Chapter 16

“Glocal” Governance in the OSCE Region: A Research Proposal

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16.1 Background

“Think global, act locally,” is the essence of glocalization and of glocal governance. Glocal governance means that local stakeholders, such as business, civil society, city councils, authorities and activists actively participate in decision-making processes. Different stakeholders, local, international and domestic ones, make decisions on common rules and regulations while operating, controlling, implementing and enforcing them locally—and wherever needed. Many of these decisions are taken in light of and in accordance with global or international standards. Such standards can be universal UN human rights norms that are, for example, enshrined in international human rights treaties and agreements, and WTO trade norms on tax regulation or copyrights and laws. Global norms can be international customary law, such as humanitarian law or the law of the sea, general guidelines, recommendations or rules and standards on security and elections as set by the OSCE.

But for these universal and global norms and standards—often manifested in international treaties—to become locally accepted and implemented, they need also to be shaped, proposed, and suggested by local actors and different stakeholders. Glocal governance, hence, defines a decision-making process in which local and global actors collaborate, often without including national authorities or only when using them as mediators between local and international levels of governance and organizations.

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During the 2020–2021 world pandemic, city mayors around the world, not only in corrupt and dysfunctional autocratic states in the OSCE region—often took independent and quick decisions according to global WHO health standards and recommendations. City mayors, hospital directors and CEOs of companies bypassed or simply ignored national authorities that were not willing or capable of adapting to the pandemic and making effective decisions. Stakeholders and local actors directly took global advice, copied them from other countries and enacted them locally in their own community. Glocal actions and governance saved people's lives. Local volunteers and CSOs provided aid and support for vulnerable groups and elderly people, and local businesses became innovative in maintaining basic infrastructure during that period. And it has been the city councils and CSOs who reported back to the WHO via ICT channels and a glocal reporting system. National ministries of health were not even aware of what happened in their communities or hospitals. This is not the first time that we see in countries in the OSCE region that the state was absent, incapable, unwilling or not interested to intervene and solve problems, State authorities were often not visible in some regions, and governments do not even have *de facto* authority. During and after the 44-days war over Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia in fall 2020, it was Facebook who offered special services to find and identify POWs and missing persons with the help of the local population in the conflict zone. In the so-called independent republic of Abkhazia in Georgia, authorities refused to take any help from the Georgian government in light of the pandemic and instead called upon the International Red Cross and other external actors, including Russian aid services. Examples of these kinds are multiple not only in conflict torn societies. When governments are incapable of dialogue with their counterparts on a local or international level, and to respond to the basic rules of international humanitarian law, private stakeholders jump in to fill the gap.

For decades now we see how glocal agreements and collaboration create new forms of governance. Private enterprises, businesses, CSOs and ICT companies are seen as steady collaborators and stakeholders to realize global norms, as last seen with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015). They become glocal actors that engage, help and often benefit from operationalizing international agreements, such as the UN Global Migration Compact (2018), and the New Green Deal by the European Union (EU) from 2019. All these agreements can only work in collaboration with local stakeholders. Without the engagement and active participation of city mayors, refugee organizations, environmental movements, business and private enterprises, international organizations and agencies, and governments, none of these glocal agreements could ever work. Glocal governance hence is not a vision, and glocalism not a mere ideology, but a reality.

Yet, the slogan “think globally, act locally,” first emerged in the 1980s along the rise of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) around the world, and the demise of nation-states. The end of the Cold War in 1990 gave the notion a new meaning, often in light of the rise of globalization (Robertson, 1994) and turned glocalization into an analytical conceptual framework (Routometof 2016). Before Routometof summarized and conceptualize glocalization, which he paraphrased as a flow of ideas, products, events or technologies that “refraction” our individual glocal identity and actions, he drew

