# Think glocally, act glocally: a culture-centric comment on Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez and Gibson (2005)

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**Abstract**
Culture is a critical variable in international business (IB), and Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez and Gibson (2005) enrich our understanding of its role. However, that said, their framing of this variable conflates the role of national culture (NC), a particular form of culture, with culture itself, a more pivotal, holistic and central construct. This paper, by commenting on and critiquing their approach, seeks to shift the theoretical center of gravity from a NC-centric paradigm to a culture-centric, constructivist one, and from a top-down, bottom-up view to a flatter, glocalized one. Implications are provided which suggest that research should address cultural processes of patterning and production, as well as cultural forms, such as global communities and global culture (GC), which share with or even capture the spotlight from NC as a focus for studying and developing IB cultural theory.
*Journal of International Business Studies* (2009) **40,** 237–254.
doi:10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400410

## INTRODUCTION

The paper by Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez, and Gibson (2005) makes a significant contribution to the international business (IB) literature by focusing on potentially paradigmatic advances in national cultural research that might reorient IB research. They suggest that their work facilitates such research by taking a more complex view of national culture and its effects, by considering its relationships with socio-economic-political variables and by emphasizing a multi-method, multi-level approach to it. Indeed, we strongly agree that researchers studying culture in IB have not been taking advantage of all the tools for characterizing culture, or for better pinpointing its effects. In this regard, we find their work is a useful starting point, as it refocuses IB on cultural as opposed to economic, legal and organizational issues.

Nevertheless, we depart from Leung et al., because the way they construe cultural effects does not free researchers from the constraints of national culture framing: ironically, what they are proposing ultimately limits rather than expands our research toolkit. They focus on national culture, and define it as the "values, beliefs, norms, and behavioral patterns of a national group" (p: 357). However, we argue that they fail to recognize that

culture is a distinct, if related, construct. It may be seen as a web of significance or meaning that is formed into narrative (Geertz, 1973; cf. Earley, 2006). The key to this view is that it involves processes of sensemaking, meaning making or production (Adams & Markus, 2004; McIntyre, Lyons, Clark, & Kashima, 2004). In this regard, Adams and Markus (2004: 341) go beyond the constraints of group membership such as being a member of a national culture entails: they adapt a classic definition of culture based on that of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952: 357), which will be applied here as it provides a more expansive basis for IB theory development than that of Leung et al.

> Culture consists of explicit and implicit *patterns* of historically derived and selected ideas and their embodiment in institutions, practices and artifacts; cultural patterns may, on one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action.

This definition, Adams and Markus further emphasize, does not necessarily reside in group membership, but rather in such patterned worlds. For instance, they suggest that a person may be a member of one particular culture, such as a national culture, while being influenced by another national culture in which he or she is not a member. In this example, culture is embodied in such processes as the transfer and construction of meaning, as well as cultural intelligence, which concerns how individuals adapt in cultural settings, and goes beyond contextually shared values and meanings in a society (Earley, 2006; Earley & Ang, 2003). Even our very understanding of group membership in a national culture must be informed by considering such underlying transformative cultural processes as identity formation (Laclau, 1994), hybridization (Canclini, 1995), cultural translation (Abramson, 1998) and glocalization (Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006).

Thus, in failing to address culture itself as such directly, Leung et al. do not go far enough in laying out a more complete cultural research program for IB. To advance our argument, and to make a crucial distinction that Leung et al. fail to make, we refer to "national culture" as "NC" and use the term "culture" to refer to the general construct of culture. This is very important, as we observe in IB that these two terms are almost ubiquitously conflated. In that regard, Leung et al. continue in the dominant IB paradigm of NC framing they cite (e.g., Haire, Ghiselli, & Porter, 1966; Hofstede,

1980). Thus, while Leung et al. have extended this paradigm in their consideration of the "state-of-the-art" (p: 357), their reading of it is faulty in our opinion because they used the two terms interchangeably, thereby conflating the NC and culture constructs.

Moreover, reflecting the global cultural forces inherent in IB, we take a "glocalization" perspective which reflects the dialectic between global and local structures, discourses and meanings (Ritzer, 2003; Wilk, 1995). Wilk (1995: 118) indicates that this dialectic is played out in what he calls "structures of common difference" such that globalized forces constitute a certain hegemony that, even as it structures and drives many of the cultural activities of local entities, ironically values diversity in them. Thus the local entity may appropriate or resist what globalization provides (Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006). Moreover, while glocalization indicates that NC plays a role as a local variable, we also suggest that there are other cultural "sites", both local and global, such as institutions or communities, which at times predominate.

To make this case, we will challenge the major tenets of Leung et al. and provide alternative views by critiquing what we regard as the key gaps in their largely traditional NC paradigm. These include, as shown in Table 1:

(1) a construing of culture, itself, as a change of focus and a constructivist alternative to its conflation with NC (i.e., culture-centric *vs* NC-centric);
(2) more fully addressing when NC matters in these terms; and
(3) offering an alternative flatter, glocalized community-based model, including other forms of cultural communities involved in IB but which Leung et al. largely neglect (i.e., their top-down, bottom-up *vs* a flatter, glocalized perspective).

In considering these issues, we offer an alternative, culturally based view of NC and provide insight into when it may be a more or less useful variable in IB research.

## CONSTRUING CULTURE ITSELF

### Culture *vs* NC
Leung et al. set out right from the start of their paper to move IB from a focus on economic, legal and organizational issues to one on NC. As noted above, they take a membership approach to NC, though they do also recognize other forms of

**Table 1** Contrasting views of culture in IB

| Traditional NC paradigm (Leung et al., 2005) | Glocalized, culture-centric paradigm |
| --- | --- |
| *NC-centric*<br>Emphasis on group membership in a national culture; essentialist with fixed notions of NC generally tied to a group membership perspective. Based on cross-cultural (NC) theory. | *Culture-centric*<br>Emphasis on culture as a construct apart from any particular form of it; involves meanings and patterns of practices that at times may or not include aspects of group membership, such as in an NC. Constructivist in that there is constant change in the meanings and practices of NC, rooted on the processes of culture, itself. Based on cultural theory. |
| *When NC matters*<br>NC is an independent variable. Research is usually based on some effect where NC is a predictive main or moderating effect. | *When NC matters and changes*<br>NC is both an independent and dependent variable, depending on the circumstance, and reflecting elements of the displacement of geographic place and postnationalism. Research may involve mediation effects, where NC or proxies for it are invoked by an independent variable as well as driving some dependent variable. Qualitative research is helpful in assessing the co-evolution of NC and other cultural types. |
| *Top-down, bottom-up approach* (derived from the actual model of Leung et al., 2005)<br>Global culture↔national culture↔organizational culture↔group culture↔individual. Lower levels are nested hierarchically within higher levels. Follows traditional IB theory in situating NC. | *Flatter, community-based approach*<br>IB activity is not so focused on NC; it is one among a number of community cultures, which may vary contingently relative to each other in their influence status or salience in any given situation. Situates NC, and by extension IB, in a more open-system, non-hierarchical context. |

culture in which people may be viewed as members (cf. Adams & Markus, 2004), such as organizational cultures. But their insistent focus is on NC, and their presumption seems to be that NC is the driving force in IB. Ironically, the first part of the title of Leung et al.'s paper, "Culture and international business" leads readers to assume they will be reading a paper that starts not with NC *per se* as the fulcrum but rather with culture, itself. Therefore they will later be sorely disappointed when Leung et al. write as if NC is their topic, and apply NC and culture interchangeably.

