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### **Glocalization and Sport in Asia: Diverse Perspectives and Future Possibilities**

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This paper develops our prior work to examine how glocalization may be applied to examine Asian sport. We begin by discussing the different usages of glocalization in social science, and the role of Asian scholars in developing and applying the term. We set out our sociocultural understanding of glocalization, notably drawing on Robertson's work and our subsequent conception of the "duality of glocality". We examine critically the arguments of Ritzer and Connell on glocalization and globalization more generally. We consider in detail how the study of glocalization processes in Asia may be most fruitfully developed with reference to four fields of research inquiry. We conclude by discussing the connection of glocalization theory to debates on localism and localization, civilizations, and multiple modernities.

Dans cet article, nous développons nos travaux ultérieurs et examinons comment la glocalisation peut être utilisée pour examiner le sport asiatique. Nous commençons par discuter des différents usages de la glocalisation en sciences sociales et le rôle des chercheurs asiatiques dans le développement et l'application du terme. Nous présentons notre compréhension des aspects socioculturels de la glocalisation, en nous appuyant notamment sur les écrits de Robertson et notre conception de la dualité de la glocalité. Nous examinons de façon critique les arguments de Ritzer et Connell sur la glocalisation et la mondialisation en général. Nous considérons comment l'étude des processus de glocalisation en Asie peut être plus fructueusement développée au sein de quatre champs d'investigation. Nous concluons en discutant du lien entre la théorie de la glocalisation et les débats sur le localisme, la localisation, les civilisations et les modernités multiples.

Since the early 1990s, the term "glocalization" has come to be widely used across the commercial sector, academe, politics, and the general public sphere. In the academic sector alone, one database (Google scholar) turns up over 9,500 papers with the word "glocalization" in their titles or

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contents; and collectively, the most prominent of these papers have received thousands of citations.

This article builds upon our prior work on glocalization theory (see, for example, Robertson, 1992, 1994, 1995, 2003, 2007, 2012a, 2012b; & White 2004) and its application to sport and football (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2009, 2012), to consider how this sociological keyword may be used to examine Asian sport. Our discussion is separated into four main parts. First, we explore briefly the different usages of glocalization in social science and beyond, and also how Asia has contributed to the elaboration of this term. Second, we set out our understanding of glocalization, notably with reference to Robertson's contributions and to our subsequent conception of the "duality of glocality". Third, we examine critically the arguments of George Ritzer and Raewyn Connell which represent two alternative sociological perspectives on glocalization and globalization. Fourth, and most substantially, we address how the study of glocalization processes may be most fruitfully developed in this context by considering four fields of research inquiry which relate to the broad aspects of Asian sport, the business and commercial aspects of sport, sport mega-events, and social identities within sport. While the substantive focus of our paper is on Asian sport, many of our arguments may be considered to have relevance for other fields of sociological research and analysis, such as in regard to Asian culture, politics, and economics, as well as theoretical debates on glocalization and globalization.

### **Glocalization: A Keyword in Social Science**

The term glocalization has been employed with different meanings in a wide variety of academic disciplines and research fields. The following provides a very brief and far from complete summary of these usages, and begins with the first two areas to feature this keyword in social science.

- In *sociocultural theory*, Robertson (1992, 1994, 1997, 2003, 2007, 2012a, 2012b; & White 2004) introduced and developed the term glocalization to explain the interpenetration of the local and the global. This approach endeavored to move beyond the basic dichotomization of the local and the global, to explore their mutual interdependency and copresence. Other sociocultural theorists subsequently adapted the concept of glocalization in

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accordance with their respective standpoints (e.g., Bauman, 1998; Krossa, 2009; Ritzer, 2003, 2004; Roudometof, 2005).

- In *human geography and urban studies*, Swyngedouw (1992, 1997) employed “glocalisation” to explore the grow-ing complexity of scales of contemporary political governance, between the international/global, the national, and the subnational/local. For example, nation-states such as the UK and Spain have had to respond creatively to grow-ing political influences at international (e.g., European) and subnational (e.g., Scottish, Welsh, Basque, Catalan) levels. In Asia, urban and state glocalisation is evidenced by the strong transnational “branding” strategies and public-private partnerships that have been pursued by particular cities, city-states, and nations, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea (cf. Brenner 1999; Chung & Ngai 2007; Koller 2008; Lee & Ducruet 2009; Martins & Alvarez 2007).
- In *marketing and business*, glocalization theory helps to explain how global commercial practices (such as product content, sales techniques, and industrial relations) are adapted to fit with local cultural conditions, tastes and practices (Matusitz, 2009, 2010; Matusitz & Leanza, 2009; Robertson, 2012; Svensson 2001; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Wilken & Sinclair, 2011).
- In *anthropology*, glocalization has been used to explain how, particularly in developing cities, we find a complex coexistence and interaction between different categorical types of society, such as the traditional/agricultural, the modern/industrial and the postmodern/service-based, all in one location, such as in Mexico City (Canclini, 2001). In anthropological terms, a kind of parallel discussion to glocalization has centered on Rodgers’ (1962) analysis of the “diffusion of innovations”.
- In *social network analysis*, glocalization has been employed to explain how, in historical terms, social ties and solidarities have softened and become more global, yet we also find that a clustering of these social bonds takes place (Hampton, 2010; Wellman, 2002). For example, Facebook pages or Twitter accounts cluster together transnational networks of “friends” or “followers”.

