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Self, Identity, and Globalization in Times of Uncertainty: A Dialogical Analysis

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Abstract

Our era is witnessing an increasing impact of globalization on self and identity and at the same time a growing uncertainty. The experience of uncertainty motivates individuals and groups to find local niches for identity construction. This article's central tenet is that the processes of globalization and localization, as globalization's counterforce, require a dialogical conceptualization of self and identity in which global and local voices are involved in continuous interchanges and negotiations. This tenet is elaborated along 2 lines of argument. First, 3 factors are described as crucial to understanding the processes of globalization and localization on the individual level: the increasing number of voices and countervoices, the role of social power, and the role of emotions. Second, the authors argue that the apparent tension between the widening horizons of globalization and the need for local niches requires acknowledgment of the pervasive influence of biologically based needs for stability, safety, and security. Finally, the authors propose studying self and identity on 3 levels—individual, local, and global—and some lines of research at the interface of these levels.

Understanding globalization and its impact on self and identity is a crucial task for social scientists today. As a result of increasing demographic, economic, ecological, political, and military interconnections on a global scale, cosmopolitanism is becoming an aspect of the everyday life of people in many parts of the world. Educational contacts crossing the borders of nationalities; tourism as the biggest industry in the world; the daily use of the Internet by adults, adolescents, and children; business contacts with people on the other side of the world; and intensive communication between diasporas and homelands illustrate that never in the history of humankind have global connections had such a broad reach and deep impact on the selves and identities of an increasing number of people.

Although globalization broadens the scope and opens new horizons for an increasing number of people from divergent origins, it has its evident shadow sides. Tragic events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, DC, and the bombings in Bali, Madrid, and London are fixed forever in our memories. They happened in a globalizing world filled with tensions, oppositions, clashes, prejudices, and misunderstandings between people from different cultural backgrounds who never in history have been so interconnected with each other as in the present era.

Not only human-caused dramatic events have global reverberations, but so too do nature-caused disasters. Not only did the tsunami in southeast Asia result in the death of many thousands of people and deeply change the selves of their relatives, but this event also entered the living rooms of billions of people in the world via emotional images broadcast by TV stations and spread by the Internet. Moreover, many people from other parts of the world were tragically involved as a result of the growing tourism in the stricken areas. As a response to the disaster, individuals and organizations from all corners of the planet organized worldwide support, feeling closely affiliated with the victims.

Without doubt, the process of globalization opens new vistas and broadens our horizons. It offers increasing possibilities of international contacts and fosters economical, ecological, educational, informational, and military forms of cooperation. However, it also restricts and closes the selves of many people as a counterreaction to what they experience as a threat, as evidenced by the resistance to the worldwide immigration gulfs, to the religious practices and rituals of other cultural groups that are experienced as "strange" or "alien," to the economic gap between "haves" and "have-nots," and to the power of multinationals. In this article, we argue that to understand both the positive and the negative implications of the process of globalization on the individual level, a dialogical conception of self and identity is required, one that can account for the different and even opposing demands resulting from the processes of

globalization and localization.

We divide the article into two parts. The first part offers a sociocultural analysis in which we argue that (a) globalization evokes localization as its counterforce and in this counterreaction the experience of uncertainty plays a crucial role and (b) a dialogical perspective is required that takes into account not only the increasing number of voices and countervoices that populate the contemporary self, but also their social dominance and their emotional character. In the second part, we present literatures that serve as a theoretical bridge between sociocultural understandings of globalization and biological and neurological processes that underlay the psychology of the self. In particular, the uncertainty and instability of a globalizing world increases the desire for stability, safety, and survival as universal biological needs. In this way, this article aims to present a dialogical framework that serves as a link between the historical and social phenomenon of globalization on the one hand and the biologically rooted needs for stability and security on the other hand.