on the 1993 argument by Ritzer (2000). He argues that not only Western democracy and desire for rule of law and social mobility were the intriguing idea and desire of millions of young people around the world to adhere to human rights norms or western life styles. These life styles and standards fueled the *globalized* and capitalist world and coined the term McDonaldization of the world. Robertson, who himself took glocalization a step further, contradicts Ritzer and called the glocalization of societies a temporarily, yet always permanent, diffusion between local-global-local and hence the process of diffusion of global ideas into local cultures and vice versa. But Ritzer’s *globalization* has given us all the vision of an almost homogeneous way of life when we listen to music, go to coffee shops, wear fashion and aim to enjoy similar lifestyles. *Globalization* is gaining momentum through global trade and mobility as well as technology. Similar, Ulrich Becks’ observation of cosmopolitization of the world since the 1990s, and Francis Fukuyama’s assumption in his bestseller “The End of History” (2002), assumed that after the end of the Cold War, democracy prevails as the most successful and intriguing concept by which people choose to be governed. These views were widely shared in the 1990s because after the defeat of totalitarian regimes, it was the desire for freedom, self-determination, democracy and modernization that united people around the globe. This motion simultaneously emerged in the light of the World Society Theory by John Meyer which dates back even earlier into the 1980s (Krueken and Drori 2010). World Society Theory is closely intertwined with the idea of glocalization and global citizenship, going all the way back to Immanuel Kant’s concept of “Perpetual Peace” and the idea of a World Republic from 1795. Needless to say, the World Society enthusiasm as propagated by Meyer and others has not been shared by everyone, let alone in social science research. The numerous and atrocious civil wars, genocides, mass atrocities, expulsions, and re-autocratizations and reemergence of totalitarian states and state leaders, anocratic regime types as well as land-sliding election outcomes for ethno-nationalist populist leaders around the world since the turn of the millennium, seem to tell the exact opposite story. Namely that democracy, the striving for freedom and independence, and human rights are not the most convincing model to live by. But these conflicts and apparent backslides of freedoms should not be confused with the cry for more individual safety and social justice and security. Both can mutually reinforce themselves and do not need to contradict each other. Yet it also does not necessarily contradict glocalization as a concept, which only aims to describe a process of governance paradigm shifts. Glocalization does not propagate automatically democracy, albeit, if glocal governance is applied in a human rights and good governance manner, democracy might be the logical outcome.

For example, Jan Arat Scholte in his essay on “Whiter Global Theory” (2016) defines glocalization as a process that leaves organizational levels of governmental governance and hierarchies as we know them behind. He calls glocalization as a transscalar process. Transscularity conveys the notion that social relations involve spatial complexity by abandoning the idea of “levels” and hierarchies between state institutions, countries, regions, federal or local versus national, private versus public actors, etc. The borders of exchange, decision making, groups, authorities and ideas are fluid. Postmodern “liquid modernity,” as Bauman (2000) calls our era, shows that

the increasing privatization of the economy spills over to the private sector and civil society. Business and enterprises, ICT companies, CSOs and public sectors such as the security, education or health sector become as an integral part of decision making and governance on all levels of governance.

Another way of looking at these paradigm shifts in governance is Multi-level governance. It resembles the way the European Union (EU) works has scales and operates on hierarchies and local, federal, regional, national and international levels of governance. By dissolving levels, especially those that are dysfunctional, governance becomes “transscalar,” which is also often assessed through the Multi-Stakeholder Approach (MSA). The MSA aims to include all relevant private, public, local, national or international stakeholders and actors that are necessary to resolve a specific problem or issue, and hence aims to govern or fill a governance gap, wherever needed. Against this backdrop, transscalarity is the case when glocalization is replacing separate concrete domains and makes them closer connected and intertwined. With this premise, the “transscalar” methodology does not distribute causality between discrete spaces, such as the global. For example, WTO or EU decisions do not alone determine national trade policies, but rather a mutually interrelated and collaborative decision-making process in which all sides—local, private and public—take their share of implementation and enforcement. Indeed transscalarity, as Scholte argues, does not stipulate in advance what geographical or multi-level dimensions or actors dominate in a given situation (Scholte 2016).