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- In *cultural studies*, specific forms of substantive and empirical research have traced the ways in which global genres and styles are adapted at local or national levels to produce distinctive, glocal cultural movements and trends (Achterberg et al., 2011; Kim & Shin 2010; Kjeldgaard, 2006).
- In *literature and translation studies*, Chinese scholars have been prominent in exploring how forms of linguistic and cultural translation occur between societies (Ning, 2003, 2010; Tong & Cheung, 2011; Yifeng, 2009; Yifeng & Lei, 2008). Ning (2010), for example, considers how glocalization and postmodern cultural trends come together in China, particularly through the deconstruction of old political, economic, and cultural structures and boundaries.
- In *migration studies*, glocalization theory has been used to explain how migrant groups engage with their host societies, particularly with reference to different strategies of adaptation, integration and differentiation (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2005, 2007a; Morawska, 2008).
- In *media studies*, glocalization theory is used to explain the impact of globalization on local media, for example as journalistic methods have become globally standardized while news content remains primarily local in focus (Esser, 2012; Rao, 2009; Wasserman & Rao, 2008).
- Of course, in *sport studies*, theories of glocalization have been employed to examine the diverse aspects of world football, the interplay of the local and global in world sport, and more specifically various aspects of sport in Korea

(Andrews & Ritzer, 2007; Cho, 2009; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2009; Lee, Jackson & Lee, 2007).

Looking beyond social science, we find that glocalization has penetrated the natural sciences. In an editorial for *Science*, Alan Leshner argued for “glocal science advocacy” within American public policy; Leshner’s position was that proscience US societies and citizen advocacy groups should engage with their nonscientific neighbors and friends. These proscience forces would be “taking a global issue and making it

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meaningful to society at the local level” to win greater investment in science from political leaders. Elsewhere in science, the concept of “glocal memory” has been developed in neuroscience to explain the combination of local and global knowledge structures in the human brain.

Thus, the keyword glocalization is powerfully evident across these different fields of the academy, and this is to say nothing further on its wider prevalence, particularly in the commercial sector. Within the academy, glocalization appears at times to be an autological keyword: that is, a term that describes itself.<sup>1</sup> We say this as glocalization is a “global” term in academe which itself appears to have undergone a process of “glocalization”, in that it has experienced strong types of absorption, adaptation or transformation within each diverse, “local” discipline. Given this prominence across different disciplines, it would be rather impractical to seek to abolish the term “glocalization” in social science or in general parlance.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Role of Asia**

Asia, and in particular the East Asia region, has played a pivotal role in the genesis and application of the term glocalization in the social sciences and in wider public life. There are three main aspects to this influence. First, the word glocalization is itself derived from the Japanese term *dochakuka*, which refers to “indigenization”, “local globalization”, or “global localization” (Robertson, 1992, pp. 173—4). From the 1980s onwards, this term served to encapsulate the global micromarketing methods of Sony and other East Asian corporations, and its successful application had a profound influence on the export strategies of Western businesses (Iwabuchi, 2002; Rothacher, 2004).

Second, particular cultural practices and belief systems in East Asia have long provided an important focus of inquiry for many social scientists. Some of this research, such as in the 1970s and 1980s, produced findings which might now be said to have pointed toward the “proto-glocal” aspects of East Asian cultures. For example, the study of East Asian religions indicated that there were strong tendencies toward syncretism and indigenization in regard to how East Asian societies selectively engaged with other belief systems (Robertson, 1987, 1992). More broadly, the Japanese term *wakon yosai* (Japanese spirit, Western technology) has reflected what might be understood as the long-standing

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proto-glocalization of Japanese society in regard to the selective absorption and adaptation (or “Japaniza-tion”) of foreign influences within a distinctive civilizational context (Eisenstadt, 1996; Nakane, 1970).

Third, Asian social scientists have themselves advanced an impressive number and diversity of applications and case-studies of glocalization processes. Much of this research has investigated specific sociocultural realms such as education, fashion, film, media, religion, and sport (e.g., Cho 2009; Hung et al., 2007; Kineta et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2007; Liu, 2011; Ning, 2010; Pan, 2006; Tonglin, 2010; Yomota, 1999). Before we turn to explore how glocalization theory may be developed further in regard to Asian sport, we need to clarify our understanding and usage of the concept.

### **Glocalization : Robertson’s Socio-Cultural Perspective**

Our approach to glocalization is underpinned by Robertson’s (1992, 1994, 1995, 2003, 2007, 2012a, 2012b; Robertson & White, 2004) prior arguments, which introduced the word to sociocultural theory and research across the social sci-ences. Robertson (1992) understands glocalization as a social process rather than an abstract category, which encapsulates the constant *interdependence* of the local and the global rather than the simple opposition of these two terms. For Robertson (1995, p. 41), “glocalization projects” are “the constitutive features of contemporary globalization”, and capture how individuals and social groups seek to interpret, to shape, and to recontextualize global phenomena at everyday levels (Robertson, 1992; 1994, 1995, 2012).

