ASSIMILATIVE GLOCALISM: DISSECTING POWER ASYMMETRIES THROUGH "THE HANDBOOK OF CULTURE AND GLOCALIZATION"

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Abstract: This paper delves deeply into the forces of globalization, leveraging *The handbook of culture and glocalization* (2022), edited by Victor N. Roudometof and Ugo Dessì, as both a resource and a subject of critique. While the handbook provides an expansive view of global influences across diverse sectors, it overlooks the power asymmetries embedded in glocalization. By examining theoretical gaps, conceptual ambiguities, and uneven engagements with global-local dynamics, this research uncovers a need for a more incisive framework to address the realities of power within globalization. To bridge this gap, the study introduces "assimilative glocalism", a theoretical model designed to illuminate the strategic incorporation and subtle subordination of local elements within global structures. Through this, the paper presents a sophisticated balanced analysis of glocalization, revealing how integration often disguises underlying hierarchies. This research offers a pioneering perspective, re-envisioning glocalization as a complex interplay that simultaneously celebrates and constrains diversity. This contribution not only enriches the discourse but also enhances the theoretical tools available for studying globalization.

Keywords: authority, hegemony, inequality, sustainability, asymmetric power.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of "glocalization", first popularized by sociologist Roland Robertson, has become an essential framework for understanding the complex interplay between global and local forces in shaping contemporary cultural, socio-economic and political landscapes. Globalization refers to the simultaneous processes of glocalization and localization, where external features are adapted into local contexts and local actors sometimes shape global trends by creating hybridized cultures, systems, strategies, and practices. *The handbook of culture and glocalization* (Roudometof, Dessì 2022, hereinafter referred to as *Handbook*) provides an in-depth analysis of the intersection of these forces, positioning glocalization as a dynamic process where local actors actively reshape global phenomena to suit local contexts. By compiling interdisciplinary contributions, the editors, Roudometof and Dessì, offers nuanced explorations that emphasizes glocalization's reflexive and multifaceted nature, spanning various sectors. This paper evaluates the book's theoretical depth, interdisciplinary reach, and significant contributions. This study critically examines both the strengths and limitations of the *Handbook*. The goal is to further expand upon the valuable insights presented by providing a foundation for future research while introducing and positioning a new theoretical framework: assimilative glocalism.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The theoretical foundations of glocalization, as explored, emphasizes the dynamic reflexive interplay between global and local forces. This challenges traditional globalization theories that focus on the dominance of globalism over localism. The contributors of the *Handbook* highlight how local actors do not only adapt but actively resist and reshape global influences to align with local cultures, and socio-economic realities. The early chapters (Cobb; Mehta; Janz in *Handbook*: 28-75) provide historical examples, such as

the spread of bronze technology, demonstrating the continuity of glocalization from ancient times to the modern digital era. A key theoretical contribution of the handbook is its redefinition of glocalization as a bidirectional process, where local actors play an active role in transforming global trends. This reflexive interaction is central to the concept, with local actors portrayed as agents who modify global phenomena to suit their specific needs and circumstances (Soulard, Salazar; Dessì; Sun, Chao, Ling; Martínez; Emmanuel, Ramsey, Samkari; Khondker in *Handbook*: 123-215), rather than passive recipients of global cultures.

The book comprehensively explores how global and local cultures interact. One of its most compelling strengths is its broad interdisciplinary approach. The book spans several fields, including sociology, law, art, literature, philosophy, sport, media, tourism, and religion, offering a rich, multi-perspective understanding of glocalization. By integrating diverse fields, the book offers holistic views of how local and global forces intersect in shaping contemporary cultural landscapes. This interdisciplinary breadth is crucial in capturing the complex and multifaceted nature of glocalization, which cannot be adequately understood through a single disciplinary approach. For instance, Axford draws from political science, media studies, and sociology to explore how digital platforms mediate the relationship between global and local forces (Axford, in *Handbook*: 217-234). Similarly, Maimone's exploration of organizational glocalization merges insights from organizational studies, sociology, and cultural studies to explain how multinational corporations balance global operational strategies with local cultural contexts (Maimone in *Handbook*: 235-255). These interdisciplinary syntheses do not only enhance the depth of analysis but also makes the volume accessible to scholars from a wide array of disciplines.

The book's theoretical depth is wide; it engages with existing scholarship on globalization, cultural hybridization, and localization, while simultaneously pushing the boundaries of these fields through glocalization. Robertson's foundational work on glocalization is frequently referenced as a starting point, but the editors and

contributors go beyond this to critically assess and expand the concept's applicability across various domains (Robertson 1994; *Handbook*: 2-3). Its theoretical discussions are grounded in rigorous analysis, e.g. the chapter on philosophy's diverse debts and duties (Janz in *Handbook*: 61-75) challenges the traditional philosophical approach to universalism by introducing glocalization as a conceptual tool for understanding philosophical ideas within localized contexts. This presents a novel theoretical framework for the discipline, urging philosophers to consider the role of local cultures in shaping supposedly universal truths.

Its discussions on legal glocalism by Mancuso are plausible (Mancuso in *Handbook*: 76-91). Mancuso introduces a nuanced understanding of how legal systems navigate the tension between global norms (like human rights) and local legal traditions. By framing legal glocalism as an adaptive and integrative process, Mancuso provides an innovative framework for future research in comparative law, legal anthropology, political constitutionalism, and international relations. Mancuso's analysis is particularly valuable in a world where global governance institutions are increasingly interacting with local and indigenous legal frameworks. The book's methodological rigor also projects its strengths as several chapters engages with both qualitative and quantitative research ensuring analyses are empirically grounded and not merely theoretical speculations. For instance, in the chapter on glocalization and news production (Ilan in *Handbook*: 289-300), Ilan uses extensive case studies to demonstrate how global news agencies adapt international news stories to fit local contexts, a process referred to as domestication. Ilan's reliance on case studies from Reuters and the Associated Press, combined with a thorough content analysis of news articles, exemplifies how empirical methods can be effectively used to study glocalization.

The methodological approach in the chapter on glocalization and tourism experiences (Soulard, Salazar in *Handbook*: 123-137) employs both ethnographic methods and statistical analysis to evaluate the impact of glocal strategies on the tourism industries. By

integrating both qualitative and quantitative data, the authors demonstrate how glocal tourism practices not only enhance cultural authenticity but also contribute to local economic development.

However, Gobo's chapter, concerning the challenges of methodology in a glocal world, offers a critical reflection on the difficulties of studying glocalization, particularly in terms of data collection and analysis (Gobo in *Handbook*: 354-370). Gobo emphasizes the need for a multi-method approach that incorporates ethnography, survey data, and content analysis, given the complexity of capturing both local and global dynamics in a single framework. This chapter stands out for its reflexivity, offering researchers practical guidance on how to navigate the methodological challenges in studying glocal phenomena.

