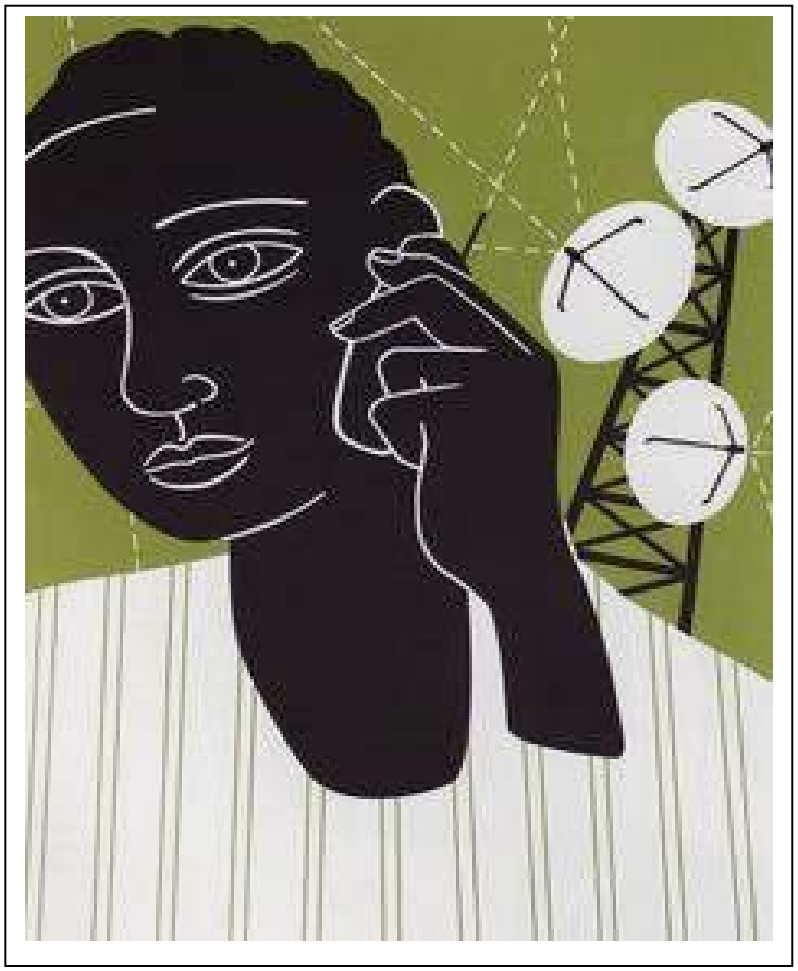
# Glocal NOMAD

## *“Glocal network on Media and Development”*



***“Proposal for Research Network/Internationalisation”***

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*The proposal is written in English for the following reasons:*

*1. The network will generate formal and informal collaborations with non-Scandinavian scholars, research departments, development agencies, NGOs (Non-government Organisations) and CSOs (Civil Society Organisations).*

*2. The results of the proposed network will be publishe*d *in English.*

# Glocal Network on Media and Development (Glocal NOMAD)

## 1. Introduction

"Media and communication for development and social change" as a sub-discipline in media and communication studies has existed as long as the science of media and communication itself, that is, since the 1950s (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006).

However, in the past decade, media and communication for development and social change has emerged as a growing interdisciplinary field of research. The epistemological drive lies in exploring the relation between media and communication practices, agency and social change processes. Theoretically, this field stood previously in a functionalist tradition of planned communication. This tradition continues as communicative approaches associated with social marketing, behaviour change communication and diffusion of innovations. However, over the last decades a new paradigmatic perspective has emerged, delineating a research field within which we see our Danish research network, Glocal NOMAD, inscribe itself. This perspective is inspired by cultural studies (i.e. Morley 1986, Silverstone 1994 and 2005), post-development theory (Escobar 1995), discursive realism within media studies (Schrøder et al, 2003), media and globalisation studies (Sparks 2007). It also connects with a rearticulation of liberating education (Freire 1993), and is inspired by radical democracy theory in political science (Mouffe, 1993 and 2005).

### 1.1 The Danish Role and Perspective

Over the decades, Danish media and communication researchers/practitioners have played important roles in developing this emerging perspective in theory and practice. However, while Danish contributions to *the practices* of media and communication for development and social change have been important, coordinated and visible for decades, for example when Danish media experts in the 1960 and 1970s helped develop Tanzania's broadcasting institute, or by substantial Danish support to UNESCO's international program for development communication (IPDC) in the 1980/90s – the community of media and communication *research* in this field has remained dispersed and fragmented.

There are important and recent examples of individual researchers engaging in this field, contributing both in terms of theory and empirical studies on an international level (Hemer & Tufte 2005, Stald & Tufte 2002, Tufte & Engel Forthcoming, Wildermuth 2008a&b, Nielsen 2009). However for the relevant Danish researcher to integrate as a community and to achieve a critical collective mass, a higher degree of coordination and concerted action is urgently required. We therefore propose the establishment of a national network and inter-nationalisation initiative, ***Glocal NOMAD.*** In a medium term perspective, the objective is to assess the possibility to establish a national research centre on media and communication for development and social change.

