) research contexts. More importantly, it is an approach that acknowledges and engages with the ability of comparative analysis to draw out analyses and interpretations that may lay hidden by the 'taken-for-grantedness' and familiarity of one single 'local' or one all-encompassing 'global' context or locality.

A main idea underscoring this article's thesis is that place-bound localities (e.g. the nation-state, the global city, offices of transnational organizations) and everything that entails and defines such localities (e.g. transnationally mobile knowledge workers, contemporary media contents and platforms) are not always wholly 'local' or wholly 'global'. In many instances, globalized flows highlighted by Appadurai's (1990) 'ethnoscapes', 'mediascapes', 'technoscapes', 'financescapes' and 'ideoscapes' (among others) give rise to the emergence of glocal elements, transforming place-bound localities into 'glocalities' characterized by both local and global influences.

### **'Glocalization', 'Glocality' and the Analytical Terrain of 'Glocal Spaces'**

'Glocalist scholarship' as discussed earlier relates to a conception of globalization that acknowledges its local facets and addresses the 'interpenetration of the local and the global', or what Robertson (1995) terms 'glocalization'. This idea of 'glocalized' interpenetrations presents us with an understanding of globalized phenomena as well as spatial scales that occur at the intersections between the global and the local. To borrow from Meyrowitz (2005: 23), these intersections can be termed 'glocalities' - material local spaces influenced by 'global trends and global consciousness'.<sup>3</sup>

It is worth highlighting that 'global cities' (see Sassen 1991) are one example of such 'glocalities'. In her subsequent works, Sassen (2010), proposes that it is possible to 'expand the analytical terrain of globalization' by extending analysis to the 'subnational' sphere. She argues that globalization 'is more than its more common representation as growing interdependence and formation of self-evidently global institutions. It includes subnational spaces, processes, and actors'. The 'subnational' therefore, is not merely a nationally-bounded space, but can also serve as 'one of the sites for the global'. She argues that while not everything about the global city must be global, such glocalities 'house or enable particular global dynamics and conditions.' (Sassen, 2010: 1-2). We could argue thus that in 'housing', 'enabling' and lending materiality and 'meaning' to global exchanges, global cities are thus a necessary pre-existing facet of 'glocalization'. This ties in to the notion that locality is in essence a precondition of 'glocality'.

Despite contemporary proliferation of 'glocal spaces' like Sassen's 'global city', sociological inquiry associated with globalization traditionally defines the global as a space that lies beyond the nation-state. Such conceptions of the global finds the nation-state or 'national society' (Robertson, 1992) relevant as a unit of analysis, allowing global comparisons or generalizations to be made by drawing upon differences or similarities between countries. However, this sociological reliance on what Sassen (2010:1) calls 'the closure provided by the nation-state' limits the analytical terrain of globalization, and supports our earlier argument for *within*-country (as opposed to cross-country) comparative analysis of transnational phenomena:

One effect has been that international sociology basically compares nation-states. Second, the ethnographic strand, always strong in sociology, mostly has not considered the macro level pertinent – and this became an in-built resistance to studying the global given common definitions of the global as beyond the local and the nation-state. Third, the main sociological strands focused on cross-border and inter-state processes . . . have tended to reject globalization as a useful category, though it has been crucial to some of the current work. (Sassen, 2010: 1)

In similar vein while discussing the ‘changing faces of journalism’, Zelizer (2009:5) argues and asks:

. . . though the global public sphere has emerged as a central environment in which journalism works, we still regularly invoke the nation-state as a point of reference for journalism. Is there an alternative term – and indeed entity – against which we should be appraising journalism’s work instead?

In a somewhat radical answer to these questions, Donsbach and Paterson (2004:106) suggest in their study of journalists in five countries that we should ‘eliminate’ the national context in order to clearly understand social phenomena. It should be noted that they propose this in a study looking into the connection between journalists’ professional decisions and their *political* views, despite the conventionally accepted idea that politics (and peoples’ political views) is intrinsically tied to cultural, social, political and contexts defined by nation-state boundaries.