Robertson’s understanding of glocalization has several social scientific under-pinnings. In *anthropological* terms, his conception of glocalization provides a more updated and global understanding of processes of cultural diffusion. In this sense, glocalization processes may be understood as facilitated by the intensification of social connectivity and more advanced forms of global consciousness. These processes also encourage social scientists to sustain a methodological focus on the everyday practices of social actors and groups. Influences from *international rela-tions* and the *social scientific analysis of religion* are also apparent in Robertson’s understanding of glocalization. Indeed, there was substantial analysis of interna-tional and global processes in both of these fields in Robertson’s early work (e.g., Nettl & Robertson, 1968; Robertson,

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1970; Robertson & Chirico, 1985), which has in turn provided significant underpinnings for his later statements on the political and sociocultural aspects of globalization (Robertson, 1992). Finally, Robertson's long-standing critical engagement with the action theory of *Talcott Parsons* is also evidenced, notably in his "voluntaristic" account of globalization, his deployment of Parsonian categories (e.g., the particular and the universal), and his use of fourfold analytical frameworks (Robertson, 1992; Robertson & Turner, 1991).

Robertson's use of the term glocalization seeks to enable social scientists to move beyond the basic categorical oppositions that tend to prevail in much discussion of globalization. These old binaries would, for example, require us to see the "local" as in a constant struggle against the "global", the "universal" as opposing the "particular", "homogenization" as fighting against "heterogenization", or "sameness" seeking to obliterate "difference". Instead, for Robertson, the concept of glocalization registers the "mutually implicative" relationships between these terms, and requires us to examine their complex interplays. In passing, we would note that more careful readings of globalization theory have recognized the importance attached by Robertson, in his theory of glocalization, to both sides of these old binaries, for example in regard to homogenization/heterogenization or convergence/divergence (e.g., Miller et al., 1999; Ritzer, 2004; Sihui, 2008).

In sport, we can see how both homogenization and heterogenization are at play in the most basic ways. For example, sports such as football have undergone global diffusion, which points toward homogenization, yet most societies interpret, organize and play these sports in distinctive ways, which demonstrates heterogenization.

### **The Duality of Glocality**

Through collaborative work, we have applied Robertson's perspective on globalization and glocalization in the fields of football and sport. We have advanced the concept of the *duality of glocality*, to draw out the everyday interrelationships between homogenization and heterogenization, or convergence and divergence, at play within sport. Often, homogenization or convergence is most evident in regard to the cultural *forms* and *institutions* that are established by diverse social groups; on the other hand, heterogenization or divergence may be more

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apparent in the substantive sociocultural *contents* and practices of social groups. Thus, if we take East Asian football supporters as an illustration, we find significant convergence on the forms and institutional frameworks of their fandom, such as in the formal use of symbols and songs to designate their support; divergence is more obvious in the semantic content of these songs and symbols, and in the narratives and lore that are built up around the specific team.

Our points on the mutual interrelationships between the local and the global require a little elaboration. If we were to think in terms of simple binaries, we would assume that “local” or “national” forms of particular identity would always be threatened or undermined by more abstract global social forces. However, for Robertson, we need also to recognize the ways in which ideas of “the local” or “the national” have actually been facilitated or promoted by processes of globaliza-tion. Indeed, the very ideas of “the local” and “the national” have themselves been spread across the world since at least the 19th century. Thus, there has been growing expectation that peoples across the world will coherently differentiate themselves with reference to particular national-identity characteristics. Robertson refers to the global spread and normalization of distinctive identities as the “universalization of particularism”.

Global sport has provided one important cultural domain through which the universalization of particularism may take hold, as local or national identities have intensified, as people from different cities and nations commingle and come into routine contact with each other. In the case of East Asian nations, since the mid-20th century, sport mega-events such as the Olympic Games or World Cup finals in football have provided a global platform for these societies to explore, to define, and to project their different kinds of national identity in evermore extensive and elaborate ways (e.g., through flags, dress, songs, rituals such as opening ceremonies to these tournaments), with all of this occurring in front of the largest transnational television audiences.

While global sport has been shaped by the “universalization of particularism”, the parallel process of “particularization of universalism” has also been evident. For Robertson, this latter process points toward the “idea of the universal being given global-human concreteness”, as illustrated by world time-zones or world internet domain suffixes. In

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sport, the particularization of universalism is illustrated by the formal integration of Asia's national and regional sport associations and their annual rounds of competitive fixtures, into the world sports system, such as through standardized membership of sport world governing bodies or assimilation into the calendar of world sport events.

In passing, we would also observe the elective affinities between each of these two categories and the two poles within the duality of glocality. Thus, the particularization of universalism points toward processes of heterogenization and differentiation, while the universalization of particularism is more associated with homogenizing and standardizing tendencies. In this way, the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism may be understood as co-existent and mutually dependent social forces, just as we find with heterogenization and homogenization in regard to the duality of glocality.

### **Two Alternative Sociological Perspectives on Glocalization: Ritzer and Connell**

As we noted at the outset, the concept of glocalization has been subject to rather varied receptions and applications by other social analysts of globalization. At this point we turn to examine two prominent perspectives on globalization and glocalization that are rather different to our own, and which have been advanced respectively by the American sociologist George Ritzer (2003, 2004) and the Australian social scientist Raewyn Connell (2007a, 2007b). We would argue that the distinctive stances taken by Ritzer and Connell demonstrate again the autological properties of glocalization—that is, as we understand this keyword, glocalization processes in action—within the realm of sociological theory.

### **George Ritzer: Glocalization Equals Cultural Divergence**

Turning first to examine the analysis of Ritzer, there is a clear and fundamental difference to our approach. For Ritzer, glocalization is not defined according to a duality of glocality, or a combination of convergence and divergence. Rather, Ritzer understands glocalization solely as a process of heterogenization and divergence. Conversely, cultural homogenization or convergence is defined by Ritzer (2004, p. 73) as “globalization”, a process which he understands as being driven by three main global forces: capitalism, Americanization and

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McDonaldization. In broad terms, Ritzer's global/glocal couplet has substantial similarities to the Jihad/ McWorld binary forwarded by Barber (1992). In explaining how this binary works at everyday level, Ritzer focuses heavily on the commercial aspects of culture, such as in the sale of food or tourist products.