One of the research questions to follow would be whether any type of localization, globalization and *glocalization* (Ritzer 2000) and subsequently glocalization (Routometof 2016) has formed new glocal identities among people (Fukuyama 2018)? Furthermore, one may ask the question of whether and to what extent this global identity has led to a transscalar way (Scholte 2016) of governance?

16.2 Glocalization as a conceptual analytical framework

The analytical concept of glocalization can be used as a scientific research tool in social science research and humanities, aiming to better illustrate, understand and even explain paradigms shifts and changing ways of political decision making. This concept can show how decision-making and implementing decisions have changed, and whether or not this is only the case when governments fail to deliver, or whether this is a more permanent shift in the way things will be governed in the future.

Implementing the UN FCCC decision on carbon reduction and combating global warming, for example, can best work on local levels when city councils take actions in cooperation with local energy providers, fossil fuel plants, automobile and local mobility policies and others. Reducing global warming is a local and joint—and hence glocal—endeavor to realize global goals. How are cities and communities responding to it? How do different industrial sectors, the health sector and civil society, respond to and participate in decision making? Are citizen-dialogues, the idea of sanctuary cities or other forms of direct consultation and democracy alternative

models to glocal governance? Who is excluded, and who is included and at what stage in the MSA, fluid, glocal and transscalar decision-making process?

There is a plethora of research questions to be answered in the context of glocality and glocalization, and social science research is still at the beginning of it. To investigate how decisions are made, implemented and enforced can best be done on community and national levels and by using quantitative process tracing methods over a longer period of time, decades ideally. Using social and critical theories as well as governance theories gives guidance of direction to triangulate the method. Process tracing and triangulation, hence mixed methods, are a way to assess and measure changes, differences and similarities among manners of governance on local, domestic and international levels.

To see whether glocal governance takes place, who are the actors, when did they get engaged or excluded, ignored or involved? In order to assess or evaluate institutions and mechanism that are used by the different stakeholders and actors to take a decision and respond to citizens’ needs, a researcher needs to compare various forms and units of glocal governance, for example, in cities and villages, among faith-based communities, private sector or on federal-state levels. Key stakeholders are those who deliver the basic needs of people: income, health, education and security.

The question is to what extent trans-national, local, virtual and global movements, and the exchange of ideas and values, norms and standards have changed the way societies and communities live today. One observation commonly shared is that global norms, such as human rights and fundamental freedoms, have diffused into our day-to-day thinking, attitudes and behavior and hence mark the way we make decisions. Because norms such as freedom of conscience and movement, right to health, to be entitled to choose your work and education and to be free from want and slavery, are easy to identify with for everyone. At the same time, a growing mode of anti-Western sentiments is rising around the world, often targeting exactly the norms that are identified as “western and global norms” and not only in the OSCE region. One of the consequences is that “freedom” and human rights are seen as a danger to stability and safety and not as a solution to threats and instability. In some way this rapidly anti-Westernization contradicts Fukuyama’s assumption of the intriguing power that freedom and human rights and self-determination have for people globally, no matter their faith or ideology (1992). I would argue, that the strife for more security, safety and predictability in today’s rapidly changing world is understandable and does not automatically contradict our desire for freedom.

Furthermore, one could argue, that the difference of opinions towards the same universal values, such as friendship, justice, peace, love or trust and dignity, have always existed and so have their multitudes of ways of interpretation and articulation. People may share the same value of freedom and dignity but live them differently in their communities. They also choose, elect or determine their leaders differently, leaders who use the same values to govern in very different manners (Morlino 2004). Hence, another open question remains, in what manner of glocal leadership, and hence governance, are people currently drifting? And is this fundamentally different from what we have seen over the history of mankind (North et al 2009)?

