



## Global-Local Dialectic

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### What is it?

The apparent contradiction of global (at the macro level) versus local (the micro level) can be understood as a dialectic, that is, two interrelated ideas in constant tension. The global-local dialectic refers to global influences on different localities – for instance, through global media flows. Different cultures and peoples are connected to, and have influenced, each other for centuries (through colonialism, wars, trade, etc.). This approach moves beyond the past focus on interactions between nation-states to emphasize both larger (global) and smaller (local) levels. One focus of attention has been the hybrid cultures resulting from global influences on local practices. Others include global interconnections, power differences, intercultural exchange, and especially the link between local choices and global consequences.

### Who uses the concept?

The global-local dialectic is used not only by scholars in communication, political science, history, and economics, but even more by interdisciplinary scholars in cultural studies, postcolonial studies and globalization. They use the concept in referring to hybrid cultures and the growing interconnectedness between individuals and cultures across the planet. Increasing use of the terms "glocal" and "glocalization" demonstrates acceptance of the ways in which global and local intertwine.

### Connection to intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue can create a space in which the global and the local meet in conversation. The global-local dialectic helps to foster intercultural

dialogue as it brings together multiple cultures and peoples. Intercultural dialogue is required to forge strong relationships across differences.

### What work remains?

Recent scholarship on the global-local dialectic tries to move away from looking at the global and the local as opposites that cannot coexist. Rather, scholars are studying examples of potentially mutually beneficial relationships. In particular, some hybridity research, as well as cosmopolitanism research, focuses on this interconnected approach to the global-local dialectic.

### Resources

- Ferguson, M. (1995). Media, markets, and identities: Reflections on the global-local dialectic. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 20(4), 439-459.
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- Mignolo, W. D. (2012). *Local histories/global designs: Coloniality, subaltern knowledges, and border thinking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.