The empirical richness of the book is seen through a wealth of case studies that span across different geographies, from the Global South to the Global North. For instance, the chapter on cosmos from the global South (Papastergiadis in *Handbook*: 92-104) offers a detailed analysis of how artists from non-Western countries used glocal techniques to subvert Eurocentric art norms. The use of case studies from South America, Africa, and Asia enriches the theoretical discussion and ensures that the empirical data is diverse and globally representative. The case studies in the chapter on food and glocalization (Sedda, Stano in *Handbook*: 105-121) further exemplify the empirical richness of the *Handbook*. Through examples such as the Columbian Exchange and the rise of global fast-food chains like McDonald's, the chapter demonstrates how food is both an element of cultural exchange and resistance, embodying the core dynamics of glocalization.

MAJOR ARGUMENTS

Soulard and Salazar provide an insightful analysis of how local cultures adapt to the demands of global tourism (Soulard, Salazar in *Handbook*: 123-137). They argue that tourism is not just an economic activity but also a cultural process where local traditions are

selectively highlighted or modified to meet the expectations of global tourists. This selective adaptation highlights the agency of local actors in shaping the experience of globalization, suggesting that glocalization is an active process of cultural negotiation rather than passive absorption. Similarly, the chapter on digital media (Axford in *Handbook*: 217-234) offers a rich examination of how digital platforms serve as spaces for both global connection and local identity formation. Axford's analysis of digital glocalization highlights the potential for digital media to empower local voices while also serving as a conduit for global cultural trends. This chapter emphasizes the hybrid nature of digital culture, where local and global elements merge to create new forms of expressions. The rise of social media influencers, for example, is presented as a case of glocalization in action, where local individuals gain global prominence by adapting global trends to local context. Though Axford acknowledge that global tech companies have a significant impact on digital culture, his chapter could have gone further in examining how these companies control the flow of information and the algorithms that determine which contents are amplified. A more in-depth critique of corporate power in digital spaces would have enriched the analysis by providing a fuller picture of the political dynamics underpinning digital glocalization.

One of the standout case studies in the book is the chapter on the glocalization of religion (Dessì in *Handbook*: 138-155). Dessì's analysis of Buddhism and Christianity demonstrates how religious practices adapt to the challenges of globalization while maintaining their local significance. The chapter highlights how global religious movements are reshaped by local cultural contexts, leading to the development of new practices and interpretations that resonate with local believers. This process is not simply a matter of local traditions being altered by global religious forces, but rather a complex negotiation in which local actors reinterpret religious doctrines and practices to fit their specific needs. The ability of religious institutions to maintain relevance in a globalized world is a key theme, offering important insights into the adaptability of reli-

gious practices in the face of global pressures. Dessì's analysis reinforces the idea that glocalization is a two-way street, where local actors play a central role in shaping the global forms of religion that they engage with. However, Dessì failed to see that, this analogy could still rightfully be considered one-sided because the Global South is mostly at the receiving end and vice versa.

The chapter on tourism (Soulard, Salazar in *Handbook*: 123-137) examines how local communities tailor their cultural representations to align with the expectations of global tourists, while still retaining control over how local traditions are portrayed. This selective commodification allows local actors to engage with global forces on their own terms, determining which aspects of their culture to market to global consumers. Also, the chapter on digital media (Axford in *Handbook*: 217-234) further explores this agency, focusing on how individuals and communities utilize digital platforms to express and promote local identities. Social media influencers, for example, as explained above, often gain global recognition by embedding global trends into local contexts, reflecting a fusion of cultural elements. Axford's analysis of digital glocalization emphasizes that local actors are not passive consumers of global digital culture but active content producers, whose creations can influence global trends, thereby reshaping global digital landscapes.

However, the emphasis on local agency does not fully account for the power imbalances that exist between local actors and global forces. While local communities may exercise some degree of control over how they engage with global tourists or digital platforms, these interactions are still shaped by global economic and corporate interests. For example, in the tourism industry, local communities often have limited control over the global forces of capital that determine the flow of tourists and the economic structures that support the industry. Likewise, in the digital media landscape, local content creators must navigate the algorithms and monetization strategies controlled by global tech giants like Google and Meta who sometimes limit their ability to reach global audiences. A more critical analysis of this power imbalance would have provided a better understanding of the constraints on local agency within glocalization settings.

Notwithstanding, the book does not shy away from addressing power dynamics within glocalization processes. The chapter on glocalization and the post/decolonial perspectives (Riegel in *Handbook*: 386-399) critically examines how glocalization can sometimes perpetuate Western hegemony by repackaging global ideas in a local guise without truly empowering local actors. In these pages, Riegel argues that glocalization should be viewed not just as a cultural phenomenon but also as a political process that involves struggles over power, identity, and representation. This critical engagement ensures that the concept of "glocalization" should not be taken at face value. Beyond its academic contributions, the *Handbook* offers valuable insights for diverse stakeholders. Several chapters discuss the practical applications of glocalization in fields such as education, tourism, and corporate governance. The work on glocal education (Emmanuel, Ramsey, Samkari in *Handbook*: 186-196) provides policy recommendations for integrating global perspectives into local educational systems without erasing local identities. The authors advocate for a glocal curriculum that incorporates global knowledge while being sensitive to local cultural contexts, thus promoting cultural diversity within education. Similarly, the chapters on organizational glocalization and tourism offer actionable insights, for instance, Maimone's analysis on how Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) can manage cultural hybridization is particularly relevant for corporate leaders seeking to balance global standardization with local adaptation (Maimone in *Handbook*: 235-255).

A recurring theme in the *Handbook* is the sustainability of cultural practices under global pressures. Several chapters highlight the tension between preserving cultural authenticity while adapting to global influences. Although glocalization offers opportunities for local cultures to thrive, it also raises concerns about long-term sustainability when local cultures are commodified for global consumption. The *Handbook*'s focus on cultural sustainability is a key contribution, emphasizing the need for strategies that balance global engagements with the preservation of traditions. However, the book could have benefited from a deeper discussion of policies that support cultural sustainability, such as how local governments

and organizations like UNESCO can preserve cultural authenticity in the face of global pressures.

A central contribution of the *Handbook* is its emphasis on reflexivity in the global-local interaction process. The concept of "reflexivity", wherein both global and local forces adapt and reshape one another, is vital for understanding the fluid and dynamic nature of glocalization. Unlike traditional globalization models that often portray global forces as overwhelming local cultures; the reflexive nature of glocalization posits that local actors are active participants in shaping how global phenomena manifest within their cultural and social contexts. The book illustrates this reflexivity across various domains, for example, Axford's chapter on digital media (Axford in *Handbook*: 217-234) exemplifies how local communities actively engage with global digital platforms, not simply by consuming global contents but by also producing localized digital expressions that contribute to global discourse. The reflexivity here is apparent in how global media platforms provide opportunities for local voices to shape global narratives, and in turn, how global digital trends are modified by local cultural inputs. This bidirectional relationship highlights the adaptability of local cultures, as well as the capacity of global platforms to accommodate diverse cultural expressions.