However, the popularity of the national as a research context prevails because the nation-state is a convenient unit of analysis. Conceptually, it is useful for delineating geographical areas of news coverage, presenting us with concrete policies, regulatory frameworks, and socio-economic-political structures for studying media content, media producers, and identifiable media audiences. In addition to providing a bounded geographical locality for studying media institutions and processes or the production and consumption of media, the nation-state is also conceptually crucial as a spatial context for political struggles and the maintenance of a definable polity.

A glocal paradigm of inquiry addresses this ongoing debate concerning the relevance of the national context. ‘Glocality’ does not deny the relevance of the nation-state and the global cities situated within its boundaries. Quite the contrary, glocal thinking simultaneously acknowledges the importance of the place-bound geophysical-political-cultural boundaries provided by the nation-state and global city, as well as the ‘mutually interpenetrating’ influences between these place-bound localities and the deterritorialized globalized flows and ‘scapes’ that inevitably find their landing and take-off points within the ‘glocal localities’, or ‘glocalities’ nestled inside the nation-state or the global city.

Taking news spheres as an example, within the realm of global and international news flows, (facilitated and intensified by media globalization and increasing penetration of satellite and broadband technologies), the locality of the nation-state is subsumed by the globality of transnational media outlets and media technologies. This gives rise to one form of ‘glocality’ that is geographically contained within national boundaries, but in many ways extant to the national locale: organizationally, economically, and culturally as well. With regards to informational flow, the extra-territorial and networked nature of the internet and the global nature of satellite television, for example, make it increasingly difficult to delineate geographical boundaries of news coverage and news audiences. To the extent that numerous global and international news outlets are able to maintain global news centers or international bureaus in different countries, (or

at the very least deploy 'parachute reporters' or call upon local news exchange services), overlaps between local and foreign/international news policies, regulatory frameworks and organizational structures challenge the ability of local institutions, local actors, and local public sphere, to exert influence over media practices that may appear to be locally-enacted, but are in reality globally-structured. Relatedly, local political actors similarly have little control over the transnational coverage of locally-occurring events and globalized attention (and judgment) towards locally-significant issues.

Notwithstanding the centrality of the nation-state to the daily functioning of media and politics, these glocal realities of global journalism make it difficult to separate national-level analysis from global-level analysis. Sassen (2010:6) presents a particularly convincing argument of the complexity inherent in delineating boundaries between global and local spatial scales:

. . . local scales are not inevitably part of nested hierarchies running from the local to the regional, the national and the international. Scaling takes on specific contents when the practices and dynamic involved are global but take place at what has been historically constructed as the scale of the national or the local [. . .] Existing theory is not enough to map today's multiplication of practices and actors constitutive of these rescalings.

A glocal approach thus addresses inquiry's need for updated conceptual tools that speak to contemporary globalized rescalings of geographical space, particularly it's birthing of 'glocal spaces'.

## Glocal Cultures

The reorganization of space however is merely one aspect of glocality. In many instances, the 'interpenetration' of global and local flows inevitably gives rise to cultural and social modes unique to the particular forms of global-local interpenetrations found in specific 'glocal localities'. In the same way that 'local culture' is place-bound, so is 'glocal culture'. To put it rather simplistically, actors within a particular 'glocal locality' share a particular culture that defines and differentiates them from actors of other place-bound spaces. 'Glocality' here consists of both spatial and also cultural dimensions of local-global overlap. Spatially, the 'glocal' is a physical, place-bound space. Glocal cultures arise from practices, routines, norms, values, beliefs and other intangible cultural modes of these 'glocally-defined' spaces. The notion that glocal spaces are place-bound within local localities implies that 'glocal culture' may also be 'local culture'. If not in pure local form, at least some local influences should be discernible in a 'glocal culture'. But herein lay two problematics: If cultures are place-bound (i.e. *local* culture and *glocal* culture) how do we then define 'global culture' and how do we differentiate it from 'glocal culture'?