Social scientists may be drawn to Ritzer's thesis with regard to its cogent explanation, its critique of rationalization processes (such as in regard to fast food), and its recognition that most cultural commodities show a mix of influences between cultural convergence and divergence. We have discussed elsewhere our main criticisms of his thesis (see Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009). Here, we would highlight three concerns that have particular bearing on Asian cultures and sport.

First, most obviously, our understanding of globalization is much more firmly associated with *both* homogenization and heterogenization. Arguably, Ritzer's redefinition of globalization has the potential to confuse rather than assist wider understandings and debates with respect to these processes.

Second, Ritzer's work on rationalization (specifically, his theory of McDonaldization) may fail to recognize the extent to which cultural divergence occurs, in regard to how seemingly rationalized and uniform structures (such as the way in which the Big Mac is cooked and sold) are actually implemented and interpreted. East Asia provides many clear illustrations of how such divergences and variations take place. Thus, at McDonald's restaurants in Asia, the company itself seeks to satisfy Asian customers by using local cuisine (e.g., teriyaki chicken in Japan); additionally, Asian customers tend to diverge from the North American company's favored practices, for example by hovering at occupied tables or by viewing their purchases as snacks rather than as full meals (Watson, 1997).

Finally, Ritzer's analysis rather over-emphasizes the commercial aspects of culture while paying relatively little attention to the noncommercial aspects of cultural institutions, practices and meanings. In this sense, we might say that Ritzer "globalizes" the term "globalization", by providing a distinctive American interpretation of this keyword in a way that prioritizes cultural commodities. In East Asia, we may illustrate this point with reference to a sport such as baseball, which might have

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similarities or differences to the North American professional leagues in terms of how the game is marketed. Yet, to understand fully the sport of baseball in Japan, Korea or Taiwan, we need to consider a much wider range of cultural phenomena, beyond the business sphere, for example in terms of the structure of the clubs, leagues and associations, and the bodily techniques, self-understandings, identities and meanings of players and supporters (Kelly, 1997, 2004).

### **Raewyn Connell: Glocalization as a “Static Polarity”**

Turning to Connell, we immediately encounter a far more trenchant and sweeping critique that is directed not only toward the term glocalization, but also toward globalization theory and indeed the modern history of social scientific thought. Connell argues that social science has been dominated by the colonial, ethnocentric and parochial *weltanschauungen* of the “metropolitan” center; that is, “the cluster of modern, industrial, postmodern, or postindustrial countries”. Connell highlights the focus of her own theory on social relations rather than bounded territories or states, and indicates that she understands the “global metropole” as comprising “the rich capital-exporting countries of Europe and North America”. Connell argues that an alternative, “southern theory” of globalization must be developed, which features the perspectives and interests of those in the nonmetropolitan “world periphery” (2007b).

The use of the term glocalization by social scientists is among many targets of criticism for Connell. Arguing that the term is one of the “antinomies” of globalization theory, Connell (2007b) states obliquely: “To speak of “glocalization” is to resolve nothing. It is to assert both terms of a static polarity at once. The local/global opposition has not been conceptually resolved”.

In our view, Connell advances a simplistic reading of globalization theory and global processes, which understates the continuities between herself and the earlier work of other social scientists. The influence of Edward Said’s (1978) theory of Orientalism is briefly acknowledged (2007b), but we might also highlight the significant overlaps of Connell’s perspective with the arguments of leading social scientists and theorists from the global metropole, notably Wallerstein (1979) on the capitalist

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world system, Gramsci (1971) and his followers on hegemony, and Frank (1967) on dependency theory in Latin America.

Our own separate and combined work has featured the substantial promotion of, and dialogue with, perspectives from developing and non-Western societies; this endeavor has been assisted by numerous visits to Asia, Latin America and Africa. In our experience, a major challenge faced by non-Anglophone academics is their restricted access to transnational research networks. The publication process is particularly problematic, as “outsiders” often feel that prominent English-language journals favor papers that have a standardized Anglo-American style and substance in a way that serves to exclude scholars who have been raised in other cultures or languages.

Turning to Connell’s treatment of the term glocalization, we reject her assertion that it is a “static polarity”, or indeed any broader statement that it is a mere abstract category. Rather, glocalization is a vibrant process that is constantly in operation, continuously being enacted and realized at social, societal and transsocietal levels. In effect, Connell is seeking to highlight what she considers to be a neglected type of glocal activity; that is, how peoples from the Global South, or from outside of the “metropole”, are empowered to provide their particular perspectives on global processes. Yet there is nothing inherent in how glocalization is used by social scientists, which would prevent such voices or discourses from emerging and being listened to. Indeed, consideration of glocalization issues would actually promote empirical awareness and understanding of the “peripheries”, by enhancing recognition of the diverse “southern theories” and voices that are championed by Connell.

One further concern centers on Connell’s basic binary opposition of northern/southern or core/periphery, in terms of its unusual classification of northern/ southern societies and its tendency to over-simplification. For Connell, “northern theory” emerges from the United States and Europe, with the “rich peripheral country” of Australia (her home nation) as being among those identified as on the outside. Conversely, most conventional social scientific approaches would otherwise locate Australia and New Zealand, and developed East Asian states like Japan, South Korea and Singapore, within the global North or “First World”: in effect, the global metropole.

