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Book Reviews

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Glocalization: A Critical Introduction
By Victor Roudometof

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Glocalization is a term that has emerged relatively recently in scholarly discussions, and is one that has rapidly gained in popularity among social scientists. Unfortunately, glocalization remains a poorly defined concept with a distinct lack of theoretical works that focus on it exclusively. Roudometof's *Glocalization: A Critical Introduction*, is an attempt to fill this gap with a detailed overview of scholarly work on glocalization and a new theoretical approach to this concept. One of the major strengths of the book is Roudometof's proposition to consider glocalization on its own terms, and not simply as a side-product of globalization. This opens numerous opportunities for analysing the concept of glocalization and its application to the social sciences.

The book is divided into two parts. Roudometof has an ambitious goal to present both the theoretical framework and its applications. Part One

details the development of glocalization and offers the author's own theoretical contribution towards its definition. Roudometof opens with a short history of the scholarly use of the term, with an emphasis on the lack of theoretical contributions offered towards its definition as a concept and not just a term. What is particularly interesting in this overview is the role of social space that governs what is perceived as familiar and local (page 34). Roudometof argues that social space plays a crucial role in glocalization, so any attempt to theorize glocalization needs to take into account social relations.

Chapter Three details a short history of ideas about glocalization. This is a challenging chapter in which Roudometof summarizes each author's main thesis and the ways they have responded to critique. This is useful for following a development of critical ideas and theoretical perspectives on glocalization. Roudometof presents all of the crucial theoretical contributions and highlights what he sees as their strengths and weaknesses. Chapter Three is a useful summary that presents all of the relevant work on glocalization in one place. This is a much-needed contribution since theoretical discussion on glocalization is sparse.

The author credits Robertson (1992) for introducing glocalization as a term in the social sciences. Robertson's work is highly influenced by world culture theory, which theorizes the global diffusion of ideas, typically from the West; this globalization produces cultural standardization (pages 44–45). Robertson proposes a different approach and suggests that globalization produces more than standardization—it can also produce differences (page 50). In this sense, glocalization can be seen as a failure of globalization. Roudometof contrasts this approach to Ritzer (2004), who proposes that globalization is a spectrum that consists of two major processes acting on opposing ends: glocalization and globalisation. Globalization includes imperialistic tendencies to erase local traditions and create unilateral homogenization. The fact that globalization is a spectrum implies that most processes fall somewhere between global and glocal. The final work highlighted in this overview, by Beck (2002), focuses on cosmopolitanization, which the author sees as internal globalization from within nation states. Roudometof interprets this concept as similar to glocalization, even though this was not Beck's intent. Beck claims that the

world is becoming more cosmopolitanized, but Roudometof argues that this approach fails to acknowledge global inequalities between different world regions and groups (page 58).

Chapter Four details Roudometof's effort to define glocalization as a theoretical concept. This is where the author proposes his own approach to glocalization, and it is by far the strongest chapter of the book. Roudometof defines glocalization in terms of analytical autonomy, a concept taken from Alexander (2003) and his strong programme of cultural sociology. When understood in these terms, glocalization can be seen as an autonomous process that is not necessarily part of other, more well-known processes such as globalization and localization. This allows Roudometof to define glocalization on its own terms. The author effectively moves the discussion away from global and local by refusing to define glocal through these terms. Instead, he explains glocalization through a metaphor of wave transmission: globalization acts as waves that pass through the local glass; the result of this encounter is glocalization, which involves a "refraction of globalization through the local" (page 65). The chapter introduces three key terms in theorizing the glocal: glocalization (glocal as a process), glocality (a social condition) and glocalism (a worldview, ideology or blueprint for action) (pages 62–63).

Roudometof illustrates this interpretation using the field of communication and mass media. The book discusses glocalization in everyday life through the Internet, the entertainment industry and other mass media. Additionally, Roudometof analyses a relationship between glocalization and power. In the wave metaphor, the power defines the ability of a locale to either create the waves of globalization or to resist them. Historically, the West is known as the main globalizing factor, but this theoretical approach also allows for other agents to have globalizing powers. Finally, Roudometof emphasizes the locale's ability to modify the passing waves (page 74).

Part Two offers a thematic overview and illustrates the use of glocalization in a number of distinct spheres. Roudometof offers telling examples to support his theoretical analysis for each theme. Chapter Five is dedicated to glocalization and modernities. The author pays special attention to

the notion of social space and its relation to the plurality of modernities. Continuing with the wave metaphor, Roudometof argues that glocalization is a refraction of modernity: it includes globalization of the forms of modernity and localization of the content of modernity (page 89). Chapter Six situates glocalization within the domain of culture. Roudometof's focus is on the cultures of consumption, such as youth culture, popular music, tourism and sport. He pays special attention to consumption culture, in which glocalization acts as a counterpart to corporate standardization. In Chapter Seven, Roudometof uses glocalization to discuss transnationalism and cosmopolitanism.

The final chapter analyses the use of globalization in the social sciences and outlines some notable limits of this concept. Roudometof discusses the concept's potential for a wider application across various disciplines, such as studies of consumption and culture, urban studies, media and communication. In the second part of the chapter, Roudometof discusses the limits of glocalization as an analytically autonomous concept. He emphasizes that this book should not be seen as an attempt to create a new master narrative for the social sciences, nor can the concept of glocalization fulfil this role. He freely admits that this book is not enough to fully resolve theoretical questions about glocalization and its definition.

Roudometof's Glocalization is a welcome introduction to an increasingly popular concept. The author manages to fill a gap in theoretical discussions while offering practical examples from a wide range of disciplines. This interdisciplinary approach is an effective way to introduce glocalization as an autonomous process and not a by-product of globalization. The book can be used as a starting point for those who wish to employ a new approach in their respective disciplines. It is also a handy guide to the existing theoretical works that deal with the intersection of globalization and glocalization.

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