The core group of researchers behind this network application – representing, so far, three Danish universities – all have significant individual trajectories of participation in respective Nordic, European and international networks. So have several other researchers, located at institutions of higher education in Denmark and the Øresund region. We estimate the membership of Glocal NOMAD can in the first year reach at least 20-25 researchers in addition to Ph.D. students and MA students.

The fact that we, the network applicants and other researchers engaged in this field, are dispersed over different institutions, faculties and departments within them, constitutes a potential in terms of both interdisciplinary and cross-institutional research efforts and knowledge sharing. However, as yet, this potential is not realized. A cooperation – not only across the major communication and media studies departments, but incorporating institutions like the IT University in Copenhagen, the Danish School of Media and Journalism in Århus, the Danish Design school in Copenhagen/Kolding and the Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies**,** University of Southern Denmark – could exploit the joint resourcefulness of researchers with various backgrounds, unified in their interest for media and communication for development and social change. For this vision to become a reality needs, in our view, a kick start.

At present Glocal NOMAD's potential members belong to institutional research clusters at each our university departments with other research foci and priorities than those cross-institutional and international collective initiatives we here propose. Glocal NOMAD's proposed institutional frame will open up an organized setting for the Danish knowledge production and dissemination in this field, encouraging basic research and making the results more visible internationally. Finally, as a joint platform, Glocal NOMAD will be able to engage actively with both national and international organisations in this field, thereby securing an applied dimension, influencing policies and practices in the outlined field.

### 1.2 A National Research Platform with International Relations

By moving from a situation of active but dispersed individuals working isolated on each our university, to instead acting as an organized Danish research collective, Glocal NOMAD will articulate a joint 'discursive space' in Denmark for the development of this research field, building a critical mass and also attracting Danish doctoral students and MA students. By organizing ourselves nationally, we are establishing a much stronger platform from where better to engage in the development of international research projects in the EU.

The Glocal NOMAD network inserts itself well within the longstanding tradition of Nordic collaboration within media and communication studies. The profile of Glocal NOMAD thus fits well with 'Globalization, Media and Social Change' which is one of the 10 newly reorganised divisions within NordMedia. NordMedia is the Nordic research platform which gathers 3-500 media scholars for research conferences every second year. Next conference will be Karlstad in August 2009 where the core researcher group from Glocal NOMAD will be participating in the mentioned division.

In this process of increased international engagement in Nordic, European and Global Networks, it is important to identify the national strength and comparative advantage of the Danish network. This 'identity building' of Glocal NOMAD as a national research platform connects back to some of the long-standing areas of strength in the Danish community of media scholars, from which this network emerges – including research in public broadcasting, community media research, qualitative audience studies and discourse analysis. However, in the current process of internationalisation, we feel both a strong need to and a strong potential in carving out our national research profile in Glocal NOMAD. We see our

research profile lying in the fertile cross-section of these strong national research traditions we grow from, influenced by our international experiences, and informed by the international objects of study we focus upon. Thus, grounded in long-standing national research traditions, but being increasingly exposed to and engaged in international research communities, Glocal NOMAD – if organized as we seek to with this application – contains the potential to play a strong role international role in the future.

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# 2 Media and Communication for Development and Social Change

## 2.1 Core- themes

Glocal NOMAD inscribes itself into the interdisciplinary approach emerging within media and communication for development and social change. Glocal NOMAD will organise its focus on common research agendas, seeking to improve the understanding of media and communication in our contemporary societies, particularly in societies undergoing significant processes of social and structural change as seen in many developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as in the countries in transition in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. We have identified four thematic areas as the core themes around which Glocal NOMAD will focus its research efforts.

*** Media and Development**

This theme seeks to understand the contemporary change in media landscapes in many developing nations. For example, new information and communication technologies are spreading rapidly in African countries, allowing a majority of Africans today to have access to mobile phones and increasingly also the internet. Many countries in Eastern Europe and developing nations have undergone processes of privatization and deregulation of their state media, establishing new institutional characteristics and new conditions for public service media. The changed media landscapes and the new policy environments all point towards new research questions having to be raised, dealing with the co-evolution of the ‘new’ and ‘old’ media, the conditions for public service broadcasting, the relationships between technological developments and economic development.