First, in setting up what they will discuss, they state (second paragraph, p: 357): "One such new trajectory [for IB research] is the concern with national culture". But then in the first sentence of the very next paragraph they further set up their paper (p: 357): "The purpose of this paper is to provide a state-of-the-art review of several recent advances in culture and IB research …" However, though Leung et al. attempt to situate NC in a more inclusive framework of levels (e.g., their top-down, bottom-up model), they continue to reflect the established NC paradigm in IB, and do not really engage the larger issues of what culture is or how it is produced. Instead, throughout their paper,

they conflate NC with culture, just as they did in these quotes.

Therefore their definition comes up short in two respects:

(1) it fails to recognize the construct of culture, itself, and that NC is merely one form of it; and
(2) it does not recognize the limits of the NC construct.

Most of their discussion concerns how people differ across NCs (e.g., on Hofstede's dimensions). NC is thus applied as a main effect or moderator in which differences are assessed across them for some dependent variable (e.g., employee performance). The misleading aspect of such privileging of NC, following Adams and Markus (2004), is that the focus of IB research has been not so much on culture *per se*, but rather on NC as a grouping variable used to study cultural variation. Such a relatively macro-level national group view fails to adequately account for either micro-level variables, such as personal experience or lifestyles, or macro-global variables that also (re)produce cultural worlds (cf. Adams & Markus, 2004). Thus NC may be confounded with other variables, such as

individual differences within NCs and degree of industrialization (Helfrich, 1999).

Eckhardt and Houston (2007) make the distinction between cultural psychology and cross-cultural psychology. The former is driven by an emic point of view in which meaning is understood on a culture's own terms, that is, emic validity, whereas the latter tends to be more universalistic, etic and generally NC-driven. In measurement-statistical terms, "emic validity" has been equated to within-country validity (Miller, Slomczynski, & Schoenberg, 1981). Here, while validity, itself, is a charged and variously defined term, nonetheless we view emic validity as the degree to which researchers comprehend patterns of meaning and practices in people's own terms (cf. Eckhardt & Houston, 2007). This emic–etic view leads Eckhardt and Houston to conclude that more research should be cultural and often qualitative; only if and when meaning equivalence is found, can etic cross-cultural psychology be applied. Moreover, since culture is embodied in many forms, which may at times be conflated with aspects of NC, including such culturally based phenomena as communities, ethnic groups, networks, corporations, regional entities, global entities, NGOs, classes, lifestyles, subcultures, demographic groups and even individuals' own "personal" cultures, and since virtually all of these reflect international influences, we find that the central focus in IB should be on culture *per se*.

## A Constructivist Approach to Culture
Not only should IB researchers investigate types of culture, but also such processes as cultural formation, evolution and co-evolution should be studied both within and across them. Adams and Markus (2004) indicate that the full panoply of the psychological foundations of culture may be investigated, ranging from evolutionary and neurological considerations to the dynamic construction of practices and experience. This view also informs their expansion of cultural research beyond experimental methods to consider the analysis of discourses, texts and material artifacts. In IB, Redding (2005) draws on Berger and Luckmann's (1966) definition of culture as the "social construction of reality", as well as putting emphasis on meaning, context and process. Similarly, Boddewyn, Toyne, and Martinez (2004) suggest that international management is a socially constructed activity that involves, for instance, a wide variety of views of everything from globalization to management

practices. In this regard, IB researchers might want to assess the discourses of managers or consumers to consider what types and processes of culture are relevant. Managers, for instance, may contingently make sense of and construct things in largely organizational, NC, or personal terms or varying combinations.

However, Leung et al. (2005) miss this key constructivist element. We seek to build further in this direction, and mine thought largely outside IB to inform it. Illustratively, for example, in considering the development of social and political identities, Laclau (1994: 2) trenchantly describes a constructivist perspective:

> If agents were to have an always already defined location in the social structure, the problem of their identity considered in a radical way would not arise – or, at most would be seen as a matter of people *discovering* or *recognizing* their own identity, not of constructing it.

Reflecting a cultural process, he further interprets this construction as identification, because there exists what he calls (p: 3) "an originary and insurmountable lack of identity". In this regard, there is a lack of an essentialist nature or essence that comprises one's identity in the state; instead the nation-state, itself, and the identities within it are continuously constructed (Stychin, 1998). A further constructivist perspective is suggested by Featherstone (2000), who links postmodernity to the need to go beyond the level of the nation-state toward greater consideration of the impact of cultural complexity in the face of globalization and its shifting power balances. Similarly, Lyotard (1984: 14) captures this well:

> What is new in all of this is that the old poles of attraction represented by nation-states, … and historical traditions are losing their attraction.

Implied in such linkages is the necessity to draw on poststructuralist-postmodern and other critical thought (Habermas, 1992, 2001; Rosenau, 1992), which constitutes a perspective that is missing in – but seems particularly relevant to – the work of Leung et al., as well as IB in general. While it should be noted that poststructuralism and postmodernism are often conflated, they may be differentiated largely along the lines that the former deals with methodological epistemological concerns whereas the latter deals with cultural critique (Rosenau, 1992).[1] In any case, most relevant to our purposes is that national metanarratives (e.g., mythologies of a nation's greatness) addressed by Lyotard (1984),

Featherstone (2000) and Laclau (1994), among many others, are seen as being constructed, on the one hand, and deconstructed or broken down, on the other.

Indeed, Leung et al. hint indirectly at such poststructural/postmodern possibilities when they speak of errors involving universal attributions. They illustrate these errors in the example of managers assuming that all workers are the same and thus that all workers of a NC behave in accord with some stereotype the managers hold. These are certainly errors, but they require a more trenchant, constructivist analysis of culture; Leung et al. never follow their analysis to its logical conclusion. For instance, how such a view may be applied in IB is exemplified in Gould (2004), who considered integrated marketing communications (IMC), a set of business practices that in many ways parallel those of IB. IMC is a major managerial practice that nonetheless has been critiqued for lack of a coherent theoretical base. Gould finds this is not so much a fault as it is reflective of an understanding that managerial practice is necessarily situated in particular circumstances of time and place, and that theory should be more grounded in uncovering useful heuristics for such practice. Beyond that he suggests, consistent with a poststructural view, that studying the discourses and practices of managers across situations might be a more fruitful way to assess IMC, since any theory needs to consider them first.