We should note that it is not our intention to present a standard review article, which seeks to test a broad theoretical hypothesis against extant published findings. Rather, our purpose is to push a particular theoretical perspective to its limits so that it is able to link literatures originating from different traditions in the social sciences as parts of an extended theoretical framework. Although the purpose of this article is primarily theoretical, we suggest, in the final part, some research ideas that focus on the dialogical self as involved in the process of globalization and localization.

Globalization, Localization, and Uncertainty: A Sociocultural Analysis

Before we present a dialogical analysis of self and identity, we discuss the intimate interconnection between the global and the local. As we show, the experience of uncertainty is a significant psychological factor in this interconnection.

Globalization and Localization as Its Counterforce

Conceptions that treat globalization and homogenization as equivalent processes have become increasingly obsolete. Whether homogenization is seen positively in terms of the utopia of the global village or negatively in terms of cultural imperialism, such notions are based on the questionable assumption that we are moving toward an increasing global uniformity. However, as [Meyer and Geschiere \(1999\)](#) and others have observed, one of the ambiguities of the notion of globalization is that the homogenizing tendencies inherent in globalization imply a continued or even intensified heterogeneity that stresses cultural differences and even oppositions. Rather, the process of globalization, with its implied technological

advances, leads to a sharpening of cultural contrasts or even engenders new oppositions.

Indications of such paradoxical articulations are numerous. A few examples (see Meyer & Geschiere, 1999) may suffice. Modern technical devices, such as tape recorders, facilitated the spread of Muslim fundamentalism in North Africa and the Middle East, creating a giant market for cassettes of the latest star imam. The desire of many Westerners for an encounter with the "exotic" world of particular cultural groups requires these groups to produce local "authenticity" as a commodity for global tourism. The recent economic boom of industrializing countries in East Asia was accompanied by an equally vibrant boom of popular religions and spirit cults in local situations (see Weller, 1994). In some parts of Africa, witchcraft is used as a leveling force, undermining inequalities in wealth and power. Paradoxically, the same force is regarded as indispensable for the accumulation of such wealth and power. Witchcraft is used both to express envy and to accumulate Western goods as an indication of success (Geschiere, 1999). From a historical point of view, Obeyesekere (1977) has already observed that spirit cults and sorcery assumed a heightened status in the more modern sectors of Sri Lanka and concluded that this finding contradicts the well-known Weberian equation of "modernization" and "disenchantment" (see also Adams, 2004, who presented similar data from modern England). Such observations suggest that globalization and localization imply each other and can be regarded as two sides of the same coin (see also Robertson's [1995] concept of "glocalization" in which these sides are combined).

The dynamic relationship between the global and the local is even visible in studies of the process of civilization. Schäfer (2004) argued that not too long ago the big picture of human history showed a small number of large civilizations and large number of small local cultures. However, since a technoscientific civilization has begun to cover the globe, the big picture today looks very different. We are increasingly living in a globally spread civilization with many local cultures: "a *deterritorialized ensemble of networked technoscientific practices with global reach*" (p. 81). The Internet provides crucial evidence for the emergence of such a global civilization. However, Schäfer added that despite the fact that the Internet has a growing user base worldwide, it remains local at all points (see also Latour, 1993). User terminals are the places where global connections and local cultures interact. This implies that information and knowledge emerging on a global scale are always transformed and adapted so that they fit with the needs of people in their local situation.

In summary, two sociocultural trends can be observed that are closely intertwined: (a) globalization as boundary crossing and leading to international and intercultural connectedness and exchange and (b) localization as sets of customs or practices emerging from particular places, regions, or countries. The two trends do not exclude each other

but rather coexist and fuel each other in dialectical ways. Any kind of cultural imperialism will be always negotiated in local terms so that it is unsuccessful in its homogenizing effects. (For related views on the intimate connection between the global and the local, see [Appadurai, 1999](#); [Arnett, 2002](#); [Bhabha, 1999](#); [Hall, 1991](#); [Hermans & Kempen, 1998](#); [Kinnvall, 2004](#); [Marsella, 1998](#); and [Wallerstein, 1991](#).)