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The basic dichotomy of northern/southern serves to underplay the vast differences between societies or regions within each category: for example, between Italy, Norway and the United States in the North, or between Malaysia, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia and (to use Connell's definition) Australia and Hong Kong in the South; or between the regions of Europe and North America in the North, or the vast majority of the world's population that is spread across Latin America, South Asia, Africa and (to use Connell's definitions) East Asia and Oceania in the South.

The northern/southern dichotomy obscures the complex interrelations and interdependencies that occur within and between the two hemispheres. These ties have long occurred across social science, as well as in wider cultural, political, social and economic terms. We should thus be wary of any romanticized or essentialized notions regarding the raising of pure, authentic and unanimous voices across the southern periphery.

Many "northern" theories and ideologies have been adapted (or "glocalized") by social scientists based outside of the "metropole": think, for example, of the influence of neo-Marxist theory and praxis across Latin America. Moreover, many leading social scientists—such as Appadurai, Appiah, Archetti, Canclini, Mignolo and Pieterse—have personal backgrounds or locations that border or cut across the Global North and South. Indeed, their separate works move far beyond a simple North-South dichotomy to bring out the subtle interplays of the local and the global, through concepts such as "vernacularization" and global "scapes" (Appadurai, 1990, 1995), "cosmopolitan patriotism" (Appiah, 1997), "border thinking" (Mignolo, 2000), "hybridization" (Archetti, 1999; Pieterse 2007), and, of course, "glocalization" (Canclini, 2001). Clearly, there are strong affinities between these different perspectives and our own understanding of glocalization as a highly complex, changing and uneven process. It is also worth noting that other scholars with mixed "North/South" biographies (such as Bhabha, Said, and Spivak) tend to interpret the condition of postcolonial, peripheral societies through the prisms of "northern" theoretical frameworks, such as Marxism, feminism, poststructuralism and deconstructionism.

Our final observation here is that, leaving to one side the inherent problems of such binaries, we would posit that analysis of East/West rather than North/South interrelationships is more sociologically

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compelling, as this alternative focus draws attention to the complex contemporary interplays between diverse cultures and civilizations. Connell's home nation—Australia—is instructive here, not solely because it should be located in the “Global North” (given its history and development) notwithstanding its southern geographical location, but more pertinently because it has placed greater emphasis on its Asian (especially East Asian) relationships since the early 1970s. Hitherto a “Western” society dominated by Anglo-Irish and mainland European peoples, Australia has undergone increasing Asianization through closer ties with its nearest region in terms of politics, commerce, education, migration, and culture. In sport, this Asianization is reflected through, for example, the political and economic influence of India upon world cricket, leading to many Australian players joining the Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket tournament; and, in the Australian football association becoming members of the Asian Football Confederation in 2005, and thus being eligible to compete in tournaments such as the Asia Cup, which Australia is now scheduled to host in 2015 (Horton, 2011). The particular case of Australia thus draws our attention beyond the North/ South dichotomy, and instead to the growing significance and complexity of East/ West relationships and connectivity, and in particular to the role of Asia in global processes within sport and beyond.

### **Asia, Asian Sport, and Glocalization**

Before we turn to consider “Asian sport” and the glocal, a short comment is required on the complex sociological issues underpinning the meaning of Asia. We appreciate here that Asia is itself a culturally constructed geographical category, which is understood to encompass most (but not all) of the nations across the lands of Eurasia. It is the world's most populous and culturally complex continent, with historically shifting categories of membership. Sport has reflected these variations in the range of nation-states that are defined as “Asian”. For example, while we noted its membership of the Asian Football Confederation, Australia is excluded from the Olympic Council of Asia. The break-up of the Soviet Union led to a growth in the number of recognized Asian nation-states, notably Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, which entered Asian sports federations from the early 1990s onwards. Moreover, across Asia's member states we find enormous national and regional differences in regard to culture, politics, and

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development—compare, for example, the modern histories, religions, political systems, languages, GDPs, and sporting tastes of China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Myanmar (or Burma), Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Uzbekistan. Thus, when we use the word “Asia” here, it is with strong caveats and qualifications with reference to these geopolitical and sociological issues.

In our view, there are four main fields in which we might fruitfully examine how glocalization projects occur within Asian sport. These do not exclude other potential research fields, but they are advanced here with reference to the particularly significant contemporary realms of inquiry in sport studies, and also the potential future development of glocalization theory.

### **1) The Broad Aspects of Asian Sport, and the Duality of Glocality**

In broad terms, Asian sports provide a distinctive field for exploring the duality of glocality, or the interplay between processes of homogenization and heterogenization. Asia evidences some spectacular forms of cross-cultural, creative transformation (or heterogenization) in sport—for example, in the celebrated case of “Trobriand cricket”, indigenous peoples completely redefined the rules and objectives of this quintessential English game, in a way that was viewed by documentary anthropologists as an “ingenious response to colonialism” (Kildea & Leach, 1976). Conversely, on the homogenization side, the technical coaching and development of elite sport in much of East Asia appears to have featured a substantial direct importation of Western methods and techniques.

Between these relatively extreme cases, there is much to be explored. Thus, for example, in East Asia, we tend to find a selective appropriation of Western policies and methods to develop sport, as has been the case in regard to Chinese basketball (Houlihan et al., 2010). Future research would do well to explore how the formal organizations, structures and rules of play within Asian sport mirror those in modern Western models, and the extent to which divergence is apparent in the substantive content, meanings, actions and everyday practices within sport between Asia and the rest.