Similarly, there are serious issues with regard to theory in IB. For example, Sheth (2001) noted that international marketing is largely contextual and *ad hoc* in practice. In this regard, "universalized" IB theories may not be as robust as some may hope; a focus on how culture is constantly being constructed at all sorts of levels and in all sorts of ways needs to be taken. The very fact that international strategies are constructed in terms of variations in global/local markets and standardization/adaptation is suggestive of the paradoxical dynamic of globalization and fragmentation in which bigger and smaller play off one another without necessarily giving particular regard to nation-states (Cornwell & Drennan, 2004). Moreover, businesses choosing to view national boundaries in all sorts of ways is poststructural grist; even a globalization strategy is "localized" (i.e., particular to a firm), and it may not even be the best strategy for its competitors. It is firms' particular cultures and situations that determine their strategies.

Thus, while Leung et al. do acknowledge the problematics of universality in theory, and reach for a contextual perspective, they nonetheless remain wedded to a view of culture that lacks a primary focus on glocalized discourses, meanings and practices that are not very easily reducible to experimental research or the lens of NC theory. This is not to say that broadly shared theories, beliefs or practices do not exist; rather, each time they are invoked, they are embedded in situational contingencies. Thus meanings are glocalized in terms of interpretation where people may appropriate, resist or hybridize in newly synthesized, if continuously evolving, forms the various global phenomena they encounter (Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006; Thompson & Arsel, 2004).

## WHEN DOES NC MATTER?

This is a question asked and studied by Briley and Aaker (2006). Or, as Leung et al. put it, how and when? Here, the question must be prefaced with consideration of what form or process of culture we are referring to, including NC but not limited to it; some form of culture will matter. For instance, Cornwell and Drennan (2004) suggest focusing on consumers and markets rather than firms and nations to better understand internationalization. In this regard, we find that a key issue concerning NC is not to conflate its effects with other influences. An illustrative example of NC conflation is a study by Erez-Rein, Erez, and Maital (2004) of the cultural integration of two firms involved in a cross-NC acquisition, which Leung et al. cite (p: 363) to exemplify:

> how a multinational company [American] that acquired an Israeli company … changed the organizational culture of the acquired company. The study identified a cultural gap between the two companies, with the Israeli company being higher on the cultural dimensions of innovation …

However, both Leung et al. and Erez-Rein et al. find it is very difficult to separate the interwoven effects of NC and organizational culture, thus conflating the two. Moreover, while there are NC dynamics involved in the integration, even in the view of Erez-Rein et al., NC (interwoven with organizational culture) is only one of seven key integration success factors (KSF). Thus, when Leung et al. describe the acquiring company's insistence on sending the Israeli managers to Six-Sigma training as a top-down process, what do we ascribe that to: corporate power, NC or something else? Neither Erez-Rein et al. nor Leung et al. clearly

demonstrate the effects of NC. To do so requires more study, such as combining mezzo research on cross-border mergers with micro-level employee perception studies (Shenkar, 2004). Or, using depth interviews, Erez-Rein et al. might have reported on what attributions, if any, employees made to NC vis-à-vis not only organizational culture, but also the general business environment. Moreover, in the experimental spirit of Leung et al., one is led to ask what if the shoe were on the other foot? What if an Israeli firm bought an American one? Or what if an American firm bought a firm in another small nation? Based on Erez-Rein et al., one can only reach a limited conclusion regarding NC based on one company in one cross-NC setting.

We would further suggest that cumulative databases of similar cases, like ethnographic databases, could be formed, and for variables such as those comprising the KSF of Erez-Rein et al. meta-analyses could be conducted (Tihanyi, Griffith, & Russell, 2005), possibly leading to quite different interpretations from those of Erez-Rein et al. and Leung et al. Particularly apt would be studying real-time reactions to organizational or marketplace phenomena in NCs as they manifest through immersion by researchers (Eckhardt & Houston, 2007). By interpreting the results of such immersive techniques as interviews, observation, participation in meetings and reading of various corporate texts (e.g., reports, notes of meetings, e-mails), they may be able to uncover how formal and informal policies and communications create cultural meaning and how that may be attributable to the organization, marketplace or NC. Moreover, as Leung et al. state, there are many cases, such as that of Erez-Rein et al., where there is an NC effect but it is weak in practical terms. In this case, they suggest either looking at NC as a moderator or looking at individual, group or situational variables that may moderate the impact of NC. They mention one important variable as an example, namely the degree to which a person holds NC to be part of his identity; identification with an NC will increase its impact.

In that regard, the construct of group membership salience may further illumine when NC or other culture-based and often automatic identification might apply. It refers to priming specific traits as salient only at certain times (McGuire & Padawer-Singer, 1976). For instance, a Nigerian will probably automatically find being Nigerian salient when he or she is in a group with other nationalities, but will be less focused on his or her

nationality when interacting only with other Nigerians. Moreover, Oyserman, Sakamoto, and Lauffer (1998) found that NC and subculture operate similarly in terms of salience. For IB, this idea could be a key one. Researchers should consider how the presence or absence of cross-NC, as well as within-country, ethnic or other community cultures to be discussed later (e.g., lifestyle communities) might confound their findings.

A dynamic constructivist, cultural approach to salience further suggests that cultural knowledge may not be monolithic in its effects, but rather that various aspects of it may arise as a function of specific situations (Briley, Morris, & Simonson, 2000). In this regard, Briley and Aaker's (2006) experimental research among North American and Chinese consumers concerning responses to advertising messages suggests that the individual is at the center of various situations that may bring out NC or other cultural factors and patterning and/or allow him or her to reflect his or her own personal, "unique" aspects. They demonstrate that NC factors take precedence relatively automatically when people are not able to deliberate about a decision or judgment. On the other hand, when people are able to give greater thought to decisions, personal cultural (i.e., one's own patterns and practices) and idiosyncratic factors take on more significance.

Considering these processes leads to applying a relatively novel approach in IB, which can broaden its conduct of cultural research by exploring how practices are translated across cultures. While translation immediately brings to mind language translation, it also refers to the idea of the spread and adaptation of various cultural phenomena, such as ideas, products, processes and rules, through actor-networks across cultures, whether NCs or other forms of culture, such as global or organizational forms (Abramson, 1998). A major way to study such translation involves bi- or multicultural individuals who bring different NC frames to a situation, reflecting the particular frame that is primed at that time, according to Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez (2000), who also followed a dynamic constructivist approach. In their view, NCs are recognized as open systems, and multiculturalism and globalization are not treated as noise. For example, in their study, Hong Kong Chinese (whom they regard as bicultural since they have been exposed to Euro-American ideas) engaged in frame-switching when exposed to one or the other of Chinese or American primes, such as Chinese or American icons.