However, even as the book emphasizes reflexivity as a key feature of glocalization, it could have benefited more from a deeper exploration of the power dynamics that shapes reflexive processes. While local actors undoubtedly play an active role in shaping global forces, the extent of their agency is often limited by structural inequalities. For example, in the tourism and media industries, local actors may have some degree of agency in adapting global trends, but they are constrained by global economic and corporate interests. The reflexivity of glocalization is, therefore, not always a balanced process. Future research could further explore how these power dynamics influence the reflexive relationship between global-local forces, particularly in terms of who benefits more, who is excluded or marginalized.

While the *Handbook* provides a thorough examination of cultural, economic, and social dimensions of glocalization, its engagement with the political implications of glocalization is somewhat limited. This gap is particularly noticeable in chapters that discuss industries like tourism, sport and digital media, where global power dynamics play a significant role in shaping local outcomes. For example, the chapter on tourism provides a well-rounded discussion of how local cultures adapt to global tourist demands, but it could have benefited from a more critical analysis of how global economic structures shape these adaptations. The tourism industry is often driven by global capital, and the ways in which this capital influences local decisions on which aspects of culture to commodify could have been explored in greater depth (Soulard, Salazar, in *Handbook*: 123-137).

LIMITATIONS

While the book provides significant insights, it is not without shortcomings. This section analyses some limitations that can be found when looking at the volume from a critical perspective.

Theoretical inconsistencies and overgeneralization

A major shortcoming lies in the book's lack of theoretical consistency across various chapters. Although each chapter offers valuable insights into how glocalization operates within specific domains, there was limited effort to unify all chapters under a cohesive theoretical framework. Robertson's notion of glocalization, which serves as the foundation for much of the book's discourse, is applied inconsistently across chapters, leading to an uneven understanding of concepts. For instance, some chapters, such as Axford's discussions on digital glocalization (Axford in *Handbook*: 217-234), employed a sophisticated understanding of glocalization that accounts for complex feedback loops between global and local forces.

However, other chapters, such as those focusing on glocal education (Emmanuel, Ramsay, Samkari in *Handbook*: 186-196) or tourism (Soulard, Salazar in *Handbook*: 123-137), reduce glocalization to a binary interaction between local and global forces, thus oversimplifying the concept.

This theoretical inconsistency weakens the book's overall argument and limits its ability to advance a coherent understanding of glocalization as a complex multi-layered process. Also, the concept of "glocalization" is sometimes overgeneralized to a point of becoming vague and analytically imprecise. The broad applicability of glocalization is one of its strengths, but the *Handbook* fails to delineate clear boundaries for the concept. Glocalization is applied to everything from legal systems and organizational cultures to pop culture, sport, and food, etc. without sufficient clarification of how the term should be adapted to these varying contexts; making it difficult for readers to identify specific mechanisms or processes that are uniquely glocal as opposed to simply being instances of globalization or localization.

Conceptual ambiguity

A worrisome issue with the *Handbook* is conceptual ambiguity surrounding glocalization. Though the editors and contributors provide various definitions and applications of the term, there is a noticeable lack of clarity and precision regarding what exactly constitutes glocalization in different contexts. This ambiguity manifests in multiple chapters, where the concept is applied loosely in ways that either lacks clear boundaries or overlap with other related concepts such as hybridity, translocality, and localization (Roudometof, Carpentier in *Handbook*: 322-336). For example, the chapter on literary narratives (Mehta in *Handbook*: 45-60) addresses the idea of global-local interactions in literature but does not adequately distinguish between glocalization and existing literary theories of hybridity and post-colonialism. In the context of literary narratives,

readers are left uncertain whether glocalization is being used to de-
scribe how global literary trends are adapted to local cultures or if
it is simply a synonym for the hybridization of literature under post-
colonial influences. Also, glocalization, hybridization and localiza-
tion were mixed-up with obscured explanations and presented as
though they all have the same meaning, for example:

> [...] hybridity alone – as a loose concept – cannot explain the success
> of Japanese anime or K-pop (that is, glocalization, a form of localization
> with deep tacit knowledge […]) (Oh, Jang in *Handbook*: 261).

Glocalization is not a form of localization irrespective of con-
text. The absence of conceptual distinction creates misunderstand-
ing, as it increasingly becomes unclear when one reads through the
Handbook whether glocalization is being used throughout the book
as a unique analytical tool or merely as a synonym for hybridization
and localization. Worth noting is the fact that glocalization and hy-
bridization are distinct from each other, surprisingly, in the chap-
ters of the *Handbook*, authors wrongly employed these concepts by
using them interchangeably. This emanates from a clear misunder-
standing of foundational concepts of globalization, thereby result-
ing to monotonous ambiguities. This lack of definitional rigor
weakens the theoretical utility of the term, making it difficult for
readers to grasp the precise mechanisms through which glocaliza-
tion operates in different fields. The *Handbook* does not provide a
clear theoretical framework for understanding these differences,
leading to an over-simplified and catch-all usage of the term. A
more nuanced and sector-specific articulation of glocalization
could have improved the analytical depth and applicability of the
concept across the diverse fields covered in the book.

Glocalization and hybridization, though related, are not iden-
tical. Glocalization refers to the process of adapting global phe-
nomena for local use, retaining the structure of the global but re-
shaping its meaning or features to fit local contexts. Hybridization,
by contrast, results in the creation of entirely new forms through
the blending of global and local elements. Hybridization is not a

matter of what percentages of local or global are taken to create something new as wrongly argued (Oh, Jang in *Handbook*: 257-258). Hybridization is mainly about creating something distinct from the blending of both local and global to an extent that neither local nor global can claim ownership of the new creation. The new creation may not retain pure recognizable features of neither the global nor local sources by becoming something wholly original. These definitions and explanations are what the two concepts are. However, in the *Handbook*, this distinct process is conflated, weakening the theoretical clarity of the discussion. Notably, K-pop is presented as a form of glocalization (Oh, Jang in *Handbook*: 262-263) while it was previously presented as a product of hybridization (257-258). Conceptual ambiguity is monotonous throughout the book.

The failure of the contributors to maintain a clear distinction between concepts is a critical flaw as it does not only undermine the strength of the *Handbook* but also causes contextual vagueness. This problem seems to arise from a misunderstanding or oversimplification of foundational concepts, leading to the miss use of key terms interchangeably; this weakens the intellectual rigor of the book. The consequences of lack of conceptual precision and consistency are evident in numerous chapters, for instance, while discussing K-pop (Oh, Jang in *Handbook*: 257-258), the authors frame the glocalization of pop culture as a straightforward adaptation of Western musical forms for Korean audiences. This application of glocalization is accurate in the sense that global pop music has been tailored to meet the tastes and values of South Korean listeners. However, where the *Handbook* discusses legal systems (Mancuso in *Handbook*: 76-91) and digital platforms (Axford in *Handbook*: 217-234), the application of glocalization and hybridization becomes more complex. The adaptation of legal systems from one context to another, for instance, often involves substantial changes in meaning, structure, and function that goes beyond mere adaptation and ventures into the realm of hybridization. The same is true for digital platforms, where global technologies are often reworked in local contexts to serve different social, political, and cultural functions.