While the local and the glocal are place-based and exhibit territorial qualities, by virtue of being what Castells (2000) describes as a 'network of nodes' connected by 'flows', the global is deterritorialized, to speak with Tomlinson's (2007) understanding of the deterritorialization of culture in the rise of global connectivity. Throughout the history of globalization, material exchanges and symbolic flows between 'nodes' rooted in different places have resulted in various forms of shared cultural practices (see Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Ritzer, 2011; Thussu, 2006; Winseck & Pike, 2007). And to return to Robertson and the problematizing of the universal versus the particular, where such shared culture 'intensifies *global*

consciousness', and where it emphasizes global phenomena over local realities, a '*glocal culture*' thus arises.

Setting aside Hannerz's (1990:239) suggestion that 'cultures, rather than being easily separated from one another as the hard-edged pieces in a mosaic, tend to overlap and mingle', we can conceive of global cultures as having the characteristic of being highly similar – although not necessarily identical – across geographically and (local) culturally non-contiguous spheres. In a sense, global cultures exhibit 'universal' characteristics. Beyond clichéd examples of global youth and pop cultures, other examples of 'global culture' include global academic culture (e.g. publish-or-perish culture, anti-plagiarism values, global conference-hopping), and also global news culture (e.g. ratings and market driven news, news scoop, live reporting, privileging of elite voices).

On the other hand, we can argue that 'glocal cultures' are discernible from 'universal' global cultures by virtue of the particular locality in which a particular 'glocal culture' is found. Here the idea of 'glocal culture' speaks with Hannerz's (1990: 237) conception of 'world culture'. Hannerz argues that 'world culture is organized by an organization of diversity rather than a replication of uniformity'. Hannerz (1990:239) contrasts 'those cultures which are territorially defined (in terms of nations, regions or localities) with those which are carried as collective structures of meaning by networks more extended in space, transnational or even global'. Borrowing from Hannerz, we can thus argue that '*local culture*' is 'territorially defined' and '*glocal culture*' are 'world cultures' which are 'carried' by networks linked via an 'extended' space of flows, but enacted within territorially defined spatialities.

Thus, unlike local cultures which are by definition inherently *local*, glocal cultures exhibit not only local, but also global cultural influences. But unlike the 'universal' nature of global cultures, the global culture of a glocal space is place-bound within particular 'local contextualities'. I borrow the term 'local contextualities' from Giddens' (1991:22) discussion of 'presence' and 'absence' of time-space distanciation. More specifically, I posit that 'glocal culture' is experienced from a local locality, and thus arises from the intersecting of 'absent' (i.e. 'virtual') symbolic flows with the surrounding 'presence' of 'local contextualities'.

Phenomenologically bracketing the local element of 'glocal culture', and focusing on the global element for the moment, I argue that 'glocal culture' encourages actors to think about the local in global terms, and to impose global practices and global norms upon the local. In this sense, it is almost as if 'glocal culture' arises from a global *structuring* of the local. To somewhat distort Giddens' theory of structuration, glocal actors enact agency by drawing upon global norms and values to deal with local phenomena. But of course, following Robertson's 'glocalization', this global structuring of the local is intermeshed with a local structuring of the global, wherein glocal actors also enact agency by drawing upon local norms and values to deal with global phenomena.

This directly relates to the spatial dimension of 'glocality' and my proposal for a 'glocal comparative' approach for theorizing localized experiences and interpretations of globalized phenomena. Even if such an approach is not able to address the entire spectrum of regional, national, local, or supra- and sub-national influences upon journalistic practice – this approach at least acknowledges the existence of multiple, overlapping spatial scales, beyond the uni-dimensional space of the national or the non-demarcate-able borders of the global. Furthermore, in case studies that involve overlapping spatial scales that don't necessarily fit neatly into conventional spatial compartments like 'national' or 'global', a 'glocal' framework can be a useful conceptual tool for investigating and understanding social phenomena.