Extending this approach, we adapt the idea of separate evalutions (SE) *vs* joint evaluations (JE), a concept applied widely in decision-making research. Typically, in this research, people are randomly assigned to three conditions – two SE and one JE – and often evaluate particular options differently when they are evaluated separately than when the very same options are evaluated jointly (Hsee, 1996).[2] In this respect, Hong et al. (2000) looked only at SE-type effects but did not include JE-type effects when one might switch frames comparatively in real time. However, we believe such an approach can be very helpful in revealing cultural processes in IB, and can be applied qualitatively, as well as experimentally. Let us illustrate starting with biculturals (two NCs): there would be $SE_{NC1}$, $SE_{NC2}$ and JE, which has both. Then various assessments are made in each condition, with JE involving comparative and SE involving single primes.

Biculturals, for instance, could be exposed to consumer-promotional or organizationally relevant messages across NCs, but controlling for other variables (e.g., an otherwise identical message addressed to the NCs). NC-based languages, discourses, practices, symbols or contexts could be used to prime NC (cf. Hong et al., 2000). Some would see the message reflecting one of their NCs, and some would see that from the other. The third group, JE, would see both messages and react comparatively by answering questions that allowed individuals to consider the relative importance of NCs. In decision-making situations various attitude, choice and behavior measures could be used as dependent variables. One possible prediction is that informants in JE might exhibit compromise or blend effects, reflecting both NCs, in their decisions that would not show up in SE. Qualitative written or verbal protocols might also be applied to study JE–SE variations in meaning and decision construction, as could in-depth interviews in which a person is asked about either or both of two NCs as a starting point. Moreover, since much IB research involves surveys, it is important to note that this method could easily be adapted in a field experiment where informants are asked questions reflecting one of the three or more situations. Nonetheless, most IB research is conducted only separately (between individuals), so that any JE effects (within individuals) are almost impossible to analyze. Still, some research has moved in the comparative direction. For example, in addition to Hong et al. (2000), Eckhardt and Houston (2007) discuss research where one or more NCs thought to be similar to a target NC are studied as comparison points.

However, a purer form of JE would occur when individuals bridging two or more NCs make judgments such as in comparing messages addressed to each of those multiple NCs. For example, if this JE–SE paradigm had been applied by Hong et al. (2000), people might have reacted differently to the mix of Chinese and American icons in JE, where they would have been primed jointly regarding the relative accessibility and meaning of NCs, than to either of the separate primes of them in SE. Such a stronger approach might also involve what has been called "cross-cultural code-switching" (Molinsky, 2007), in which one modifies one's behavior in a "foreign" setting so as to be in accord with the norms of that setting, given that there may be various situational or personal contingencies that can impact on the achievement of such accord. It is flexible in conception, according to Molinsky, so that it may apply across NCs, organizations or combinations of them by putting people in one of three decision-making situations, one for each NC or other culture involved, as well as one where the design involves both.

In JE, people can be asked about what their behavior or reaction would be under each situation for such things suggested by Molinsky as experienced identity conflict or performance difficulty. We theorize that the NC cultural reference points would change so, that under $SE_{own-NC}$ people would think less about NC *per se* while reflecting the tacit, automatic aspects of NC; under $SE_{foreign-NC}$ they would consciously and deliberatively find that culture is salient, and focus on accommodation processes; and under $JE_{own\ and\ foreign-NC}$ they would even more explicitly focus on comparisons and liminal states of translation between NCs. In this regard, drawing on the concept of metacognition (Earley & Ang, 2003), which concerns one's self-awareness of one's own inner states, including cultural knowledge, we suggest that what we call "cultural metacognition" (i.e., self-awareness of the cultural aspects of one's perceptions and behaviors) may exist to varying degrees, even as misperception, and should be investigated using this approach. Thus the SE–JE approach could address the difficulties in determining how much individuals know about how their own culture drives their perceptions and behaviors (Eckhardt & Houston, 2007).

Moreover, while the approach is complementary to previous bicultural studies, it also has certain advantages, especially where biculturalism may be more situational. For instance, being Korean is a relatively enduring characteristic, $SE_{enduring}$, but being placed temporarily in a "foreign" organization is likely to involve less enduring identification, $SE_{foreign-less\ enduring}$ (cf. Molinsky, 2007). Along with $JE_{both}$, these three conditions as suggested above would likely allow certain aspects of automaticity and deliberation to emerge in field studies. Similarly applying SE–JE evaluations, biculturalism may be experimentally created through scenarios (e.g., asking an Indian to imagine being in a French vs an Indian organization), or creating virtual or ad hoc cultures to which to react. Such research would have the advantage of revealing and manipulating such cultural processes of translation and code-switching in ways not otherwise possible. Thus, in terms of automatic vs deliberative responses in cultural settings, this approach allows them to emerge as salient or not, and has the additional advantage of dealing with cultural processes in terms of degree of cultural awareness. Its power is to reveal the different ways people construct meaning as embodied in SE or JE frames. To summarize, we have discussed some ways to assess when and how NC matters. In subsequent sections we expand this view to discuss, first, the evolving displacement of NC, and then its status as a dependent, as well as independent, variable.

## The Displacement of NC

NC has been taken to belong to a place, that is, a territory where it is located. In this regard, it has generally been treated as an independent variable, that is, people in a certain place act in a certain way. As Ricart, Enright, Ghemawat, Hart, and Khanna (2004: 175) note, for instance, locations are the "distinctive content of international business strategy". However, people may identify with, identify against or not identify with particular places in which they find themselves or which they think about (Rose, 2003). Moreover, as Canclini (1995: 228–229) commented, on what is meant by a particular territory and place being in dynamic flux:

> … the tensions between deterrorialization and reterrorialization. With this I am referring to two processes: the loss of the "natural" relation of culture to geographical and social territories and, at the same time, certain relative, partial territorial relocalizations of old and new symbolic productions.

In this regard, NC may play itself out against a variety of other places, such as cities, states, multinational regions or the world. Moreover, location may be construed more broadly as a "site of meaning", such that strategy and other aspects of IB are seen as "situated" in these sites. For example, a site of meaning might be a multinational's division embedded in a particular NC. But such divisions may also stretch across NCs, and their own cultures may often supersede those NC's influences. Beyond that type of site, there are many other sites of meaning, such as brands as cultural artifacts, networks and communities, which may or not have global dimensionality, as well as individuals as employees or consumers (cf. Castells, 1996, on the "network society"). NCs are also imagined communities or metaphors, in that since one cannot know all of a nation, there is a shared narrative of what constitutes it (Anderson, 1983). Hall (2003: 183–184) takes this notion of imagined community to suggest that NCs are not as "solidly 'placed'" as some might think, but rather that they are dependently produced through paradoxical "differences in unity" involving class, gender, race and region, among others.