Moreover, the *Handbook* suffers from an overreliance on the general notion of "interaction" between global and local without sufficiently articulating how interactions differ across sectors. This vague unilateral focus is what Appadurai, in *Modernity at large*, warned against because such a reliance inherently lacks potency to truly capture real world realities of global unfolding by intentionally failing to present/analyse globalization's complexities (Appadurai 1996: 32). Against Appadurai's caution, in various chapters of the *Handbook*, the term glocalization is applied as a broad, catch-all concept to describe any form of global-local interaction, regardless of contexts. For instance, the glocalization or hybridization (rightly put) of pop culture, as discussed on K-pop (Oh, Jang in *Handbook*: 256-271), differs significantly from the glocalization of legal systems (Mancuso in *Handbook*: 76-91) or digital platforms (Axford in *Handbook*: 217-234), yet the handbook does not offer a coherent theoretical framework for understanding these sector-specific differences. Pop culture, for example, often allows for significant glocalization or hybridization, where global trends can be creatively reinterpreted to reflect local tastes and values. K-pop is a prime example of this phenomenon, blending Western pop music elements with distinctively Korean cultural references to create a hybrid form that resonates globally.

In contrast, the glocalization of legal systems or digital platforms operates within more rigid structures, where global norms are less flexible and more resistant to local adaptation. The failure to account for sectoral differences results in an oversimplified and overly broad application of glocalization, reducing the analytical depth and applicability of the concept. A more nuanced and sector-specific articulation of glocalization would have greatly improved the theoretical clarity and applicability of the concept across the diverse fields covered. By failing to address the unique ways in which glocalization manifests in different sectors, the book reduces the concept to a vague and overused term.

What is particularly concerning is that this one-size-fits-all approach to glocalization undermines its potential as a theoretical tool for understanding the complexities of global-local interactions. A

more nuanced and sector-specific articulation could have massively improved the analytical depth of the *Handbook*. For instance, how does glocalization manifest differently in socio-economic fields versus cultural or political domains? Do adaptation processes vary between industries that operates within strictly regulated frameworks, like finance and law, compared to creative industries like film and music? By failing to engage with these questions, the book limits its own ability to explore the diverse ways in which global-local forces intersect.

Methodological limitations and lack of quantitative rigor

There was limited engagement with rigorous quantitative methodologies. Though the *Handbook* features some empirical studies, they are largely qualitative. The over reliance on qualitative data is not inherently problematic, but the lack of sufficient quantitative analysis leaves significant gaps in the book's empirical foundation. For example, the chapter on glocalization and news production (Ilan in *Handbook*: 289-300) by Ilan, while rich in case studies, could have been strengthened by a quantitative content analysis of news articles or audience reception studies to demonstrate how glocalized news content is consumed differently across regions. Similarly, the chapter on organizational glocalization (Maimone in *Handbook*: 235-255) offers an insightful qualitative analysis of how multinational corporations adapt to local cultures but lacks the kind of quantitative data – such as employee surveys or financial performance metrics – that could provide stronger empirical support for the argument that glocalization leads to successful organizational outcomes. This lack of quantitative rigor is particularly noticeable in chapters where statistical analysis would have significantly enhanced the credibility of the claims made. The chapter on tourism and glocalization (Soulard, Salazar in *Handbook*: 123-137), for example, discusses how glocal strategies enhance tourist experiences but does not provide any quantitative data on

tourist satisfaction, economic impact, or cross-cultural engage-
ment. The absence of such data limits the chapter's ability to sub-
stantiate its claims.

Geographic and cultural bias

Despite aiming to explore glocalization globally, the book
shows a perceptible bias by spotlighting Global North and East
Asia. While these regions are significant, the underrepresentation
of the Global South undermines the book's global claims. The
chapter on K-pop (Oh, Jang in *Handbook*: 256-271) exemplifies
this bias, with its extensive focus on East Asia, particularly South
Korea, overshadowing other important regions. For example,
Afrobeat, which has achieved global success while retaining strong
local roots, receives less attention. This imbalance suggests a lack
of diversity in the case studies and limits the book's global perspec-
tive. The book over focus on cultural forms that already have global
visibility, such as film, music, and digital media, while neglecting
less prominent but equally significant cultural expressions. Indige-
nous cultures and their interactions with global forces are notably
underrepresented, which is a missed opportunity to explore how
glocalization operates in contexts where local traditions are under
threat from global homogenization.

Underexplored interdisciplinary links

Although the book is lauded for its interdisciplinary approach,
some chapters fail to sufficiently integrate insights from different
fields, thereby missing the opportunity to create a more cohesive
interdisciplinary framework. The fields of sociology, media studies,
and cultural studies are well represented, but the integration of in-
sights from other disciplines, such as political science, economics,
physics, anthropology, and environmental studies, are less pro-

nounced. For example, the chapter on glocalization and law (Mancuso in *Handbook*: 76-91) offers an in-depth legal analysis but fails to draw sufficiently from political science or international relations to contextualize how legal glocalization interacts with global governance systems. Similarly, the chapter on digital glocalization (Axford in *Handbook*: 217-234) could have benefitted from incorporating economic analysis to explore the financial implications of digital glocalization for tech companies and consumers. By not fully leveraging the potential of interdisciplinary collaboration, the book misses opportunities to provide more comprehensive insights into the multi-dimensional nature of glocalization. This underexploration is particularly evident in the area of economics; though several chapters touch on the economic aspects of glocalization, there is no in-depth analysis of how glocalization impacts economic systems, trade, or global labor markets. The absence of robust economic analysis is a critical limitation, given that economic is one of the most powerful drivers of cultural and social change. Without this dimension, the book's analysis of glocalization is incomplete and underdeveloped particularly in major areas.

Power dynamics

Insufficient engagement with power dynamics and systemic inequalities in glocalization processes emerges as a glaring weakness. While several works, such as the one on *Glocalization and post/decolonial perspectives* (Riegel in *Handbook*: 386-399), acknowledge the existence of power imbalances between the Global North and South, the discussions are often underdeveloped and lack depth. The concept of "glocalization" is often presented as a neutral or even positive process that allows for local cultures to adapt global influences for their benefits. However, this framing overlooks glocalization as a tool for perpetuating global inequalities and reinforcing hegemonic power structures. For instance, the arguments on Netflix (Sigismondi, Ciofalo in *Handbook*: 305-320) discusses how the streaming platform uses glocal strategies to cater for local tastes,

but it does not sufficiently address how Netflix's global dominance undermines local media industries. This failure to critically engage with the potential negative consequences of glocalization, such as cultural homogenization and socio-economic exploitation, limits the book's ability to provide a balanced and critical analysis. Critically, Netflix's global reach highlights power asymmetries within glocalization, revealing how global entities strategically use local cultures as tools for market entry without altering core local business models as such covert entering mechanism benefits the exporting global entity economically and ideologically.