A region that provides an excellent ground for research is the countries, societies, political regimes, and hence member states of the OSCE. The 57-member states together face similar challenges such as climate change, migration and Internet security. Among the members states are those that range from some of the most democratic countries, like Norway, Finland or Canada, to some of the most autocratic ones such as Tajikistan or Turkmenistan, and conflict torn regions such as Kosovo and Chechnya and the Fergana Valley in Central Asia; and therefore, pose one of the most intriguing laboratories of research for glocal governance. The OSCE states show different stages of development and economic regimes, some are highly industrial and capitalistic countries, and some are resource-dependent, subsidiary and agricultural economies. But all state governments adhere to a set of universal and UN principles and standards such as human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as OSCE standards in terms of good governance principles, rule of law, human rights, elections and security.

Many OSCE countries including Ukraine, France, Estonia, Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Armenia and the USA have experienced the dramatic rise and shifts that civil society can pose. CSOs and private enterprises have often become the new “bosses in town,” as have capitalistic industry and enterprises, and autocratic and populist leaders strike back. But in order to solve common problems, these actors and stakeholders often form alliances and comply with international norms and standards, including UN environmental and health standards, EU standards for trade and logistics, and OSCE standards of anti-corruption, participation, and rule of law.

Exchange of ideas, values, norms, products, fashion, beauty styles, pop art and our understanding of violence, harm and wrongdoings are truly globally and instant. We may agree on the big notions of these values and norms, but often have differing views on how to implement them in our day-to-day lives, which leads us again to the question how glocalization is materialized?

Thanks to ICTs everyone can be a reporter today on domestic violence and child abuse, on forced evictions and suffering patients in hospitals; and thanks to open borders and cheap airline carriers, global mobility allows us to share our experience directly. As a consequences the nation-state has become a hollow ground, providing a power gap that is filled with populist-nationalist and organized crime leaders who call upon imaginary—and often never existing—traditions and values for those who feel lost in this rapidly and dramatically changing globalized and mobile world. On the other hand, city mayors and community leaders, including religious ones, have filled governance gaps on local levels, providing minimal standards of social security, income, education and health. They govern with much success, often using coercion, intimidation and keeping the population ignorant to a certain degree, but in the end, they enjoy more trust by citizens than state authorities or foreign aid workers.

The call for glocal solutions to universally shared challenges and problems and effective responses to our basic human needs, such as security, health, education/empowerment and decent income in order to live a dignified life, is what is the motor for glocal governance. Immanuel Wallerstein (2004), in his World System Analysis, described the modern democratic state as one that has to deliver three

services that frame basic needs, since antiquity, namely (1) public education, (2) access to health and a (3) guarantee of lifelong solid income (Wallerstein 2004, p. 94). They compose, today, what we describe as the public sector.

Anyone who provides these deliverables, no matter whether this is a warlord or a human rights defender, an oligarch or democratically elected parliamentarian, can for some time or longer establish a stable governance regime. Most of the time, those leaders, not legitimized by democratic elections as they are members of organized crime and warlords or autocrats, will fail to keep the regime running without the need to use force, intimidation or coercion over a longer period of time. Nevertheless, they ought to be taken into consideration when we aim to understand how glocal governance works. Generally speaking, we need to look at who delivers to the needs, and what methods are used to do it? Parliamentary and liberal democracies generally speaking are the most successful in delivering over longer timeframes but have also often failed in parts and sectors that have been dysfunctional and corrupt (Morlino 2004). Good Governance (GG) principle hence adds to the assessment scheme when investigating how glocal governance works. GG today often replaces the big wording of democracy but means the same, namely to make public decisions and elections transparent, hold stakeholders accountable and allow for private and public participation of citizens and enterprises. Those stakeholders who deliver the three basic needs according to GG principles have a good chance to replace corrupt state authorities—if basic liberal freedoms are guaranteed. Often that is not the case where organized crime groups and mafia-style regimes have infiltrated governments and turned the state into a farce. But what does this glocal paradigm shift mean for governance?

16.3 Glocal Governance

Conceptualizing research in the area of glocal governance means to work with the notion and idea of glocalism. Glocalism is a generic idea and Routometof names it a “blueprint” that can serve as an ideology (2016). Glocalism aims to illustrate or show-case how ICTs and the global economy, including Ritzer’s example of *glocalization*, have been shaping our globally different ways of life in all sectors of society and on all levels. Glocalization, instead is the process, the different steps and the stages to reach a level or condition of “glocality.” Glocality describes the state of the art and hence the situation or condition we live in.