Another aspect of this critique of place and NC as applied by Leung et al. comes from Habermas (2001) in his collection of essays *The Postnational Constellation*. Writing of the changing roles of nation-states, he suggests not that they will disappear but rather that many of their functions may be displaced by the institutions and forces of globalization. Territorial bases will not reflect the interests of all involved, as in his example of a nuclear power plant built by a country that does not meet the interests or standards of its neighbor. There must be some harmonization of these interests, and Habermas suggests that such can come in the form of new institutions such as the European Union. Connolly (1991: 218) further suggests that there may be challenges to the "*structures of territorial democracy* with a politics of *nonterritorial democratization of global issues*". Such democratization, as a product of nonstate actors (e.g., activists, such as Greenpeace, regionally organized across states), will probably disrupt and possibly reinvigorate the internal democracy of territorial states. Still, there will also be resistance as well as appropriation, and as Habermas indicates, using the European Union as an example, people will have to adapt to a larger political existence – a matter of no little difficulty.

In terms of the overall critique being made in this paper, the role of the nation-state in IB should be evaluated in terms of what it does and does not control. It is not that the national state and regions or localities are in fixed relationships, as Leung et al. imply, but rather that they are involved in complex, dynamic interactions (cf. Opp, 2005). To the degree that the nation-state seems to embody NC, then much the same can be said about both of them: the relationship between national state as a territorial entity and NC is not itself that precise (e.g., permeable boundaries, dislocated people), so that the dynamics of NC suggest a lack of something essential or fixed. In conducting research in this area, a way to avoid confounding the two – NC and state – is to use cultural values rather than only country as a dummy variable (cf. Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006), or perhaps – even better – to look for links among various forms of culture and individuals' subjective perceptions of them (cf. Earley, 2006). Thus, for instance, other research might simply look at how much people identify with regions and countries, and relate that to perceptions and behaviors, as Opp (2005) did, for instance, with respect to Europe, Germany and Saxony.

However, these dynamics of NC change and meaning flows (cf. McCracken, 1986) might best be studied using interpretative research approaches (e.g., Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006). Such approaches apply qualitative research methods (e.g., interviews, the reading of various texts and observations), which study people in naturalistic settings and socio-historical contexts in order to interpret the meanings they construct (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). For instance, we might consider one interpretative view of NC that draws on poststructural-postmodern thought, and concerns how meaning in the form of narratives captures the simultaneous influence of multiple historical cultures. These may be seen to involve the long-standing *vs* postmodern (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995). The former represents core, relatively cohesive ideas of things that have persisted through history, whereas the latter represents the shattering of these ideas in conjunction with the play of new cultural entities. In this regard, NC is a powerful historical, institution-rooted metanarrative and metaphor, which has persisted even as it has been transmuted through globalization. It thus seems likely to persist as a long-standing explanation for at least some IB behavior, even as globalization works to transform, if not erode, its impact. In

summary, while Leung et al. do mention global networks, there is little recognition in their model of the displacement of the national state or NC by postnational forces, nor – as discussed in the next section – of how that may often make it a dependent variable as much as an independent one.

### NC as an Independent *vs* Dependent Variable
While the NC focus of Leung et al. reflects prior IB research, it also seems misplaced in light of other research reflecting the increasing displacement of NC by what we label as global culture (GC). We define GC in terms of various "scapes" or broad cultural spheres that embody the global flows of ideas (ideoscapes), people (ethnoscapes; cf. Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999, on global consumer culture), images (mediascapes), capital (finanscapes) and technology (technoscapes; Appadurai, 1990), as well as brands (brandscapes; Thompson & Arsel, 2004). According to Kjeldgaard and Askegaard (2006), who studied global youth culture, these global flows help to constitute the glocalization process through the global–local dialectic. Here, we apply this concept of glocalization to meaning flows involving GC and NC effects.

In this regard, we now consider NC not only as an independent variable helping to determine IB perceptions and behaviors, but also as dependent on GC. Thus another way to think about NC is to ask what kind of a variable it is. In this vein, Askegaard and Kjeldgaard (2002) note that researchers usually explain variations in cross-cultural behavior by treating culture (NC) as an independent variable, in much the same way as Leung et al. (2005) discuss and advocate. Leung et al. hold tenaciously to this idea of NC as an independent variable in all the examples and cases they provide, even those that involve the moderating influence of NC interacting with other variables, such as personality, group-level or organizational phenomena, or situations.

But how is NC produced? In this regard, Lewin and Kim (2004) indicate that NC co-evolves with various global, technological and organizational forces, while Hong and Chiu (2001) situate it in a dynamic open system. Askegaard and Kjeldgaard (2002) argue that culture (NC) is a reflexive phenomenon that itself needs to be explained, that is, as a dependent variable (cf. Shenkar, 2001, who argued that cultural distance that reflects NC could also be seen as either an independent or dependent variable). Critically, Askegaard and Kjeldgaard

challenge the essentialist view of NCs as closed cultural units. For them, NC reflects an ongoing process of reflexive negotiation resulting from globalization and the multilayeredness of culture. Building on the postmodern ideas of simulation and hype, they state (p: 29):

> … we define as "cultural reflexivity" – a simulation where cultural tradition increasingly exists as mainly reflexive and conscious practical realization of the idea of culture. Culture, then, could be said to increasingly take the shape of hype, a simulation of a possibly never existing purified version of that particular culture."

They cite many consumption examples in which global forces, such as immigration, global business, tourism and mass media, induce (p: 27) "consciousness of the consumption of culture". For instance, holidays, such as Halloween and Carnival, are marketed beyond home countries and are commercially reinvented. NC in this respect may also be seen as a dependent variable that is constantly being produced and transformed, even as it may appear to remain a predictive independent variable. Such changes may be studied by longitudinal content analysis, in which NC variables of interest are monitored or through historical analysis of cultural patterns and trends.

Applying the experimental methods that Leung et al. advocate provides still another way to consider NC's effects. They indicated that NC as an independent variable will be more or less predictive of perceptions and behavior, depending on the strength of various individual, group and situational moderators. However, as shown in Figure 1, we suggest a different, fuller model in describing how NC functions. Therefore, while NC may be assessed in terms of various norms and behaviors, as Leung et al. described, it can also be treated contingently as either or both an independent (Path B) or dependent variable (Path A), something they did not recognize, their top-down,
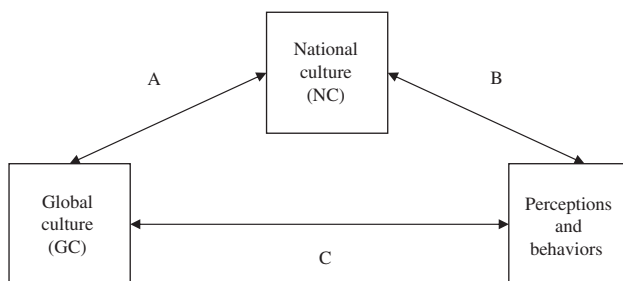
bottom-up model notwithstanding. Path C is a direct GC path to impacting on individual, institutional and community perceptions and behavior, largely bypassing NC altogether. It should be noted that from this basic GC–NC model other models may emerge. Thus we do not develop all feedback loops (the bottom-up half in the Leung et al. framing), nor all the possible moderators or mediators of the GC–NC relationship, such as center–periphery positioning (Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006) or various forms of cultural, administrative, geographic and economic distance (Nachum & Zaheer, 2005; Ricart et al., 2004).