Likewise, the book does not adequately explore the ways in which local agency might resist or subvert glocalization processes. Although the chapter on cosmos from the global South (Papastregiadis in *Handbook*: 92-102) touches on how non-Western artists use glocal techniques to challenge Western art norms, this discussion could have been expanded to include more examples of how local actors actively resist global forces rather than merely adapting to them. By primarily focusing on adaptation and hybridization, the book risks portraying local agency as passive recipients, rather than as active agents in shaping and contesting global influences. This was not the book original intention but its arguments made this its final position. This reveals that established goals and objectives were not fully met either consciously or unconsciously.

Lack of engagement with contemporary critical theories

The *Handbook* conveys limited engagement with contemporary critical theories, particularly pos-tcolonialism, feminism, and critical race theory. While some chapters briefly touched upon these perspectives, they are often treated as peripheral or supplementary matters to the book's broader discussions on glocalization. This neglect limits the book's ability to interrogate glocalization through power, identity, exploitation, and inequality which are areas that are crucial for deeper understandings of global-local interactions. Though the work on post/decolonial perspectives (Riegel

in *Handbook*: 386-399) attempts to address these gaps, its discussions remains superficial and fails to engage with the full complexity of post-colonial theory's critiques of globalization. For example, scholars such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha have extensively theorized the hybrid nature of post-colonial identities but these insights and many others such as dependency theory are not sufficiently integrated into the book's analysis.

The omissions of critical race theory and feminist perspectives further weakens the book's ability to explore how gender, race, and class intersect with processes of glocalization. By not fully engaging with these essential frameworks, the book misses an opportunity to analyze how marginalized communities in underdeveloped societies navigate forces of globalization differently from those in more dominant, globalized regions. Such an analysis would have added a critical edge, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of how power dynamics, systemic inequalities, and historical legacies of colonialism shape glocal processes.

Underexplored temporal dimensions

Temporal aspect of glocalization – the way it unfolds over time – is notably underexplored throughout the *Handbook*. Its chapters tend to focus more on static or contemporary case studies while neglecting the historical trajectories that have shaped current global-local interactions. Glocalization is a dynamic process influenced by historical, political, and socio-economic forces over time. For example, the chapter on cosmos from the global South (Papastregiadis in *Handbook*: 92-102) addresses contemporary art but overlooks historical aspects such as colonial legacies and post-colonial struggles that have shaped glocal artistic production. Similarly, the chapter on K-pop's global success (Oh, Jang in *Handbook*: 256-271) lacks historical analysis of South Korea's economic and socio-cultural development that contributed to K-pop's rise. The book also misses discussing how South Korea's positive multilateral relationships with global North countries and also how the global

North's geopolitical interests in the region played a crucial role for K-pop's success.

By not incorporating these dimensions, the book offers a limited understanding of how glocalization evolves and transforms across different historical periods and regions. The omission of historical context is particularly glaring in the portion focussing on law (Mancuso in *Handbook*: 76-91) and education (Emmanuel, Ramsey, Samkari in *Handbook*: 186-199), where long-standing colonial and postcolonial dynamics have profoundly shaped local legal and educational systems. By failing to explore how these systems have evolved in response to global pressures over time, the *Handbook* presents a somewhat ahistorical view of glocalization, which reduces its analytical depth. Incorporating more historical analysis would have allowed the book to better capture the complexities of glocalization as a process that unfolds over time, rather than as a static interaction between global-local forces.

Insufficient attention to resistance

A surprising omission in the *Handbook* is its lack of focus on resistance to glocalization, as well as the phenomenon of counter-glocalization. While the book explores how local cultures adapt and hybridize, it does not sufficiently examine how cultures may resist or reject glocalization processes. This is a critical oversight, as resistance is a fundamental aspect of global-local interactions, particularly in contexts where local cultures feel threatened by the homogenizing agency of globalization. The absence of a comprehensive discussion on counter-glocalization – where local actors actively push back against global influences in favor of preserving traditional/indigenous practices – creates significant gaps. For example, the book could have explored how indigenous communities in Latin America, Africa, Asia or the Pacific resist the encroachment of global economic and cultural influences by asserting local sovereignty over community land, forest, resources, and cultural heritage. The role of grassroots movements and civil society in opposing

global pressures and advocating for local autonomy is an important dimension of glocalization that is underexplored in the *Handbook*.

Overemphasis on culture

The book exhibits an overemphasis on cultural glocalization, with relatively insufficient attention given to socio-economic and political dimensions. While cultural glocalization – particularly in the realms of pop culture, food, and art – deserves significant attention, the *Handbook*'s disproportionate focus on these areas comes at the expense of a more comprehensive analysis of how glocalization affects global commerce, business policies, currencies, political systems, and international relations. There is little discussion on how global trade policies, economic institutions like the World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank shapes glocalization and what impacts they have on local economies.

The chapter on organizational glocalization (Maimone in *Handbook*: 235-255) briefly addresses these issues but falls short in exploring broader economic implications for labor markets, trade, and global supply chains. The political dimensions of glocalization, including the role of global governance institutions, international diplomacy, and transnational activism, are underexplored. While the chapter on law and glocalization (Mancuso in *Handbook*: 76-91) discusses how legal systems adapt to global norms, there is little discussion on how global political institutions, such as the United Nations or regional bodies like the European Union or African Union influences glocalization processes. The omission of these, limits the *Handbook*'s ability to offer a holistic analysis of glocalization as a multidimensional process that encompasses not only culture but also socio-economics and politics.

Lack of focus on digital inequality

While the book provides solid discussions on digital glocalization (Axford in *Handbook*: 217-234), it overlooks key issues of digital inequality and accessibility. Digital glocalization is often framed as a democratizing process, where global platforms enable local voices to engage in global conversations. However, the book fails to address the uneven distribution of access to digital tools, internet, and digital literacy. The digital divide – between urban and rural, wealthy and poor, and technologically advanced and developing regions – profoundly shapes how glocalization unfolds. This oversight is principally notable in the discussion on social media's role in global political discourse (218-227). Though the chapter highlights how populist movements gain traction via social media, it neglects how the lack of digital access can exclude marginalized communities from participating in these movements. A more in-depth exploration of digital inequality would have provided comprehensive understanding of how glocalization in the digital sphere reproduces or exacerbates global inequalities.

Insufficient Exploration of Environmental and Sustainability Concerns

The *Handbook* overlooks environmental and sustainability issues; in an era where climate change and environmental degradation are pressing concerns these absences represents critical gaps. Glocalization is closely linked to environmental impacts mostly in tourism, food production, and resource extraction. For example, the chapter on food and glocalization (Sedda, Sano in *Handbook*: 105-119) explores the cultural significance of food but neglects the environmental consequences of global food systems. A deeper analysis of how globalization drives environmental degradation, resource depletion, and unsustainable farming practices would have enriched the discussion. By neglecting environmental dimensions, the book presents a partial picture of the consequences of glocalization, particularly in relation to sustainability and ecological resilience.