## Journalism as Local Culture in Relation to Global Web-Based Networked Technologies

In addition to structural (e.g. global versus local news spheres) and spatial considerations (e.g. global, local and glocal scales), a cultural milieu is also relevant for discussing media spheres. Culture here refers to "lived experience of peoples and communities", which Flew (2007:19), (drawing upon an anthropological traditional, and on Stuart Hall's notion of "culturalism") describes as "what people do in a given social situation, with the resources available to them, to both produce and consume culture . . . as a diverse repository of symbolic forms". Sociological and anthropological debates draw heavily upon this notion of culture to understand the interaction between journalism and new media (e.g. Boyer, 2010; Couldry, 2010; Domingo & Paterson, 2011; Lee-Wright, 2010; Paterson & Domingo, 2008; Russell, 2010), as well as the relationship between globalization and journalism (e.g. Clausen, 2003; Cottle, 2009; Hanitzsch et al., 2011; McNair, 2006; Volkmer, 2006).

To the extent that news - international news included - revolves around geographically and culturally proximate issues or events (see Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001), and insofar as journalistic cultures differ between countries (e.g. Hanitzsch, 2011), journalism can thus be conceived of as being a form of *local culture*. Hanitzsch and colleagues (2011) for example, identified distinct cultural differences between Western and non-Western journalistic settings. Following from the argument that local culture is conceived of as local only in relation to the global (Robertson, 1995), and vice versa (Hannerz, 1990), we can also argue that journalism as a cultural form is not a detached local culture in the same way that traditional dress or local cuisine may be. More so than other cultural forms, journalism culture is only local insofar as it is juxtaposed with global structures (e.g. transnational media organizations, decentralized web-based online journalism) or global processes (e.g. global diffusion of new technologies and news formats). This notion that journalism is a *local culture* only when it is juxtaposed against a *global culture* highlights the importance of locality in discussing journalistic spheres and practices.

On a macro level, the relationship between journalism and locality relates to the spatial configurations of news spheres, and allows us to juxtapose the global with the local. In other words, journalism cultures can be conceptualized as comprising of coexisting cultures defined by space and locality, i.e. namely global news spheres, local news spheres, and even glocal news spheres.

## Operationalizing the 'Glocal-Comparative' Approach

One example of research that has benefited from this 'glocal-comparative' approach is my comparative analysis of news production across six separate news organizations operating out of one global city, but producing news for two distinctly different national and international news spheres (Firdaus, 2012; Volkmer & Firdaus, 2013). This study explored 'network newswork'<sup>4</sup> at the Kuala Lumpur newsrooms of six diverse news organizations operating within Malaysia's local socio-economic-political system but each with its own distinct news agenda, coverage area, and target audience. These news organizations thus typify 'glocal' media organizations - organizations with offices and workers physically present in one locality, but effectively maintaining differing global and national scopes.<sup>5</sup> The research included interviews with Malaysians working for foreign news organizations, expatriates based in Malaysia, as well as locals working for Malaysian news outlets.

Thus, empirically, 'glocal-comparative' logic was able to facilitate a systematic matrix of comparisons between and among the six different news organizations and their local and expatriate journalists, allowing the research to consider the implications of journalists' organizational as well as national affiliations on their news practices.

Conceptually, the current approach provided a framework which allowed the study to address the existence and implications of a glocal news sphere – wherein international news presence within the socio-political borders of a country is considered against the country's domestic media and political landscapes. Analytically, the 'glocal-comparative' approach assisted the study's analysis of the forms and implications of interpenetration between global and local news spheres.

Comparative analyses addressed convergences and divergences at the institutional-ideological, organizational, professional-routine and micro-sociological-individual levels of news production, a model of journalistic structure adapted from Stephen Reese's (2001, 2001) 'hierarchy of influences' model (See also Shoemaker & Reese 1996). Each level of analysis addressed various forms of globalization and glocality. At the institutional-ideological level, the approach facilitated analysis of the existence in one country of two opposing ideologies of journalism - global-professional versus government-authoritarian. At the organizational level, comparative analysis examined the glocal as well as local and global news orientations as well as resources of different news organizations under study. At the professional-routine level, analysis explored how globalized technologies were incorporated in the localized settings where journalists worked. Finally, at the micro-sociological-individual level, the study addressed the lived experience and perceptions of (localized) place-based journalists producing news using (globalized) networked-based resources.<sup>6</sup> This approach thus provides a conceptual tool with which to address emergent glocal instances of journalism. Not merely to compare nation-based journalistic practices against the journalism of a 'global' news organization, but more importantly to locate the nexus where global, local and emergent 'glocal' spheres shape journalism in a particular instance.