Globalization and Uncertainty

Globalization is not a new phenomenon, but its scale, speed, and import have changed ([Kinnvall, 2004](#)). In terms of scale, the number of economic, ecological, demographical, political, and social linkages is greater than in any previous time in history. In terms of speed, we are witnessing a compression of space and time as never before experienced. In terms of import, the globe is perceived as an ever smaller place: Events elsewhere have important implications for our everyday lives in our local situation.

Globalization allows increased movement and border crossing, which permits the exchange of goods, services, ideas, and practices at the interfaces of cultures ([Hermans & Kempen, 1998](#); [Manners, 2000](#)). However, global developments also have their shadow sides. As [Kinnvall \(2004\)](#) noted, the process of globalization is often accompanied by a “neo-liberal” ideology that involves a move from Keynesian economics toward more monetarist macroeconomic policies in highly developed countries. Moreover, such changes are followed by the introduction of structural adjustment programs in developing countries (see also [Hurrell & Woods, 1999](#)). Although these programs have the purpose of increasing privatization and global competitiveness and are intended to create stability and strengthen civil society, they often have the reverse effect of removing job certainty in the middle and lower classes of many societies. As a result of the state's diminishing involvement in economic affairs, the image of the government as provider of welfare and certainty has been undermined in many societies, creating an authority vacuum in which new, often demagogic leaders emerge as a reaction to people's desire for certainty ([Kinnvall, 2004](#)). (See also [Stiglitz, 2002](#), who referred to globalization as creating dual economies and technological or digital divides in societies.)

The new terrorism

Many parts of the world are confronted with a new source of uncertainty: new terrorism ([Grant, 2005](#); [Moghaddam, 2005](#)). Whereas terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s tended to be geographically confined to territories of dispute or conflict, the emergence of transnational or deterritorialized organizations marks a new phase in the operational complexity of terrorist groups. With their reliance on the mass media, they are communication organizations *sui generis*. An organization like al-Qaeda uses the full panoply of information technology devices, including CD-ROMs and satellite phones, while avoiding the vulnerability of E-mail communication

by using advanced encryption techniques to ensure confidentiality (Nacos, 2002). In its presentation to a global audience, al-Qaeda manifests itself as a transnational theater of operations sending and distributing their emotion-arousing messages worldwide. Its organization takes the form of a loose agglomeration that makes the risk of terrorist attack apparently unpredictable and potentially more global. The organization seeks to promote instability in its environment as a means to promote uncertainty (Grant, 2005; see also Crelinsten, 2004).

Global and local identities

Focusing on the psychology of adolescence, Arnett (2002) discussed the uncertainty and confusion resulting from globalization. He noted that in a globalizing world, people have to face the challenge of adapting not only to their local culture but also to the global society. He argued that, as a consequence of globalization, most people in the world, and adolescents in particular, now develop a bicultural identity: Part of their identity is rooted in their local culture, and another part is attuned to the global situation. Or they may develop a hybrid identity, successfully combining elements of global and local situations in a mix (see also Hermans & Kempen, 1998). However, Arnett referred also to the increase of identity confusion among young people in non-Western cultures. As local cultures are challenged and changed as a result of globalization, some young people feel themselves at home in neither the local situation nor the global situation.

Aspects of uncertainty

Given the central role we attach to the experience of “uncertainty”—a term to which different authors ascribe alternative meanings—a more detailed description is required. We see the experience of uncertainty as composed of four aspects: (a) *complexity*, referring to a great number of parts that have a large variety of relations; (b) *ambiguity*, referring to a suspension of clarity, as the meaning of one part is determined by the flux and variation of the other parts; (c) *deficit knowledge*, referring to the absence of a superordinate knowledge structure that can resolve the contradictions between the parts; and (d) *unpredictability*, implying a lack of control of future developments. As we demonstrate below, the experience of uncertainty characterizes a global situation of multivoicedness (complexity) that does not allow a fixation of meaning (ambiguity), that has no superordinate voice for resolving contradictions and conflicting information (deficit knowledge), and that is to a large extent unpredictable.