This omission is glaring given the contemporary increasing importance of sustainable development in global policy discussions.

Limited Practical Applicability

Although the *Handbook* offers rich insights, its practical applicability is somewhat limited. While several chapters provide recommendations for diverse stakeholders, the suggestions are often too broad or abstract. For instance, the chapter on glocal education (Emmanuel, Ramsey, Samkari in *Handbook*: 186-199) advocates for a glocal curriculum that integrates global knowledge with local cultural contexts, but it does not offer specific strategies or case studies to show how this could be implemented in different educational systems. Consequently, its recommendations are somewhat disconnected from real-world challenges. Similarly, the chapter on tourism and glocalization (Soulard, Salazar in *Handbook*: 123-137) discusses the benefits of integrating local culture into global tourism strategies but does not provide concrete examples of how this has been successfully achieved. Without detailed case studies or practical guidelines, the book's recommendations risk being seen as theoretical abstractions rather than actionable solutions. This lack of practical applicability is particularly problematic in chapters that focus on industries such as tourism, education, and media, where the potential for glocal strategies to be implemented is high. By not offering more concrete, context-specific recommendations, the *Handbook* misses the opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and real-world practice.

POSITIONING THE NEW THEORY: ASSIMILATIVE GLOCALISM

A critical gap in most literature on glocalization lies in the exploration of cultural hegemony, particularly how global cultures – often dominated by Western ideals – navigate local contexts to

maintain dominance even while integrating local elements. Building on Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony argues that dominant classes maintain control by shaping ideologies in ways that appear natural and inevitable (Gramsci 1971: 12-31), as such, it becomes evident that glocalization is a subtle instrument of cultural dominance. Gramsci's posits that dominant ideologies are naturalized within societies, creating a system of control that extends beyond force into ideological normalcy. Assimilative glocalism embodies this concept by illustrating that global powers adapt local cultures into global narratives by making local elements to appear as part of an inevitable unified system, but in reality, this well crafted scheme centralizes global control by rendering powerless positions to local agency. This eliminates local autonomy and prepares them to be consumers of global ideologies, norms, cultures, policies, etc., rather than empowering local agency to be creators or co-creators of these initiatives/agenda.

This hegemonic influence often appears in ways global brands and media entities tailor their products to fit local cultures and ideals. This adaptation does not necessarily mean mutual benefits as explained in the previous paragraph; rather, it often entails subtle coercion that aligns local consumption patterns with global capitalist ideals. In this sense, local cultures, policies, systems, etc., are not preserved but transformed to accommodate global norms. This adaptation is evident in the diffusion of Western media in African and Asian markets, where local adaptations still propagate Western ideals of beauty, consumerism, and individualism. Despite this negativism, Tomlinson does not shy away from defending systemic destruction of local identities by claiming globalization denotes modernity (Tomlinson 1999: 70-73). Through his porous critique of Castells which is nothing short of trying to argue for the maintenance of global hegemonic structures by casting local elements to be unmodern, Tomlinson exhibits characteristics of an assimilative glocalist.

Gramsci's framework reveals how Western nations rather than creating true cross-cultural fusion, reify existing global power structures under guises of cultural respect and adaptation. Assimilative glocalism, as a theoretical framework, articulates how global

power asymmetries maintained assimilation under the guise of mutual exchange. This argument departs from Tomlinson's work, who tries to make it seems as if globalization openly argues in favour of destroying local elements (Tomlinson 1999: 70-73). Glocal practices are not truly reciprocal but globalization does not publicly portray this because the concept of "modernity" is inherently problematic; only Western elements, according to globalization, merits to be termed modern.

Therefore, assimilative glocalism, a phenomenon where global entities absorb local elements while subtly imposing their ideologies warrants deeper examination. This dynamic is evident but not limited only in tourism, media, movies and digital industries where global entities localize contents for diverse markets but retain central control over narratives and production standards. Appadurai's concept of "scapes" (Appadurai 1996: 33) offers an illustrative framework through the categorization of global flows of media, technology, and finance as structures that influence local cultures. While local elements are incorporated, the dominant structures – technology, financial interests, and managerial strategies – remain globally controlled. This framework significantly enriches the current understanding of assimilative glocalism by revealing how mediascapes and financescapes influences and shapes diverse landscapes globally.

In the same pattern, global food chains like McDonald's or Starbucks adopt regional food items not merely to accommodate local tastes but to present an image of cultural inclusion by maintaining corporate control and uniformity (Ritzer 2019: 44-47). This "customization" does not change core business structures or overarching corporate strategies, yet it subtly convinces local consumers of the brand's cultural sensitivity, thereby embedding the global brand within local cultural fabrics. In this sense, assimilative glocalism enables global entities to create narratives of cultural respect by subtly subordinating local identities within global frameworks.

A more covert dynamic of assimilative glocalism lies in its ability to extract cultural capital without reciprocation. The concept of "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1986: 243), defined as "the accumulated cultural knowledge that confers power and social status", is

particularly relevant in this context. By extracting elements – such as movies, symbols, and practices, or even languages – global corporations' access and leverage Western cultural capitals that confers social legitimacy and consumer appealing traits in local markets. The deployment of such capital by global corporations benefits global entities financially and ideologically but provides no corresponding enhancement to local variables. In many cases, local elements are portrayed only insofar as they align with global corporate ideals of marketability and consumer appealing characteristics.

Thus, assimilative glocalism can be defined as a strategic mode of integration whereby global entities selectively incorporate local elements to enhance market penetration and regional relevance while preserving global hierarchies and control mechanisms. This concept departs from mutual adaptation by prioritizing a unidirectional flow that subtly reconfigures local identities to align with the ideological and socio-economic agendas of global powers. In essence, assimilative glocalism functions as a veneer of inclusivity and cultural sensitivity but it ultimately centralizes and reinforces global chain of command (Bourdieu 1986).