## **Conclusion**

Through de-Westernizing debates, media and communication scholarship has long acknowledged the need for theory to go global. While others have taken this as a call to propose theorizing communication from other geographic lenses or cultural traditions (e.g. Islamic, Middle Eastern, Confucian, Indian), I have demonstrated that the de-Westernization of theory doesn't necessarily need to be defined solely by rejection of the West, and neither do I dispute the importance and validity of other regional-cultural traditions of inquiry. Rather, I have expanded the terrain of theory and research by proposing an alternative 'glocal-comparative' approach that facilitates inquiry from beyond and within these traditional geo-cultural demarcations of scholarly inquiry. This approach provides us with the necessary conceptual tools to theorize glocal contexts of communication, allowing us to simultaneously de-Westernize and de-globalize scholarship without rejecting Western (or non-Western) theories wholesale and without reverting to 'sceptic' denials of globalization's relevance as an overarching social reality. Pairing 'glocality' and 'comparative analysis' as twin conceptual tools for an encompassing 'glocal-comparative' approach to scholarly inquiry is useful for addressing the conceptual needs of media and communication research in an increasingly globalized world.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Media Studies Department, University of Malaya

<sup>2</sup> For Blumler and Gurevitch's comparative analysis, see 'Towards a Comparative Framework for Political Communication Research' pp. 59-72 in J. G. Blumler & M. Gurevitch (Eds.) 1995 [1975] *The Crisis of Public Communication*. London: Routledge.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Meyrowitz stands among one of the earlier scholars to blend the words global with local, having done so since the 1980s. (see 2005, p. 23)

<sup>4</sup> 'Network newswork' refers to a fast-emerging journalistic practice wherein professional journalists socially reconstruct traditional journalistic notions of credibility and news source in order to allow them to incorporate user-driven networked resources and social media content into their routine newswork norms and practices.

<sup>5</sup> Organizations under study include an international news channel (Al Jazeera English) and a local Malaysian national news channel (Bernama TV) as well as a regional Asian news channel (Channel News Asia); and three different international/national news agencies, each representing Malaysia, Germany and Japan.

<sup>6</sup> For example, the analysis was able to address the duality of expatriate journalists' 'glocal' lived experience of living and working in Malaysia, but not really following or understanding local politics and local news due to their organization's journalistic attention to global hotspots and elite nations. The approach also facilitated place-specific comparisons between newsroom-based journalists and international correspondents working at single-journalist bureaus, wherein social media merely supplemented the news gathering resources of the former, but is a major tool for both newsgathering and news reporting for the latter. Also, glocal nuances coloured both divergence and similarity in news practice wherein local national TV journalists followed social media posts of opposition politicians in a 'Big Brother' fashion to allow them to discredit the political opposition in their government-led reporting of news, whereas global media reporters in Malaysia used the same opposition social media for balanced reporting as informed by a 'global' journalistic ideal.

## References

- Appadurai, A. 1990. Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy, in M. Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Bhabha, H. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. Milton Park: Routledge.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (ed.). 2010. *News Agencies in the Turbulent Era of the Internet*. Catalonia: Government of Catalonia, Presidential Department.
- Boyd-Barrett, O., & Rantanen, T. (eds.). 1998. *The Globalization of News*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Boyer, D. 2010. Making (sense of) News in the Era of Digital Information, in S. E. Bird (ed.), *The Anthropology of News and Journalism: Global Perspectives*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Brenner, N. 2004. *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Capoana, E. 2011. New Technologies Democratize TV Programs: *NósOtros* and the Citizen Participation of a Glocal Content. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 1(3), 161-167.
- Castells, M. 2000. *The Rise of the Network Society* (2nd ed. Vol. I). Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