*** Cultural and Media Production**

Culture and identity is constantly produced through media and communication practices. With the increased mediatisation of everyday life, the aim is to explore how this influences cultural practices and identity formation. Some of the countries with which we collaborate are multicultural societies with many languages spoken and many ethnicities. Consequently, issues of nationhood have increasingly been articulated. On one hand, cultural globalization is occurring, where cultural homogenization is occurring, with mainstream media concentrated on fewer and fewer hands and controlling an increasingly uniform cultural production. On the other hand, opposed processes of cultural heterogenisation are seen, where community media and cultural reaffirmations of local identities are expressed worldwide. What is happening to national development processes in such culturally complex societies, and under what conditions is cultural and media production evolving?

*** Citizenship, Governance and Public Sphere**

With the advent of web 2.0 and with the spread of mobile phones in many developing nations, conditions for and processes of citizen participation, public debate and social

critique are changing. This was seen in the way mobile phones were used in articulating citizen actions during the violent post-election crisis in Kenya in early 2008. It has been seen in numerous other settings also. Civil society has also in recent years grown significantly in countries with old traditions of top-down communication and non-participatory media and communication practices. One dimension in these scenarios is linked to the increased global networking of civil society organisation in the transnational advocacy networks (TANs). In these contexts of agency, citizenry and public debate, Glocal NOMAD will uncover relationships between media and communication developments, civil society, citizen engagement and governance processes.

*** Health and Environment**
This research subject is developing in response to two large development challenges that have evolved in recent times and which both are pushing the fundamental rethinking of communication for development towards a much stronger emphasis on having to address issues of social and structural change. These challenges are a) HIV/AIDS and the crisis in HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives after now 25 years of still uphill (communication) efforts to combat the pandemic, and b) Climate Change and the enormous communication challenge inherent in making this issue connected to livelihoods, and linked to lives of ordinary citizens. Health and environment issues are challenging planned communication, involving reflection and critique of current practice, theoretical rethinking and methodological innovation.

## 3. Activities and organisation

### 3.1 Levels of activities
The method to establish Glocal NOMAD fully goes through a range of activities which are developed and arranged in collaboration between main applicants and associated applicants. They include:

* a major conference. Danish researchers and research students are invited along with NGOs, GOs and participants and consultants from the private sector. The aim of the conference is to generate relevant research questions within our research priorities. However, the conference objective is also to show that Glocal NOMAD is in the making.

* the realization of four one-day seminars at Roskilde University, Århus University and University of Southern Denmark. The seminars will be based on a further development of the four prioritized research themes, the target group being limited to Danish researchers and research students. The aim is to establish the research clusters, non-existing today, and to provide opportunities for the participants to identify research areas and research questions of common interest. The seminars will result in academic papers aimed for publishing in international peer reviewed journals.

* developing a Ph.D. course in “Media and communication for development and social change”. This course will be anchored within the “The Danish National Research School for Media, Communication and Journalism” (FMKJ) and the content developed on the foundation of the four themes of Glocal NOMAD.

* publishing an anthology written by international and national contributors/authors, and four working papers has high priority. The anthology will be pivotal for the scientific identity-building of the Glocal NOMAD. It will serve as a sort of 'business card' to the international research community as to how Glocal NOMAD's members are conceiving the prioritized research areas. This can serve as entry point for our further involvement in the international research debate. Equally important is however the process leading to this publication as it will be a process of configuring our common research interests and research platform.

Furthermore, we will actively seek dialogue with the relevant leading media practitioner organisations and relevant private sector companies to communicate our perspective and engage also in policy dialogue around these issues. In our immediate Danish context we already have a long series of organisations we can engage with (DANIDA, UNFPA's Nordic Office, national consultants like COWI and DANICOM, NGOs like International Media Support, MS/ActionAID, ADRA and Danchurchaid, all with experiences in this field).

It is furthermore important to see Glocal NOMAD strengthen teaching at our universities, i.e. through the publication and use of the anthology. This didactic dimension has to be contemplated in the organisation and editing of the anthology as it is important to contribute to the long-term articulation of interest in this area of teaching and research.

Finally, a very important activity for Glocal NOMAD members is to formulate joint inter-institutional research proposals in collaboration with our international partners at Nordic, European and Glocal levels.

### 3.2 Organization

Glocal NOMAD, as a research network, will be organisationally established at Roskilde University and be included as an activity in the Danish part of the transnational consortium ØRECOMM, which is established between Roskilde University and Malmö University. While Glocal NOMAD aims at strengthening Danish research by improving the Danish research network with media and communication for development, this will be done in a relevant both Nordic and international research context. By situating Glocal NOMAD institutionally within the ØRECOMM platform, this emerging Danish research network will be connected to both Nordic as well as International/global efforts to improve research in this field. At this moment in time it is our conviction that ØRECOMM and Glocal NOMAD together are in a situation where they can position themselves as a leading international consortium and research network within this interdisciplinary but still rather specialized field of research.

The organisation of Glocal NOMAD at Roskilde University has furthermore the advantage that the development of the new Ph.D. course in Communication for development and social change will be implemented as a part of the national graduate school FMKJ, which for the next 3 years is hosted at CBIT, Roskilde University.

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