

Glocalisation, the link between the global and the local

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Whether looking at fragmentation or homogenisation processes, one can get the impression that it is always external forces, coming from outside, that determine globalisation. However, as has been stressed before, global processes or networks are not disconnected from the local. In fact, they are local in each of their points (Latour, 1993):

they have

- an origin (a consequence of somebody's action),
- a means of diffusion (e.g. ships or trucks, but also radio waves or fibre optics) and
- places or people that crystallise the consequences.

This means that, wherever globalisation has effects, the form these effects take will depend on the particular setting or context. Some authors have called this convergence of global dynamics and local contexts "glocalisation" (Backhaus, 2003; Robertson, 1992, Swyngedouw, 1997).

Glocalisation expresses the way globalisation dynamics are always reinterpreted locally, leading to an interpenetration of the local and global scales that creates context-dependent outcomes. Some authors go so far as to consider that glocalisation is the way that globalisation really operates (Robertson, 1992; Swyngedouw, 2004). Like the other dynamics of globalisation, glocalisation also takes place in different fields.

In the field of **culture**, glocalisation can be seen when elements of global culture (such as movies, global brands, or consumption patterns) are reinterpreted by local cultures. It can also happen when elements of a local culture are combined with a global phenomenon. For instance, when in the lobby of an international standard hotel - the archetype of a homogenised room - elements of local culture are introduced through, for instance, a local style of decoration or uniforms with a local influence (Backhaus, 2003).

In the field of **economics**, glocalisation also occurs when global firms open branches in region where there are specific labour skills that are relatively difficult to find. In this case, global firms become locally territorialised through their workers or specific local settings (for example through their proximity to a prestigious university or through good relations with their suppliers), in the sense that they are dependent on these specific local goods or services and therefore cannot move away easily (Cox, 1997). This is, for example, the case of Silicon Valley and some other industrial districts.

At an institutional level, processes of glocalisation are noticeable when local governments (municipalities, regions, etc.) take action to establish themselves as actors on the global stage. This can range from **networking** with other local governments in other countries to **developing strategies** to attract or retain international investors.

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