As this description of globalization suggests, it is not necessarily a negative experience; for many people, the experience of uncertainty may open and broaden the space for possible actions, adventures, and explorations of the unknown (e.g., traveling, international contacts, forms of international and intercultural cooperation). Moreover, uncertainty can be seen as a definitive farewell to the dogmas and ideologies of institutions that restricted and confined the self in earlier times. However,

when uncertainty reigns in many life areas or when one's survival is at stake, as the recent terrorist attacks demonstrate, the experience of uncertainty may be intensified to a degree that it changes into an experience of insecurity or anxiety. As we have suggested, the latter experience motivates people to find local niches in which they try to find security, safety, and certainty (Adams, 2004; Giddens, 1991).

In summary, globalization is not to be equated with homogenization or uniformity but finds localization as its counterforce. Whereas globalization challenges people to extend their selves and identities beyond the reach of traditional structures, this extension implies the pervasive experience of uncertainty. Intensification of this experience motivates individuals and groups to maintain, defend, and even expand their local values and practices by establishing a niche for the formation of a stable identity.

From a dialogical perspective, we see the experience of uncertainty (in the neutral sense of the term) as an intrinsic feature of a dialogical self. Building on the views of figures like Bakhtin (1973, 1981), James (1890), and Mead (1934), we envision the existence of a multivoiced dialogical self that is involved in internal and external interchanges and that never reaches a final destination. This self is conceived of as open to an ambiguous other and is in flux toward a future that is largely unknown. As we show in the next section, this uncertainty challenges our potential for innovation and creativity to the utmost, and at the same time, it entails the risks of a defensive and monological closure of the self and the unjustified dominance of some voices over others.

A Multivoiced and Dialogical Self

Three Reasons for a Dialogical Approach

Our central thesis is that global–local connections require a dialogical conception of self and identity for several reasons. Three reasons, in particular, warrant such a conception: the increasing multiplicity of self and identity, the need for developing a dialogical capacity, and the necessity of acknowledging the alterity of the other person with whom one enters in dialogical contact.

Multiplicity of voices in the self

In a globalizing world society, individuals and groups are no longer located in one particular culture, homogeneous in itself and contrastingly set against other cultures, but are increasingly living on the interfaces of cultures (Appadurai, 1990; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Raggatt, 2000; Spiro, 1993; Wolf, 1982). The increasing interconnectedness of nations and cultures does not only lead to an increasing contact between different cultural groups but also to an increasing contact between cultures within the individual person. Different cultures come together and meet each other within the self of one and the same individual. This process may result in such novel

and multiple identities as a business representative educated in a French school system but working for a Chinese company; Algerian women participating in an international football competition but afterward praying in a mosque; English-speaking employees living in India but giving technical training courses via the Internet to adolescents in the United States; and a scientist with university training in Zimbabwe desperately looking for a job as an immigrant in Great Britain. The focus here is on intercultural processes that lead to the formation of a multiplicity of cultural positions or voices coming together in the self of a single individual (Pieterse, 1995). Such positions or voices may become engaged in mutual negotiations, agreements, disagreements, tensions, and conflicts (e.g., "As a German I'm used to giving my honest opinion in case of disagreement with my colleagues but in the Iranian company where I work now, I found out that it is better to be deferential"). These examples have in common that different cultural voices are involved in various kinds of dialogical relationships and producing positive or negative meanings in fields of uncertainty. In other words, the global–local nexus is not just a reality outside the individual but is rather incorporated as a constituent of a dialogical self in action.