Perhaps most significantly, NC can be used as a mediator between GC and the various perceptual and behavioral dependent variables used in IB (cf. Fischer, Ferrara, Assmar, Redford, & Harb, 2005).This means it is a dependent variable of its own, reflecting various global variables that impact on the meanings that a national group acquires through glocalized idea diffusion, translation, appropriation and hybridization (i.e., global–regional movements and trends such as emerging global business processes, political interdependencies, global financial linkages and global diffusion of technology). Moreover, the center of gravity shifts in the model from NC to GC, in that NC is seen as a mediator. In cases when NC is strong, like a true statistical mediator (Baron & Kenny, 1986), global effects may diminish.

Consider an example. In a study of born-global small and medium enterprises in China, Zhou, Wu, and Luo (2007) found that the impact of internationalization on firm performance was mediated by *guanxi*. In this case, internationalization is a GC variable and *guanxi* is an NC variable. *Guanxi* was operationalized in questions related to ties to local networks. NC mattered in this example because its manifestation in the form of *guanxi* dominated the effects of internationalization.[3] Had the researchers looked only at internationalization (Path C), which by itself had a significant effect on performance, they would have missed this finding, which supports Path A and B in our model: Path A indicates that GC influences NC as a dependent variable, and Path B shows that NC influences the dependent variable. Thus, when both paths are active, NC serves to "mediate" the effects of GC through various glocalizing processes, such as appropriation and resistance. Moreover, these two paths A and B, taken together, reflect NC as a dependent variable, an idea Leung et al. never address, and thus their model is not fully specified.

**Figure 1** The roles of global and national cultures in IB.

There may also be times when NC matters for some but not all variables. In such cases it is best to consider both moderators and mediators jointly, something not usually done in IB. Consider a social–psychological example. Schimmack, Radhakrishnan, Oishi, Dzokoto, and Ahadi (2002) applied a mediator–moderator cross-cultural model in which they used individualism–collectivism as a dummy variable to gauge NC's moderating effect (Path B). However, this Path B effect was qualified by a mediator – hedonic balance – which had a stronger effect in individualistic as opposed to collectivist NCs, giving rise to a mediation–moderation model. At the same time, they found other "pancultural" personality effects that are modeled in similar fashion to direct GC effects in IB (Path C). Thus the joint use of mediators and moderators can show when both NC and GC have an impact in a complex network of variables.

Furthermore, as discussed in the next section, Path C and GC may matter in IB when various global communities are considered. An apt metaphor for this path is the flatter world (Friedman, 2005), in which NC does not even play a mediating role and which instead is dominated by global culture directly (Path C), and especially communities. However, communities and this path are largely missing from the analysis of Leung et al., thus limiting IB's overall cultural framing. The main point is to map the role of NC relative to GC, and to show how its effects under some conditions may correspond to the formulation by Leung et al., but also how under others, such as treating it as dependent on, as a mediator of, or having little connection at all to GC, its impact may deviate greatly.

## AN ALTERNATIVE FLATTER, GLOCALIZED COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL
We make a basic distinction between our view and that of Leung et al., who overly privilege NC; other research points to mapping all cultural influence, not just NC. Thus, considering the multi-level model of culture illustrated by Leung et al. in their Figure 1, we suggest that the whole model needs to be reconfigured. The top-down, bottom-up model is only one metaphor for viewing cultural settings. Another metaphor is a flatter world, based on communities. Community involves a shared consciousness that differs from that outside the community (Gusfeld, 1978), and community practices are an important way for instantiating culture (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998). There

are many types of community, such as brand communities (e.g., Harley-Davidson owners) or business communities. The sense of community may stretch through the various boundaries in the model of Leung et al., including NC, so that their group level, which seems to correspond to community, does not hold. Communities overstep the boundaries, and lead to wholly different sets of analyses regarding how culture functions globally, but not necessarily – or primarily – nationally.

In that regard, the top-down, bottom-up perspective of Leung et al. gives way to a network model in which people and firms act across geographies and various other community forms (cf. Kogut, 2000). Thus it should be added that, while Path C in our model representing GC can take on hierarchical properties at times, or seem to, the more apt approach is to consider GC in network terms in which many two- or multiple-way interactions are occurring. This approach has two major implications:

(1) While networks and communities in their various guises (e.g., collaborative networks, global networks, global communities) have been recognized, they should be a prime focus for situating IB research and theory in a fuller community-based ecology, displacing NC or even its internationalization as necessarily the main focus.
(2) The top-down, bottom-up model based on NC could be quite misleading.

Instead, the alternative view taken here considers community as a site of culture. Such sites involve various forms, including face-to-face contact, as well as other types of linkage, imagined or virtual (Anderson, 1983; Rheingold, 1993). Indeed, geography as a primary site of community has given way in many instances to GC and Appadurai's (1990) globalizing "scapes" as a producer of community. Such communal activity may also be framed in relation to social networks, in which people form ties in the context of either geographic (Wellman, 1979) or virtual proximity (Rheingold, 1993). For instance, Leung et al. mention computer-mediated communication. But this phenomenon suggests the presence of virtual communities, which have added a different dimension to culture, beyond geographic space. It is not merely another layer; instead, it is another dimension of culture that cuts through all the other layers of culture in the model of Leung et al.

Adapting this perspective even further, a particularly useful concept concerns communities of practice in which people engage in a set of activities involving shared knowledge and understandings (Seely Brown, & Duguid, 1991). These communities are also sites where culture is "produced", so that, far from being a static phenomenon, culture is dynamic in its continual creation (cf. Bourdieu, 1993). Similarly, translation or actor network theory (ANT) theorizes about evolving networks in terms of processes that are dislocating and displacing more conventional organizational thinking in the face of ongoing technological and sociocultural change (Calas & Smircich, 1999).

One form of such production and dislocation is international, in that communities and networks form and expand globally, often as countervailing borderless forces in relation to NC. Ricart et al. (2004: 182) suggest that countries should be viewed in terms of "nodes in a network rather than as a heap of structurally equivalent objects". This theorization views countries in multidimensional, open space terms rather than as having totally equivalent dimensionalities. Their formulation is extended even further here: businesses and consumers exist in this space where NC is but one culturally determined variable among many that more or less impact on their decisions. For example, Hamill (1997), in suggesting that the Internet requires new paradigmatic thinking for IB, especially for small and medium-sized businesses, provides the example of how the establishment of appropriate home web pages may enable firms to develop global niches as opposed to country strategies. Indeed, both businesses and individuals may similarly be viewed as nodes in networks (Redding, 2005) that are becoming more extended and multidimensional as parts of virtual and glocalized community formations.