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A critical point to be borne in mind, of course, is the extent to which glocalization processes in Asian sport are driven by regionalist or endogenous patterns of diffusion, integration or transformation in sport; that is, through relations *between* Asian societies, rather than through contact with outside regions. This kind of regionalism is already evident in Asian societies (Wang-Bae, 2003; Wilken & Sinclair, 2011), so may also be around in sport. Thus, for example, we might look closely at cross-national cricket relations in South Asia, or links between Olympic associations in Gulf States, or baseball ties across East Asia. This focus helps to draw out the historical role of near neighbors for most nations in regard to trade, development and identity-building. On this latter point, in sport, of course, strong rivalries with near neighbors are often critical in building national forms of identity.

A final issue worth raising here is the way in which the complex circuits of cultural transmission and interpretation enable forms of *reverse glocalization* to take hold. By reverse glocalization we are referring to how glocal cultural meanings, practices and styles are themselves copied or drawn upon selectively by other societies, thereby producing second or third levels of glocality. For example, the English game of cricket, as we have noted, has undergone substantial glocalization within Asian societies. In turn, various Asian glocal practices and techniques in cricket have been used in England and Australia: such as aggressive opening batting methods in limited-overs fixtures, or new techniques and tactics for slow bowlers, or the use of glitzy marketing (or American-style “razzamatazz”, as another variant of glocalization) to promote the Twenty20 format of the game. Indeed, the Asian and global histories of modern sport are largely studies in such processes of glocalization, whether direct or reverse. Other illustrations of reverse glocalization are evidenced by elite athlete migration, for example as Japanese baseball players are recruited into the MLB, Chinese basketball players into the NBA, and East Russian ice-hockey players into Canada or the NHL. We might note also the corporate aspects of reverse glocalization, for example, as we write, Asian nationals hold controlling interests in eight of the top 44 clubs in English football. Overall, further research into Asian forms of reverse glocalization would help to reveal the complex cultural interplay between Asia and other regions and continents within global sport.

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### **2) Sport Business and Commerce**

We noted earlier that the etymological origins of glocalization are tied closely to Asian business practices. At the same time, extensive forms of commercialization or “hypercommodification” have become established within world sport (Walsh & Giulianotti, 2001, 2006). Thus, it would make sense for further social scientific research to be conducted into the commercial forces in Asian sport and how these are subject to diverse “glocal” processes. There are multiple sites for such research. We may explore, for example, the extent to which the business and marketing divisions within major Asian sports clubs and associations draw on Western logics, techniques and strategies to increase turnover, consumer interest, and profitability. Research may also investigate sport labor market strategies—notably how foreign executives, coaches and athletes are recruited and managed—to explore the blending of Asian and non-Asian industrial practices. A similar focus on glocality may be directed at labor relations in sport merchandise corporations, particularly the many Western TNCs which have production plants in south-east Asia. In what ways also do Asian sports leagues become “glocal” entities, in terms of how they select, adapt or deviate from the commercial structures and practices within equivalent non-Asian organizations?

The marketing of sport and sport-related products provides a critical subfield for the analysis of glocal processes on three main plains. First, there is the everyday productive work of marketing people to investigate, and in particular how forms of Asian and non-Asian marketing know-how are assembled and acted upon, to create glocal advertising images and marketing messages. Second, there are the particular understandings which the marketing industry may have regarding Asian consumers and their perceived cultural tastes or preferences for Asian, Western, or other consumer identities. Third, there is a more semiotic approach which interprets marketing techniques and codes according to particular analytical frameworks.

The first two types of research are relatively under-used, and would require substantial qualitative research, notably interviewing and ethnography, in the productive spaces of advertising agencies. The third type of research is at its best when it moves beyond textual interpretation, and instead draws on systematic content analysis of media images, and

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empirical research with social actors such as the consumers who buy these products or, less commonly, the marketing people who create these images.

This type of research would not preclude critical discussion of industrial or marketing practices in sport. Indeed, such discussions would be enhanced through the use of glocalization theories to advance more empirically informed and conceptually robust understandings of the sports industries in Asia, and to enable the full diversity of “Eastern” voices to be heard on this subject.

Finally, perhaps the most pressing field of future research relates to the role of rising Asian nations and markets in reshaping the commercial and organizational contours of global sport. We noted earlier the political and economic influence of India and the Indian Premier League in world cricket (Horton, 2011; Rumford, 2007). In football, rapid economic development and transnational connectivity in different Asian regions have had significant impacts on the global game. For example, Gulf states such as Qatar, UAE and Dubai have invested heavily in football, through building partnerships with or buying elite clubs (e.g., Barcelona, Manchester City, Paris-Saint Germain) or hosting major tournaments (notably the 2022 World Cup in Qatar), in part as a form of “glocal” state- or city-branding (Klauser, 2011; Koller, 2008; Lee & Ducruet, 2009). Meanwhile, leading European football clubs pursue revenues and new “customers” in rich and populous Asian markets (notably China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia) through summer tours and the assiduous television promotion of European leagues across the continent. Research here might explore how these clubs seek to “glocalize” themselves, to appeal to Asian markets, while also examining how different Asian football fans construct particular “glocal” identities through the game.