Glocalism does not have the characteristics of a theory, yet it serves for some as an ideology or blueprint for framing an ideal scenario by which society can enjoy a higher quality of basic needs fulfillment. This can be, for example, lead to a higher level of and free education for all, a social security regime and a decent income and a good health care regime for all based on accountable, transparent and participatory decision making, and hence GG principles and human rights norms. Many annually published value and governance barometers such as the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, the Polity V Index, Democracy Index or World Value Survey and Varieties

of Democracy Index, measure global trends and shifts based on these indicators and criteria. Their data has well illustrated over the past decades, how global values and norms, diffuse locally and become part of day-to-day decision making on local levels.

But against this backdrop, Roudometof denies any theoretical claim that the concept glocalization may have because glocalization only describes the stages and paradigm shifts we currently observe. Glocalization or glocality cannot theoretically explain or justify (yet) why we would live better or more sustainably, more peacefully and prosperously under a glocal governance system? Glocalization is simply an analytical concept to better understand governance paradigm shifts.

Thus far, glocalism describes what can be seen, and hence it is a conceptual framework that helps us to analyze and understand the dramatic shifts, triggered by migration, climate change and population growth paired with the rapid pace that ICT provides in exchanging ideas, norms, values and goods. Glocalism is the blueprint and glocalization is a fluid process. It is an ever-changing concept that shows and illustrates how we solve local or domestic or global problems. To become glocal consequently changes the way we make decisions, consult, advise, participate and determine hierarchies. Last but not least, glocalization has changed the way in how we want to be governed, namely in a respectful, equal and participatory way.

Local action and engagement by civil society and private actors, but also local councils and individual engagement, is the essence of glocalization, namely connecting local actors with global norms, standards and best practices—and vice versa. Such norms can be universal human rights norms, quality assurances or good governance principles. Local actors can be representatives of cities or community councils, youth groups, human rights defenders, non-governmental and civil society organizations, teachers, lawyers, volunteers, health care or communication technology providers and business owners. They are private, civil or corporate organized groups or individuals, engaging with the formal and informal sectors of public policy alike. Most prominently we find local engagement in the education and health sector, in small and medium enterprises and in the health sector (North et al. 2009).

Glocal actors and stakeholders are the basis of MSA, in which private and corporate actors interact with domestic, national or other transnational actors and institutions, such as state governments and authorities as well as with international governmental organizations (IGOs) such as the EU, UN or OSCE. Their numbers are growing. Today, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that over 2 billion people work in the informal economic sector alone, which is predominantly local, that is approximately 60% of all work forces globally. If at all, they are organized in glocal communities and associations in their labor sectors. People who work in the informal sector are below the radar of state authorities, often pay no income taxes and do not enjoy national and domestic labor or employment rights, pension funds, insurances or other ways of protection given by state governments—and hence no safety net. They have to organize themselves individually as a group and family or clan and patronage regime and often depend on corrupt, exploitative and abusive leaders. Local small and medium enterprises, local markets, and farmers, make up to 40% of the GDP in Sub-Sahara Africa and up to 10% of the GDP in North America. In

many countries, most of the GDP comes from the informal sector and from transnational corporates that exploit natural resources. Both sectors are not sustainable and less resilient to the economic or environmental crisis, let alone to a pandemic.

Furthermore, CSOs, international and local relief and aid organizations and donors make up 60% of public policy engagement in solving problems locally and globally. For example, providing primary education across the planet, first aid and health, filing claims for environmental damages and cleaning up polluted areas. The power of individual engagement and group activism in the area of climate change, education and in the health sector can be witnessed around the world. In sum, over 60% of our public goods and basic needs are in the hands of informal and non-formal actors and institutions, and so are our safety and security. One may conclude that it is without much surprise that people more and more mistrust their governments and that populist leaders can fill this governance gap by fueling the fears of people living without a safety net, and promising them a better and safer live.