Reflecting global cultural production, community effects may be construed in a model, the Glocalized Community Culture Model (GCCM) shown in Figure 2. Several factors emerge that model individuals and cultures quite differently from Leung et al. Their top-down, bottom-up hierarchy may be vitiated, because individuals' perceptions of these communities may not reflect that structure. The center of gravity shifts, so that in any given situation the levels instantiated may have a different hierarchy or none at all. Certain levels may or may not be invoked, and group membership salience may extend to virtually any trait embodying community (cf. Randel, 2003);
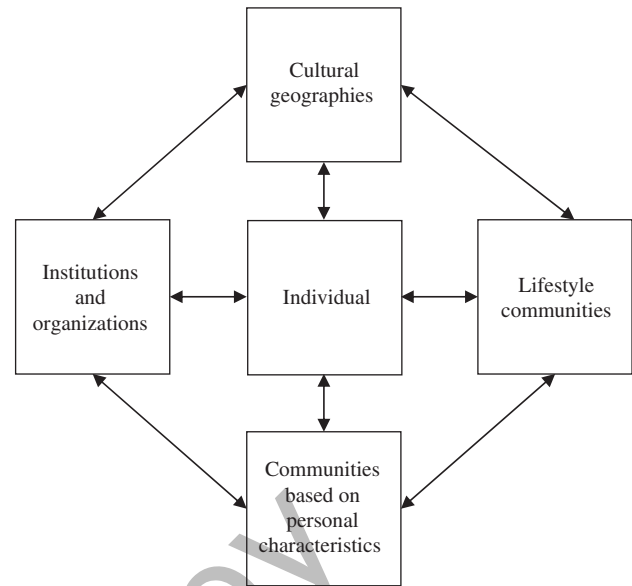


**Figure 2**  Glocalized Community Culture Model (GCCM).

different types of communities embed individuals. NC is but one type. This is not to say that a top-down, bottom-up view is never appropriate, but rather that it may be limiting. Thus individuals may think of their communities less in terms of levels and more in terms of the salient community among the many with which they are involved. To some degree, this deleveling reflects the flattening of the world (Friedman, 2005), in which the movement of resources, goods and people is not so much hierarchically organized with the NC focus of Leung et al., as it is situated within a relatively level network of exchange.

Striking in that regard is the view of Beck (2004), who argues that the traditional views of NCs, sovereignty and simple views of globalization are being swept away in a tide of reflexive cosmopolitanism. This means that much of what people do is not done so much with reference to the nation-state as it is with a sense of global cosmopolitanism. Thus what is often perceived as NC is in his view the adoption of cultural lifestyles that are cosmopolitan and global. A good example would be the readers of *JIBS*, who form a specific community and, while cognizant of their own NCs, are likely to be informed by its community norms; at least in this respect this community operates within its own dynamic cultural flows. Another example is the poker community, which has been explicitly described as being "flat" with global digitalization; champions from all over the world; various world-wide websites, home office and infrastructure

locations for any one site; and non-border-con-strained investments (McManus, 2005).

Thus, when individuals consider their place in the world, or – more tellingly – their concerns at the moment, the corporate culture in which they are embedded, for instance, may take precedence over their NC; at other times, for these very same individuals, the relationship may reverse. Virtual communities are even less geographically rooted, and operate as a leveler. Moreover, individuals' own perceptions are not necessarily constructed like the traditional hierarchical theory of Leung et al.; the salience of any particular variable at a specific time will be what influences behavior. In this regard, the GCCM does not reject hierarchical effects out of hand, but instead takes a more nuanced, glocalized approach to them. For instance, in the Starbucks brandscape, glocalization drives "cultural hetero-hybridization" (i.e., differences in meaning con-struction across various communities of Starbucks users and non-users; Thompson & Arsel, 2004).

As shown in Figure 2, community may be divided into four major types:

(1) cultural geographies;
(2) institutions and organizations;
(3) communities based on lifestyles; and
(4) communities based on personal characteristics.

Moreover, as Steenkamp (2001) notes, there are levels of culture ranging from global to meta-cultures (clusters of countries), to micro-local cultures representing heterogeneity within cultures (cf. Shenkar, 2004, on mezzo phenomena). It is this heterogeneity that extends beyond NC and pro-vides the basis for the latter three types of commu-nity above. Individuals may participate in particular forms of each type. The key to the model is that, at any given time, a particular community membership may take on salience.

Communities based on geographies correspond most closely to how IB, and Leung et al. in particular, has construed culture. Such *cultural geographies* include NCs, GC and others such as regional, state and city communities. However, while such communities focus on place, the idea needs to be extended beyond physical geography to reflect people who emigrate and create commu-nities elsewhere, or maintain ties to the original communities (Greig, 2002: e.g., people of Chinese ethnicity settle across the world while retaining varying degrees of Chinese identity).

*Institutions and organizations* encompass both public and private groups and bodies, ranging from

governments to NGOs to corporations, including an assortment of divisions and work groups and the related organizational cultures they embody. *Lifestyle communities* are those that encompass the shared activities and views of particular consumers, such as brand communities and Internet commu-nities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). This type of culture is also similar to the neo-tribes discussed by Maffesoli (1995), who found that, against the postmodern disintegration of conventional mass society, people organized themselves more or less loosely in fragmented collectivities based on com-mon interests. The fourth community type, *com-munities based upon personal characteristics and demographics*, also reflects a sense of shared per-spectives. For example, ethnicity, gender, age and religion are often constructed as forms of subcul-ture that produce community activities when people identify with others based on them.

In this regard, ethnicity is one type of identity and community formation involved in "identity politics" (Dean, 1996) or the "politics of identity" (Honneth, 1996), which offers resistance to NC, even as it informs it. Other formations include gender, class, race, social movements and lifestyles, among others, which reflect what Adams and Markus (2004) call entitativity, that is, particular racial, religious or social groups sharing certain customs and beliefs. Honneth provides one frame for cultural change in this regard, namely the struggle for social recognition, including for new forms of identity, such as is reflected in feminism, for instance. Connolly (1991) discusses personal and collective identity in relation to the state, suggesting that however one may form one's own identity, it is inextricably tied to the collective. However, NC provides but one form of such identity, and while relevant to IB, various globa-lized communities (e.g., corporate, lifestyle) may be just as or more relevant to identity. Moreover, they probably interact with NC in a reflexive, recursive process of cultural patterning (Tomlinson, 1999).

Cultural patterning also involves the hybridized and intertextual interaction (Martin, 2005) of the various communities (shown in Figure 2). Hybridi-zation suggests that cultures form new mixes from their interactions: for example, "social border-lands", including nationality and lifestyle borders as fertile areas for cultural production (Rosaldo, 1993); mergers that combine corporate cultures, cf. Jacob (2005) on crossvergence. One useful form of hybridization involves intertextuality, that is, texts referentially invoking other texts, such as those

from different cultures. Other processes, such as translation, glocalization, and appropriation of and resistance to new cultural influences, may also be implicated in hybridization. These hybridizing processes are represented by the two-way arrows in Figure 2, where various forms of community interact with one another: note that, while all communities may interact, to facilitate the figure not all arrows are shown. The processes do not essentialize hybridization; community cultures interact in a myriad of ways, so that new forms with varying degrees of visibility of the original source emerge (e.g., virtual communities may start in specific NCs but transcend them over time)[4].