### **3) Sport Mega-Events**

A third field of research relates to Asia’s growing role in staging sport mega-events. Since the year 2000, and by the year 2023, Asia will have hosted the 2002 and 2020 World Cup finals in football (Korea/Japan, Qatar), 2008 Summer Olympics (Bei-jing), 2018 Winter Olympics (Pyeongchang, South Korea), the 2011 cricket World Cup (India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka), the 2010 Commonwealth Games (Delhi), and the 2007, 2011 and 2015 World Athletics Championships (Osaka, Daegu,

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Beijing). Continental sport mega-events have also grown substantially in scale, for example with the Asian Games more than doubling its number of competing athletes between 1986 and 2010, to almost 10,000 participants.

Glocalization theory enables research into the interplay between convergence and divergence in the hosting of these mega-events, in terms of how host nations draw on global standards and methods for staging such occasions, while also enabling more localized aspects to emerge. This mixture of the global and the local is astutely encapsulated by Wang Ning's (2010) discussion of the opening ceremony at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. This occasion, for Ning (2010), featured the unprecedented highlight of Confucian ideas which are certainly Chinese and local, but on the other hand, all these are realized by means of postmodern high technologies in sound, light, and electricity which are introduced from the West and thus global... It proves that globalization cannot be achieved unless it is located in a certain cultural soil or localized in a certain civilization.

The architectural structure and design of mega-event stadiums provides one such focus for discussion, in regard to their global standardization or their use of iconic and distinctive features (e.g., Beijing's Bird's Nest). More broadly, research might also explore how the host cities or nations of Asian-focused sports events—notably the Asian Games—have sought to encapsulate different particular interpretations and understandings of pan-Asian identity and diversity.

Beyond the staging and architecture, we may examine how the hosting of sport mega-events connects at civic and national levels to particular political-economic strategies and social policies, such as distinctive state-building measures, urban modernization and development, and corporatist and neo-liberal economic policies. A key question, for example, is how mega-events staged in Delhi, Seoul and Qatar connect to “glocal” strategies of “city-branding” or “nation-branding” (Koller, 2008; Lee & Ducruet, 2009). How are such strategies and policies implemented, and with what knowledge and guidance, if any, from the West? Analysis here would also engage with the urban studies approach to glocalisation, as advanced by Swynge-douw (1992, 1997), and as outlined at the outset, to enable us to explore how sport is used by “glocal” states to reorientate

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and reinvent themselves with reference to the loss of powers upwards (to continental and global entities) and downward (to civic and metropolitan centers).

A related issue here concerns the way in which Asian cities or nations use sport mega-events to facilitate particular forms of urban development or redevelopment. Research might explore the continuities and differences between these processes in Asia and in other locations. One focus might be on social justice issues, in regard to the clearing of “unwanted” urban populations and constructions, such as the poor in shanty-towns (Giulianotti & Klauser, 2010).

Finally, analysis may also shift to explore the Asian security aspects of sport mega-events. Processes of glocalization are widely evidenced in the way that security knowledge, methods and expertise for sport mega-events are shared across different cities and nations, and adapted by the different hosts according to context (Klauser, 2011). It would be interesting to explore how different Asian mega-event locations engage selectively with this expertise, and perhaps add new security techniques or emphases. South Asia has been particularly affected by the distinctive sport-terrorism interface, notably the attack in Pakistan on the Sri Lanka cricket team by Islamist militants, and the terrorist attack on Mumbai in 2008 which killed 174 people, and led to the Indian Premier League cricket tournament being transferred to South Africa. Terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaeda cells which threaten these attacks, have been interpreted as essentially “glocal” entities, given the mix of local and international influences on their ideologies and modus operandi (Marret, 2008).

#### **4) Sport and Identity: Gender and Scalar Identities**

A fourth field of research inquiry relates to different forms of glocal identity across Asian sport. Here, for reasons of brevity, we shall concentrate on identities associated with gender and socio-spatial scales (civic, national, regional and transnational identities).

The gender-globalization interface in sport raises a wide range of glocalization issues and problems for investigation in Asia. To begin, research may explore how local cultural values are negotiated with respect to women’s sport participation as athletes and spectators, for example in different kinds of Islamic society. Research may also examine

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how different historical, cultural and economic factors underpin the relative prominence of women in elite sport, such as in South Korea which has produced an exceptional number of successful women athletes (e.g., golf), and also a national football supporter movement featuring substantial participation among women (Koh, 2003).

In regard to socio-spatial scales of identity, we may explore the distinctive ways in which civic and national identities are constructed and contested through sport. What techniques are employed to mark off these identities through sport (Krase, 2009)? How is the global norm of sport rivalry manifested at local or national level through sport, such as in “derby” club football fixtures in Jordan or Japan, or in contests between North-South Korea, China-Japan or India-Pakistan? We may explore too whether sport might offer scope for the construction of a pan-Asian identity, in the way that European identity is dramatized or conveyed through sports, for example in the Ryder Cup golf fixture between Europe and the United States. More broadly, there are regional relations and rivalries to consider, for example in regard to how East Asian and the Middle East sport politicians interact to shape the policies of Asian sport governing bodies.

The role of commercial influences may also be examined, for example in regard to how local and national identities are commodified, and also how forms of “corporate nationalism” are promoted in Asia within sport, for example by major sport apparel companies or by sponsors of leading merchandise companies. This would build upon recent research undertaken with respect to Japanese sports culture and Nike (Kobayashi, 2011, 2012).