Dialogical capacity

In contrast to earlier closed and homogeneous societies, the globalizing society is characterized by strong cultural differences, contrasts, and oppositions. As Marsella (1998) observed, cultures and nations are competing for survival as life in contemporary society pits secular, religious, humanist, and scientific cultural traditions against one another in seemingly irreconcilable struggles because of fundamental differences in cultural practices, worldviews, and ideologies. It is our conviction that fundamental differences in an intensely interconnected world society not only require dialogical relationships between people to create a livable world but also a self that has developed the capacity to deal with its own differences, contrasts, tensions, and uncertainties (Cooper & Hermans, 2006). When the world becomes more heterogeneous and multiple, the self, as part of this world, also becomes more heterogeneous and multiple. As a consequence, increasing differences in the social milieu result in increasing differences in the self in which some parts of the self become more dominant than other parts (Callero, 2003). Cultural and historical differences require a well-developed dialogical capacity (Watkins, 2003) in order to perceive, recognize, and deal with differences, conflicts, and oppositions and to arrive at workable solutions to the problems and challenges that result from an accelerating process of globalization. This requires a conception of the self in which processes of question and answer, agreement and disagreement, and negotiations between different parts of the self are recognized as intrinsic features of problem solving (Bertau, 2004; Hermans, 1996b).

Alterity

The potential of dialogue goes beyond the familiar situation of two people

in conversation. Participants involved in conversation may express and repeat their own view without recognizing and incorporating the view of the other in their exchange. Innovative dialogue exists when speaker and respondent are able and willing to recognize the perspective of the other party in its own right and, further, are able and willing to revise and change their initial standpoints by taking the preceding utterances of the other into account (Marková, 1987). In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (1954) described, at the higher levels of communication, the experience of the other as "alter ego." The other is like myself (ego), but at the same time, he or she is not like myself (alter). Dealing with differences in a globalizing world requires the capacity to recognize and respond to the other person or group in its alterity. Alterity, as a central feature of well-developed dialogue, is a necessity in a world in which individuals and cultures are confronted with differences that they may not understand initially but that may become comprehensible and meaningful as the result of a dialogical process.

In the elaboration of a dialogical view, three propositions are indispensable: (a) other persons, groups, or cultures are parts of an extended self in terms of a multiplicity of contradictory voices or positions; (b) relations of social dominance are not alien to dialogue but belong to its intrinsic dynamics; and (c) emotions play a crucial role in closing or opening the self to global and local influences. As we demonstrate, these three propositions require linkages between the level of the global, the local, and the individual.

The Other in the Self: A Multiplicity of Voices

In a historical analysis of the concept of identity, Hall (1992) contrasted an "enlightenment subject" and a "decentered or postmodern subject." The Enlightenment subject "was based on a conception of the human person as a fully centered, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose 'center' consisted of an inner core" (p. 275). The decentered subject is composed of different parts that are highly contingent on the changes in the environment:

Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continually being shifted about. If we feel that we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or "narrative of the self" about ourselves. (p. 277)

Along similar lines, Hermans (1996b, 2001) and Hermans, Kempen, and Van Loon (1992) proposed a decentralized conception of the self as multivoiced and dialogical. More specifically, they defined the dialogical self in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of *I*-positions or voices in the landscape of the mind, intertwined as this mind is with the minds of other people. Positions are not only "internal" (e.g., I as a man, White, Catholic, professor, husband,

father, lover of the music of Beethoven) but also “external,” belonging to the extended domain of the self (e.g., my wife, my children, my colleagues, my country, my enemy; for the extension of the self, see also [Aron et al., 2005](#); [James, 1890](#); and [Rosenberg, 1979](#)). Dialogues may take place among internal positions (e.g., a conflict between my position as a father and my position as a hardworking scientist), between internal and external positions (e.g., I discuss with my colleague John our common project), and between external positions (e.g., disagreement between my teachers on religious topics). The dialogical self is not only part of the broader society but functions, moreover, itself as a “society of mind” with tensions, conflicts, and contradictions as intrinsic features of a (healthy functioning) self ([Hermans, 2002](#)).