- 
- Clausen, L. 2003. *Global News Production*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. Localizing the Global: 'Domestication' Processes in International News Production. *Media, Culture & Society*, 26(1), 25-44.
- Cottle, S. 2009. *Global Crisis Reporting: Journalism in the Global Age*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Couldry, N. 2010. New Online News Sources and Writer-gatherers, in N. Fenton (ed.), *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Domingo, D., & Paterson, C. (eds.). 2011. *Making Online News: Newsroom Ethnographies in the Second Decade of Internet Journalism* (Vol. 2). New York: Peter Lang.
- Donsbach, W., & Patterson, T. E. 2004. Political News Journalists: Partisanship, Professionalism, and Political Roles in Five Countries, in F. Esser & B. Pfetsch (eds.), *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, and Challenges*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Esser, F., & Pfetsch, B. (eds.). 2004. *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, and Challenges*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Featherstone, M., Lash, S., & Robertson, R. (eds.). 1995. *Global Modernities*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Firdaus, A. S. 2012. 'Network Newswork' Across 'Glocal' Spaces: A Study of the Integration of User-Driven Networked Sources among Global and National News Outlets in Malaysia. (PhD), University of Melbourne, Melbourne.
- Flew, T. 2007. *Understanding Global Media*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Galtung, J., & Ruge, M. H. 1965. The Structure of Foreign News. *Journal of Peace Research*, 2(1), 64-91.
- Giddens, A. 1991. *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Mellado, C., Anikina, M., Berganza, R., Cangoz, I., et al. 2011. Mapping Journalism Cultures across Nations. [Article]. *Journalism Studies*, 12(3), 273-293.
- Hannerz, U. 1990. Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture. *Theory, culture and society*, 7(2), 237-251.
- Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. 2001. What is News? Galtung and Ruge Revisited. *Journalism Studies*, 2(2), 261 - 280. Retrieved from <http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/14616700118449>
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. 2000. *Empire*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University.
- Held, D., & McGrew, A. 2007. *Globalization/Anti-Globalization: Beyond the Great Divide* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.
- Kovacic, M. P., & Erjavec, K. 2008. Mobi Journalism in Slovenia: Is this Really Citizen Journalism? *Journalism Studies*, 9(6), 874 - 890.
- Krumsvik, A. H., & Wang, X. 2008. Online News in China and Norway. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, XVII(3), 104-117.
- Lee-Wright, P. 2010. Culture Shock: New Media and Organizational Change in the BBC, in N. Fenton (ed.), *New Media, Old news: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Löffelholz, M., & Weaver, D. H. (eds.). 2008. *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- McNair, B. 2006. *Cultural Chaos: Journalism, News and Power in a Globalised World*. London ; New York: Routledge.