The glocalized mediation of sport, and its relationship to forms of Asian identity, also requires examination. We might consider here the extent to which Asian sports journalists “converge” upon global practices in regard to news-gathering techniques and technologies. We might probe the degree to which sports news content is strongly localized and only selectively cosmopolitan, for example, when reporting heavily on how local star athletes are exported to particular foreign sports leagues (Cho, 2009; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007b; Rao, 2009).

Finally, a particular interest here is in how transnational processes impact upon Asian identities. Media and migration are key forces to

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examine in the glocal construction of these identities through sport. This field of research helps to high-light the relationship of globalization to the “deterritorialization” of local identities and cultures. In this sense, local identities are not tied to a specific physical or geographical place or “territory”, but are instead highly mobile, as evidenced by particular migrant communities or by “virtual” groups which rely on media or communications technologies (e.g., Facebook groups).

In regard to migration, we may examine, for example, the case of Asian migrants in Europe, North America or Australasia, and the types of social, national and transnational identities that are developed through sport. In the case of peoples from South Asia, the sport of cricket may help to sustain particular cultural and national identities, but with specific influences also from the host society. The position of second-generation migrants—who are the children of the original immigrants into the host society—is particularly interesting, given the dual identities that are likely to emerge. This field of inquiry might draw on prior research into the glocal identity strategies of other migrant groups in relation to sport. Transnational media and communications technologies (such as satellite and online television, Skype, the internet) play a key role in this regard, in enabling migrant groups to reactivate, maintain or adapt their “home” or local identities, including sport-related ones, within alternative social environments. A further area for research is the construction of glocal types of allegiance or fandom with regard to global sport institutions. For example, what “globalized” forms of fandom are evident among Asian followers of Barcelona, Dallas Cowboys, LA Angels, Manchester United or New York Yankees? And what relationships exist between these “long-distance” fans and those “home” supporters who maintain closer geographical ties to the relevant sports club? Exploring these glocal identity questions helps to reveal the contemporary, two-way relationships of Asia to global sports institutions and cultures.

### **Conclusion**

In summation, we have sought to demonstrate the sociological importance of globalization and its relevance to the investigation of sport in Asia. Globalization is a highly versatile keyword that has been used across academe—in many disciplines and subdisciplines of social science, as well as in the natural sciences—and also in the private, public and

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voluntary sectors of different societies. Glocalization is not an abstract or static category, but is instead a dynamic social process that is of particular sociological interest when examined in operation. In our analysis, glocalization captures the complex interplay, and mutually implicative interrelationships, between the local and the global, the particular and the universal. The “duality of glocality” means that glocalization is a dichotomous process, in terms of registering trends toward both social convergence or homogenization *and* social divergence or heterogenization.

Glocalization is an especially appropriate term for sociologists to use to explain sport, whether in Asia or elsewhere. Much of the creative and critical appeal of sport—for players, coaches, teams, spectators, and commentators—is in “finding a way”, such as to compete against specific opponents, or to respond effectively to particular tactics. Similarly, the term glocalization captures how social groups at the everyday level endeavor to “find a way” to engage with global processes and phenomena; these different ways may include, for example, the assimilation, selective adoption, reinterpretation or rejection of these global processes, or on the other hand there may be attempts to spread local cultural practices to other societies.

Asia provides a very stimulating ground for any discussion of glocalization, given East Asia’s foundational role in advancing the term, the contribution of Asian scholars in theorizing and researching glocalization, and the further empirical and substantive opportunities which are afforded by this diverse and vast continent for exploring glocal processes. On this latter point, we have set out four issues and subjects in the field of sport studies which may be examined with a specific focus on glocalization and Asia.

We would like to conclude here by briefly considering two social and social scientific problems that have relevance for the analysis of glocalization, Asia and sport.

First, we note the latest ways in which forms of “localism” or localization have been advocated in different contexts. Often, these social policies and political ideologies have contradictory natures, in terms of using “top-down” or centralized methods to mold “bottom-up” social formations and movements. In the West, the UK Conservative Party’s “Big Society” policy and the US “Tea Party” movement are illustrative of this

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“antistate” localism. Elsewhere, the rise of Far Right political parties in Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Eastern Europe, and their consolidation in the UK, France, and Italy, are underpinned by an extreme national “localism” and Euro-skepticism. These developments have an inevitable symbiosis with sport, for example in the cuts in state funding for local sports facilities, in the presence of Far Right movements among football supporters, and in counter-responses by NGOs and state institutions to promote grassroots antiracism activism in stadiums. There are also obvious ramifications for migrant Asian groups and communities in these settings, such as through lower public provision of sport facilities, and potentially negative treatment or social marginalization in large sport settings. More broadly, Asian societies may “glocalize” this diffusion of principles of localism in diverse ways. In sport, we may explore how these localisms may be manifested through, for example, civic or ethno-national rivalries, or the use of sport participation to mobilize local civil societies.

Second, there are strong parallels between our conception of glocalization and the theory of “multiple modernities” and the comparative study of civilizations. In effect, these studies of multiple modernities and civilizations seek to explain how different societies “find their own ways” into and through modern times. Asia has been a particularly prominent focus for examining these multiple modernities and civilizations, particularly Japan, China, India and Islamic societies (Eisenstadt, 1996, 2003; Robertson, 2011). Future research may draw on these astute and subtle analyses of civilizations and modernities to explain more fully the logics and projects of glocalization that continue to take shape in the interface of Asia and sport, and which have increasing importance for the future of global sport per se.

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