INDICATORS OF ASSIMILATIVE GLOCALISM

By developing key indicators of assimilative glocalism, we can better understand how global systems subtly reconfigure local contexts, shaping power dynamics and reinforce dependency under clandestine veils of inclusivity. The following indicators offer a critical framework to analyse the mechanisms through which global forces embed themselves in local settings without decentralizing power, control or influence: a) *Strategic cultural selection*. Global entities consciously select local elements that harmonize with a broader brand image, consumer expectations, or ideologies central to a Western identity. This selective incorporation serves as a tool to appeal to local consumers while avoiding deep engagements or acknowledgment of the nuances within local context; b) *Surface-*

level adaptation. Adaptations undertaken within assimilative glocalism are typically aesthetic or superficial, involving changes to aspects like branding, language, or minor product alterations. Such adaptations do not represent a substantive engagement with or respect for local cultures or values but instead operate as a marketing strategy to ensure local acceptability without significant structural change; *c) Retention of global standards and command.* Despite the superficial inclusion of local elements, the operational, financial, and ideological principles of global entities remain intact and are dictated by systemic centralized standards. Assimilative glocalism thus retains control over core processes; ensuring local adaptations do not compromise or transform global value systems; *d) Economic dependency reinforcement.* Economic strategies within assimilative glocalism encourage dependency, where local economies are integrated into global supply chains, but in ways that subordinate local autonomy. This dependency is cultivated through models that necessitate ongoing reliance on foreign-controlled resources, capital, and technological frameworks, positioning local economies as ancillary to global corporations; *e) Subtle ideological shaping and cultural reconfiguration.* Assimilative glocalism often employs narratives that ostensibly celebrate local diversity while subtly promoting dominant cultural ideologies, such as consumerism, individualism, or neoliberal values. These narratives encourage a gradual shift in local values to align with those beneficial to global entities, thereby masking ideological imposition under the guise of cultural respect and diversity.

Through its indicators, assimilative glocalism offers a sophisticated framework to examine how global-local power asymmetries are sustained. This new concept enables a nuanced understanding of how global entities embed themselves within local agency without relinquishing control. The theoretical lens reveals how ostensibly inclusive glocal practices operate as mechanisms of global hegemony, making assimilative glocalism a critical framework for evaluating the power dynamics inherent in globalization.

Interestingly, a critical area often underexplored in glocalization literature is the socio-economic power held by global corporations within local markets. According to Castells' network society

theory, global corporations exercise substantial economic power by controlling knowledge and technology, creating socio-economic dependency (Castells 1996: 12-24). This dependency becomes an asymmetric relationship, where local economies are tied to global entities, limiting local agency's ability to self-direct their economic future. For example, countries relying on foreign-owned tech firms for their information technology infrastructure may struggle to build domestic industries capable of competing globally, resulting in long-term dependency and stunted local innovation. Likewise Nollywood and Bollywood's dependence on producing films that meets Netflix's standards limits their abilities to innovate extensively beyond this standard, making it both challenging and difficult for them to surpass Netflix (Hollywood).

Also, socio-economic power dynamics are evident in the dominance of global agribusiness over local farming practices, where multinational corporations introduce glocalized agricultural practices that allegedly cater for local demands but ultimately prioritize profits. Through economic control, as perpetuated by McDonalds and many other global fast-food brands, these corporations impact food security, local economies, and cultural practices surrounding food. Therefore, a richer analysis of glocalization must examine how economic control by global firms can reshape cultural practices, extending beyond surface-level adaptations and fundamentally altering local cultures to align with global capitalist structures.

As such, cultural appropriation – a term often used to describe the unacknowledged adoption of cultural elements by a dominant group – raises ethical questions about the role of global corporations in appropriating local cultures under the guise of glocalization. Works by Young, and Ziff and Rao argue that cultural appropriation often ignores the context and significance of local customs, reducing them to consumable aesthetics or experiences (Young 2008: 96-101; Ziff, Rao 1997: 15-20). For example, the commodification of indigenous symbols by fashion brands is frequently framed as "celebrating culture", when, in reality, it strips these elements of meaning and imposes a Western framework of interpretation. The distinction between cultural appropriation and genuine

cultural integration in glocalization is crucial. Glocalization often masks appropriation, presenting it as cultural exchange while prioritizing profit over respectful engagements. By reframing these dynamics through an ethical lens, we can see that assimilative glocalism may, in fact, enable a form of symbolic exploitation, where global firms benefit economically from cultural symbols without contributing to the preservation or empowerment of local communities. Such exchanges have been ongoing for years but its benefits are only seen in Western societies and not the other way round.

THE ROLE OF DIGITALIZATION IN GLOCAL POWER ASYMMETRIES

The digital age has redefined glocalization, particularly in how it simultaneously enables cultural diffusion and dominance. Just like discussed in theories of media imperialism (Schiller 1976: 14-18), contemporary digital platforms equally represent cultural domination similar to that which emerged after Word War II. Today, global tech giants which are mostly Western owned, dictate terms of cultural expressions and social interactions. Social media companies, for instance, employ algorithms that promote Western media contents globally, while contents from non-Western countries are often underrepresented. Through the control of digital algorithms and platforms, global entities dictate which cultural content reaches broad audience, subtly reinforcing global power asymmetries and reducing the agency of local elements in digital spaces.

Empirically, the suspension and subsequent removal of Prophet T. B. Joshua's *Emmanuel TV* YouTube channel exemplifies the workings of assimilative glocalism in the digital age, particularly in the regulation of local narratives that diverge from globally dominant ideologies. In April 2021, YouTube suspended the channel for alleged hate speech, citing videos in which Prophet T.B. Joshua said homosexuality can be cured through deliverance – a stance aligning with most locally rooted religious perspectives yet conflicting with YouTube's policies on inclusivity. This incident

demonstrates how platforms enforce a selective cultural frame-work, assimilating only content that conforms to Western-centric values on human rights and identity, thereby limiting local expres-sions in cases where it contradicts so-called globalized norms. The *Emmanuel TV* channel had over 1.8 million subscribers and 400 million views through its provision of Christian contents to global audience, largely in Africa and South America where such perspec-tives resonate deeply.

YouTube's handling of local situations from the global South becomes even more contentious when examining the allegations of sexual misconduct that led to the removal of the *Emmanuel TV* channel from its platform in 2024. Notably, these allegations were unproven in any legal court, raising questions about the evidentiary standards used by digital platforms to make such decisions. The absence of formal legal proceedings or a court ruling substantiating the sexual accusations brought against the decease man of God, casts doubt on the fairness of YouTube's action which was prompted largely by reports from Western rights organizations, mainstream and social media campaigns, rather than judicial find-ings. This lack of legal validation underscores a troubling aspect of assimilative glocalism*,* wherein global platforms act as de facto ar-biters, enforcing severe penalties on users and content creators based on accusations that while serious, lack legal confirmation. By assuming legal authority traditionally reserved for judicial bodies, YouTube not only limits religious and cultural expressions but also positions itself as a unilateral enforcer of values, thereby, bypassing due process.

In this context, the action taken by YouTube and other organ-izations reveals an alignment with the principles of assimilative glo-calism*,* where global standards on sexuality, human rights, and in-clusivity are imposed on local narratives. The late Prophet was nei-ther trial nor subjected to legal convictions, either for hate speech or for alleged sexual misconduct. The absence of legal proceedings against Prophet T. B. Joshua raises critical questions about the basis upon which digital platforms render judgments on religious or socio-culturally specific expressions. Without a formal legal foundation, YouTube's decision appears not as a neutral enforcement of policy but

as an assimilationist glocalist's act, enforcing [global] norms upon non-Western voices in a manner that disregards due legal process.