- 
- Meyrowitz, J. 2005. The Rise of Glocality: New Senses of Place and Identity in the Global Village, in K. Nyíri (ed.), *A Sense of Place: The Global and the Local in Mobile Communication*. Vienna: Passagen Verlag.
- Mitchelstein, E., & Boczkowski, P. J. 2009. Between Tradition and Change: A Review of Recent Research on Online News Production. *Journalism* 10(5), 562-586.
- Ndangam, L. N. 2008. Free Lunch? Cameroon's Diaspora and Online News Publishing. *New Media & Society*, 10(4), 585-604.
- Pan, Z. G., Chan, J. M., & Lo, F.-C. 2008. Journalism Research in Greater China: Its Communities, Approaches, and Themes, in M. Löffelholz & D. Weaver (eds.), *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Paterson, C., & Domingo, D. (Eds.). 2008. *Making Online News: The Ethnography of New Media Production*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Pieterse, J. N. 1995. Globalization as Hybridization, in M. Featherstone, S. Lash & R. Robertson (eds.), *Global Modernities*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Rao, S. 2009. Glocalization of Indian Journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 10(4), 474-488. doi: 10.1080/14616700802618563
- Reese, S. D. 2001. Understanding the Global Journalist: A Hierarchy-of-Influences Approach. *Journalism Studies*, 2(2), 173-187.
- Reese, S. D. 2007. Journalism Research and the Hierarchy of Influences Model: A Global Perspective. *Brazilian Journalism Research*, 3, 29-42.
- Reich, Z. 2008. How Citizens Create News Stories: The 'News Access' Problem Reversed. *Journalism Studies*, 9(5), 739 - 758.
- Ritzer, G. 2011. *The McDonaldization of Society* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Robertson, R. 1992. *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage Publications.
- Robertson, R. 1995. Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity, in M. Featherstone, S. Lash & R. Robertson (eds.), *Global Modernities*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Russell, A. 2010. Salon.com and New-Media Professional Journalism Culture, in S. E. Bird (ed.), *The Anthropology of News and Journalism: Global Perspectives*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Sassen, S. 1991. *The Global City*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Sassen, S. 1994. *Cities in a World Economy*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge.
- Sassen, S. 2007a. Introduction: Deciphering the global, in S. Sassen (ed.), *Deciphering the Global: Its Spaces, Scales and Subjects*: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Sassen, S. (ed.). 2007b. *Deciphering the Global: Its Spaces, Scales and Subjects*. Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Sassen, S. 2010. The Global Inside the National: A Research Agenda for Sociology. *sociopedia.isa*, 1-10.
- Shoemaker, P. J. & Reese, S. D. 1996. *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*, White Plains, N.Y., Longman.
- Shoemaker, P. J., & Cohen, A. A. 2006. *News Around the World: Content, Practitioners, and the Public*. New York: Routledge.
- Song, Y. 2007. Internet News Media and Issue Development: A Case Study on the Roles of Independent Online News Services as Agenda-Builders for Anti-US Protests in South Korea. *New Media and Society*, 9(1), 71-92.
- Stanton, R. C. 2007. *All News is Local: The Failure of the Media to Reflect World Events in a Globalized Age*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

- 
- Thussu, D. K. 2006. *International Communication: Continuity and Change* (2nd ed.). London: Hodder Arnold.
- Tomlinson, J. 2007. *The Culture of Speed: The Coming of Immediacy*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Volkmer, I. 1999. *News in the Global Sphere: A Study of CNN and its Impact on Global Communication*. Luton: University of Luton Press.
- Volkmer, I. 2003. The Global Network Society and the Global Public Sphere. [Thematic section]. *Development*, 46(1), 9-16.
- Volkmer, I. 2006. Globalization, Generational Entelechies, and the Global Public Space, in I. Volkmer (ed.), *News in Public Memory: An International Study of Media Memories across Generations*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Volkmer, I. 2007. Governing the 'spatial reach'? Spheres of influence and challenges to global media policy. *International Journal of Communication*, 56-73.
- Volkmer, I., & Firdaus, A. 2013. Between Networks and Hierarchies of Credibility: Navigating Journalistic Practice in a Sea of User-Generated Content, in C. Peters & M. Broersma (eds.), *Rethinking Journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*. London: Routledge.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K., & Hanitzsch, T. 2008. Introduction: On Why and How We Should do Journalism Studies, in K. Wahl-Jorgensen & T. Hanitzsch (eds.), *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Weaver, D., & Löffelholz, M. 2008. Global Journalism Research: Summing up and Looking Ahead, in M. Löffelholz & D. H. Weaver (eds.), *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Weaver, D. H., & Löffelholz, M. 2008. Questioning National, Cultural, and Disciplinary Boundaries: A Call for Global Journalism Research, in M. Löffelholz & D. H. Weaver (eds.), *Global Journalism Research: Theories, Methods, Findings, Future*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Winseck, D. R., & Pike, R. M. 2007. *Communication and Empire: Media, Markets, and Globalization, 1860-1930*: Duke University Press.
- Zelizer, B. 2009. Introduction: Why Journalism's Changing Faces Matter, in B. Zelizer (ed.), *The Changing Faces of Journalism: Tabloidization, Technology and Truthiness*. London: Routledge.