Most prominently, the power of CSOs and private stakeholders has been striking during the Arab Revolution beginning in 2011, the same year that “We are the 99%” and Occupy Wall Street movement triggered worldwide protests against economic and financial inequality and corruption. Euromaidan protesters in Ukraine in 2014 brought down a regime and yearlong protests occurred from Hong Kong, to Minsk, to Tel Aviv, Bangkok and Santiago de Chile against state corruption and the failure to deliver. The global movement “MeToo” (2017) fighting for equal gender equality, and the “Fridays for Future” youth protest to end climate change since 2018, all of which have reached the remote corners of the OSCE region and beyond. CSOs and local movements today enjoy many millions of followers and supporters, who help them via online petitions, civil disobedience and active opposition. They trigger glocal governance, but they are only one part of the decision-making process.

The list of stakeholders and actors who bypass or surpass governments is long, almost endless, and today there are several millions of local and domestic, as well as internationally organized groups, using the lingua francas English or Arabic or Russian. A common language—even when it is translated by apps on smartphones—helps to mobilize stakeholders to make changes on the ground (UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs 2020). The different actors and stakeholders have, however, one thing in common, they often refer to global norms and standards, such as human rights or a healthy environment, the fundamental freedom to migrate, and the right to education or health, to solve their local problems and organize their day-to-day living. Claims for law and norms compliance, for fair elections and public health care, come from the local, not from national governments. Why? Because people even in the most remote corners of the world, as we can view from the Tian Shan Mountains in Central Asia to the Karabakh in the Caucasus, the Pyrenees in Europe and the Saint Elias mountain range in North America have—thanks partly to the Internet—have learned and seen elsewhere in the world that getting fair trials or equal treatment and health care and giving their children education is possible. Both universal human rights norms and standards, as well as good governance dimensions, are the two guiding sets of principles that lead to a “blend of the local and the global” as Roudometof phrases it (2016, p. 79).

16.4 Further Research

Glocal governance means consensus-building among all relevant stakeholders and joint implementation and enforcement mechanism. It is decision-making based on consensus during the planning, implementing and enforcing stage of governance. By this, glocal governance is different from multi-level governance, which is based on consultative procedures between stakeholders. Albeit different stakeholders hold the different tasks and enjoy different autonomy, multi-level governance is predominantly a procedure by which governmental authorities consult with external or other governmental stakeholders and actors on different levels.

To study and investigate cases and initiatives of glocal governance the analytical concept of glocalization can help us to better understand current paradigm shifts of government and nation-state building or demise in the OSCE region. The so-called weakness, end, decline, failure, crisis or hypocrisy of Western democratic concepts have been under much scrutiny over the past two decades—and discussed extensively elsewhere (Merkel and Kneip 2018). Glocal governance research does not aim to add to this debate but rather to look at side effects and alternative avenues of governance that have been emerging since the 1990s. Merkel et al highlight that democracy is not in crisis, but that some systems and regime types are. It is up to them how they reform and adapt to the needs of people, including the way to be governed, that will determine whether they survive. Fueled by the rise of populist and ethno-nationalistic leaders, regional conflict and high levels of state corruption, the parliamentary democratic regimes are much disputed. Whether glocal governance can turn into a new regime type or an entirely new governance system is yet to be seen. Personally, I doubt it. But to answer this question, we need more research, case studies and data allocation on how glocalization has actually led to a replacement of nation-state governmental regimes, brought to light modes of Mafia states or whether it simply complements and completes and adds values to existing governance regimes of whatever type.

This chapter aims to encourage more research in this subject matter in the OSCE region. The region provides a unique, diverse and yet under similar norms and standards operating cities, states and communities. Special attention deserves the new democracies and member states in the Balkans, as well as Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including Mongolia. Comparing new democracies with older and consolidated ones in Western and Northern European and North America would illustrate some results that might show more similarities when measuring glocality than expected.

Lastly, the debate about glocal governance adds to the current democracy versus autocracy debates and in the decades to come.

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