How might such community-based processes be investigated? We can use the SE–JE approach to investigate any areas where various cultural influences or confounds might occur (e.g., GC or personal culture or organizational culture *vs* NC). Traditional NC research in IB may be viewed as a special case of SE, in that individuals in two or more NCs are necessarily separated. But unless they are multicultural, the analysis is not able to go beyond that. However, in cases involving various forms of culture, individuals often are "multicultural" in that, for instance, they are participants in both GC and NC, thus allowing JE comparisons. NC may also be used as a mediator between community cultures and dependent variables (e.g., organizational communities and job performance). Perhaps most important, IB researchers should conduct interpretative studies to analyze people's glocalized discourses, meanings and practices.

An illustrative example comes from Kjeldgaard and Askegaard (2006), who conducted a multisited study of glocalized youth culture as it manifested in Denmark and Greenland. As per our reading, their study captures the community effects embodied in cultural geographies, as well as in a lifestyle community, namely youth culture. It is also provides a good illustration of how interpretative methods might be applied in this context. Their research involved one urban and rural location in each country, and employed consumption diaries, photographic life descriptions and in-depth interviews (p: 236) "to facilitate the emergence of similarities and differences during the process of data collection and analysis, rather than from being part of an a priori focus". They developed themes of glocalized similarities and differences across the various sites, reflecting a hermeneutical comparison and translation of everyday consumer practices. Indeed, Askegaard and Kjeldgaard (2002: 32)

indicate the need for "balancing consumers' phenomenological worlds of self-construction and identity formation with a more institutionally based approach".

In so doing, Kjeldgaard and Askegaard (2006) adapted the view that through globalization the global becomes localized, and vice versa. For instance, one major finding was that the richness or lack of comparative consumption opportunities was attributable not only to class-based resources, but also to center–periphery structures: Denmark was a more central site, and Greenland was more peripheral. Methodologically, this research had the advantages of using multiple sites, of theory-based site selection (central-peripheral), of providing data to separate out effects (class *vs* center–periphery issues) and of situating interpretations socio-historically. Thus it is not enough to consider countries as sites. There must also be contextualization, which in this example included glocalization, globalized youth culture and the period characterization of late modernity, as well as specific aspects of Denmark and Greenland (e.g., the latter's postcolonial status). Most importantly, for the view being developed here, this study illustrates how to reduce the conflation of NC with other types of culture, and shows when it is seen to "matter" or not only when situated *vis-à-vis* GC and various communities. Moreover, this study is an exemplar of research that would be useful for virtually any domain of IB where culture in its variety of community forms is implicated.

## CONCLUSION

Leung et al. (2005) indicate that "culture" matters, sometimes more and sometimes less. While this seems like a reasonable statement, they are speaking only of NC; culture, itself, always matters, but NC matters only at specific times. Leung et al. conflate culture and NC, as has often been done in the past, and overly privilege the effects of NC in relation to other forms of culture. A central implication of our paper for IB cultural theory and research is to avoid confounding or conflating NC with other cultural forms and processes. Thus IB researchers should not always focus on NC, but rather on culture itself.

In this regard, the theoretical contribution of our approach to IB is found in three major areas we identified:

(1) construing cultural effects by being culture-centric as opposed to NC-centric;

(2) reconsidering when NC matters in relation to GC and other cultural forms; and

(3) applying a flatter, glocalized, cultural community perspective.

In particular, the investigation of cultural patterns and processes (i.e., such as those involving the construction, translation and co-evolution of cultural meanings and practices) should be given a more central place in IB research, whether or not NC or other community domains are more salient. Moreover, different forms of theory development ranging from cultural psychology to poststructural thought should be considered, thus more fully accounting for any possible cultural effects.

Substantively, our contribution highlighted the need to investigate phenomena not previously emphasized in IB research in the form of various types of global community. These communities embody and drive glocalized shifts of gravity away from NC. Methodologically, our contribution is to suggest ways to overcome the limitations of studying NC as a fixed variable in static analyses, and of failing to account for its constructivist, dependent variable dynamics. Thus, while survey and experimental research and the increasing investigation of moderation and mediation effects are often indicated for assessing or priming the salience of NC, we also want to emphasize research, largely qualitative and process-oriented, that focuses on glocalized cultural production, meanings and practices, as well as community dynamics. In this regard, we have stressed the untapped potential of comparative approaches, such as the SE–JE paradigm, which may be applied across experimental, field survey and qualitative studies, and which may often be most helpful in deciphering the linkages and dynamics of interaction and translation embedded in IB. In conclusion, we recommend a change in research focus to address theories of culture itself, thereby establishing IB cultural theory and developing a more complete theoretical account of the myriads of cultural forms, processes and effects that may inform it.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## NOTES

[1]For instance, the postmodern may also be viewed as an era that is allegedly beyond modernity (Giddens, 1991), or as the condition of knowledge or culture in highly developed societies (Lyotard, 1984). Poststructuralism involves a critique of the human condition in such matters as meaning, the subject, language and narratives (Sarup, 1993). It may be viewed as coterminous with postmodernism, and is reflected in the work of such varying thinkers as Lacan, Derrida and Foucault (Sarup, 1993). However, by saying that it is coterminous we should not ignore its historical roots, said by Habermas (1992: 5) to reflect "a critique of reason radicalized through Nietzsche". Moreover, there are many flavors of postmodernism and poststructuralism (Huyssen, 1984). Even so, they inform many fields, including business (e.g., Boje, 1995; Clough, 1992; Huyssen, 1984), if only in opposition to other thought (Cherryholmes, 1994; Habermas, 1992; Roderick, 1986).

[2]For example, in one study Hsee (1996) considered willingness to pay (WTP) for a new dictionary with fewer definitions, $SE_{New}$, *vs* another, $SE_{Used}$, which is slightly torn but has more definitions *vs* the two in JE. WTP for the used dictionary was higher in JE while WTP in $SE_{New} > SE_{Used}$, a preference reversal revealed only by this SE–JE framing.

[3]A further issue concerns NC mediators as dependent variables. While mediators are dependent (e.g., *guanxi* is dependent on "inward internationalization"), this does not mean they are necessarily "caused" by an independent variable: Zhou et al. (2007) find that, when foreign firms come to China, they build *guanxi* networks, but they do not "cause" *guanxi*. *Guanxi* is an aspect of cultural knowledge that is made salient and co-evolves in the course of business. Thus, while mediation studies treat NC as a fixed filter of global effects, reflecting on its role as a dependent variable in a dynamic open system (cf. Hong & Chiu, 2001) might alter this view.

[4]However, such hybridization may involve but should not necessarily be reduced to narrower connectivity or technology issues (Tomlinson, 1999).

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