The case further illustrates how global platforms exert selective control over digital contents by privileging narratives that align only with their standards by disregarding those that diverge, especially for contents originating from regions with distinct non-Western values. Prophet T. B. Joshua's expression of his religious belief regarding homosexuality, while against Western values, reflects specific cultural and religious contexts that YouTube's policies overlook. By regulating such content through a globalized framework without recourse to local agency sensitivity or legal adjudication, YouTube enforces, perpetuates and become an assimilative glocalist who permits only aspects of local contents deemed palatable to a global, predominantly Western inclined audience.

The suspension (2021) and subsequent removal (2024) of *Emmanuel TV*'s YouTube channel highlights a broader issue within digital glocalization: the role of platforms as cultural gatekeepers, imposing penalties without a balanced evaluation of local values or due legal process. This unilateral exercise of authority represents a fundamental feature of assimilative glocalism*,* wherein platforms enforce a homogenized global framework that favors dominant Western values. In sidelining voices that do not conform to these values – especially those not proven in a court – platforms like YouTube exercise a form of digital imperialism, curating globalism through selective assimilation and marginalization of local agency.

This case exemplifies how assimilative glocalism functions, where global platforms, under the guise of inclusivity and safety, enforce narrowed perspectives. By acting as both a judge and enforcer, platforms like YouTube redefine socio-cultural boundaries according to their standards, suppressing local voices even in the absence of legal substantiation. In this regard, assimilative glocalism within digital media reify global power structures, as local agency increasingly rely on digital platforms to distribute their narratives, which can only be achieved by conforming to digital platform's norms and algorithms. Nonetheless, conformity implies altering local norms, values, cultures, narratives, etc. This phenomenon

highlights how digital glocalization amplifies global control over local narratives, contributing to a homogenized global environment that prioritizes Western ideals. Addressing this power asymmetry requires exploring how digital platforms could facilitate a more balanced exchange of contents, one that privileges local agency over global control. But achieving this is difficult because global powers are not willing to relinquish control to ensure power sharing equity.

To further develop the concept "assimilative glocalism", it's essential to delineate how global forces integrate local elements selectively to reinforce, rather than dismantle, global hegemony. Assimilative glocalism represents a nuanced mechanism within globalization, where the adaptation of local features by global corporations – while appearing inclusive – is strategically transformative, serving to validate and propagate global power structures. This theory contends that the selective adaptation of local elements, far from a mutual cultural exchange, functions to subtly centralize global control while maintaining the façade of local respect and diversity.

The rise of diverse digital platforms has further intensified assimilative glocalism, especially through algorithmic curation and control. The selective amplification of certain types of local contents by algorithms reinforces global cultural dominance under a veneer of localization. For instance, Facebook, and Instagram's reels reflect surface-level glocalization, because contents that gains high visibility on these platforms are often those that conforms to globally acceptable – or Western – values and narratives. This process centralizes digital power within global corporations, creating a digital ecosystem where local contents are subservient to global platform's goals; this significantly shapes the way imperialists and former colonized people are presented which are, to an extent, positively representing colonialists and vice versa (Couldry, Mejias 2019: 76). Thus, digital assimilative glocalism enables the superficial appearance of inclusivity while maintaining algorithmic control that promotes the interests of colonial corporate stakeholders over local expressions of post-colonies.

ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF ASSIMILATIVE GLOCALISM

Assimilative glocalism also manifests in economic practices where local economies are drawn into global networks under the pretext of "local economic development". Multinational corporations often justify their presence in local markets by claiming to foster economic growth, yet their business practices prioritize the extraction of resources and profits that benefits developed societies rather than local economies. Harvey's concept of "accumulation by dispossession" illustrates this further, wherein global entities accrue wealth by appropriating local assets and labor without a meaningful reinvestment into local economies (Harvey 2005: 144-147). For example, global agribusiness companies often promote themselves as providing local farmers with access to global markets. However, these arrangements typically bind local farmers to depend on corporate-controlled supply chains, fertilizers, and seeds that prioritize corporate profit margins over local sustainability and autonomy (Patel 2012: 110-116). This economic form of assimilative glocalism reinforces dependency on global capital, thereby reducing local economies' capacity for self-determination by entrenching economic disparities under banners of global partnership.

Assimilative glocalism can therefore be framed as a neo-colonial practice, where global entities impose their structures while superficially respecting local values. According to Said's concept of "orientalism", Western powers created an image of the Orient that both exoticized and subordinates non-Western cultures, reinforcing Western dominance under a coating of fascination and respect (Said 1978: 42-46). Assimilative glocalism operates in the same fashion by presenting a "glocalized" version of local cultures through selective local elements that suit global narratives and economic goals while preserving Western-centric standards and systems. This neo-colonial framework is evident in the global spread of Western languages as dominant tools for business, media, and education. Language is not merely a communicative tool but a carrier of socio-culture and ideology (Phillipson 1992: 52). Conforming to global linguistic standards subtly erodes linguistic diversity

and reinforces systemic hierarchies. In this way, assimilative glocalism serves as a soft-power tool that continues to centralize power within former colonial powers.

RESISTING ASSIMILATIVE GLOCALISM THROUGH AUTHENTIC GLOCALIZATION

Understanding assimilative glocalism opens up avenues for resistance by emphasizing the need for authentic glocalization. Authentic glocalization would involve a true exchange of practices, narratives, and knowledge that honors local agency and avoids subordinating them to global norms. This can be observed in cases where local cooperatives, rather than multinational corporations, dictate terms of engagement in glocal markets. For example, indigenous communities that produce artisanal goods for global markets under cooperatively owned platforms retained significant control over how their cultural narratives are presented, often emphasizing sustainability and cultural preservation over profit maximization. An authentic glocalization model would challenge assimilative glocalism by ensuring local agency determines prices for their products and not third party agency that are not within their locality. It should be a system that definitions and meanings are deconstructed (Escobar 1995: 8-15) and not one that solely relies on Western frameworks. This form of global-local interaction – authentic glocalization – would require global entities to adopt genuine respect for local integrity and economic equity, rather than a superficial adaptation of local elements. By fostering local-global partnerships that prioritize mutual benefits, empowerment, and equitable exchanges, authentic glocalization stands as a counter-framework to the assimilative approaches that dominates contemporary global-local dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This work offers comprehensive analytical frameworks to better understand glocalization beyond the one-sided scope provided by the *Handbook*. This expanded analysis position. Glocalization not merely as a scheme of exchange but also as a complex interaction shaped by global corporate interests, socio-economic dependencies, political and digital power asymmetries. Assimilative glocalism thus reveals how global power asymmetries are perpetuated through selective adaptations. The framework negates glocalization's traditional inclusive representation. By strategically absorbing local elements, global entities reinforce hegemonic structures, subjugate local narratives, and perpetuate socio-economic dependencies. This is better understood only through an approach of assimilative glocalism.

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LIST OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE *HANDBOOK* (2022)