Such a multivoiced dialogical conception acknowledges the extension of the self to the local and global environment. The personal voices of other individuals or the collective voices of groups enter the self-space and form positions that agree or disagree with or unite or oppose each other. Along these lines, real, remembered, or imagined voices of friends, allies, strangers, or enemies can become transient or more stabilized positions in the self-space that can open or close itself to the globalizing environment ([Hermans, 2001](#)).

Features of a globalizing position repertoire

As far as the dialogical self is open to the globalizing society, the position repertoire of the self has some specific features: (a) It is populated by an unprecedented density of positions (internal and external ones) that requires the self to organize and reorganize itself and implies the risk of a “cacophony of voices” ([P. H. Lysaker & J. T. Lysaker, 2002](#)); (b) when the individual is increasingly faced with a great diversity of groups and cultures on a global scale, the position repertoire becomes more heterogeneous and laden with oppositions and contradictions (see also [Falmagne, 2004](#)); (c) as a result of the speed and unpredictability of global changes, the repertoire is subjected to an increasing change and receives more “visits” by unexpected positions; and finally (d) as a consequence of the increasing range of possible positions, there are larger “position leaps” (e.g., immigration to another country, cosmetic surgery, instant fame as the result of TV performance; [Hermans, 2001](#)).

Collective voices and audiences

Dialogical self theory is inspired not only by the psychology of the self devised by [James \(1890\)](#) but also by dialogism as proposed by [Bakhtin \(1973, 1981\)](#). In Bakhtin's view, all utterances are multivoiced and dialogical at the same time ([Skinner, Valsiner, & Holland, 2001](#)). They are multivoiced because in the act of speaking there are two voices: the voice of the speaking person and the voice of a social language (e.g., one's dialect, one's professional group, one's generation). In a sense, Bakhtin argued, the word in language is “half-foreign” because the collective voice of the social group speaks through the mouth of the individual speaker. The

collective voice becomes one's own when the speaker populates it with his or her own intentions and expressive tendencies (e.g., I speak as a psychologist, but at the same time I'm expressing my personal opinion or conviction). The speaker adapts the social languages to his or her meaningful and expressive personal tendencies.

Cultural groups

Although Bakhtin (1973, 1981) did not say much about cultural groups (Wertsch, 1991), they can easily become incorporated in a dialogical view of the self. Both the cultural groups to which one belongs and those to which one is emotionally opposed can be part of an extended, multivoiced, tension-laden dialogical self. A representative of one cultural group can talk about representatives of another cultural group in an ironic or even deprecatory way, imitating or ridiculing their words, accents, or facial expressions and using characteristic intonations and gestures to express one's own evaluation of the other person or group in verbal and nonverbal ways. When people communicate with each other in dialogical ways, there is not only a speaker and an addressee, but also one or more implicit or hidden audiences (Marková, 2006; Salgado & Hermans, 2005) that are, as third parties, the objects of speech (the ridiculed group in the example). The process of globalization implies not only an increase in the number and heterogeneity of addressees and their various cultural backgrounds but also the number and heterogeneity of audiences that are implicitly present in the speech of everyday life.

Psychopathology

The increasing density and heterogeneity of positions of the self in a globalizing era is also reflected in the literature on psychopathology. Some dysfunctions that were once of peripheral importance in psychiatric diagnostic systems have assumed almost epidemic proportions at the present time. Borderline personality disorder and eating disorders, for example, have "identity disturbances" among their core features (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), suggesting that an increasing number of patients are faced with a disorganizing instability of the self and the impossibility of choosing a limited number of favorite and stable positions to help them to find a meaningful direction in their lives. Moreover, psychiatrists maintain that we are facing an epidemic of multiple personality disorder (or, to use its more recent name, dissociative identity disorder). Whereas up until 1980 no more than a hundred of these cases had been diagnosed (Boor, 1982), the number of multiple personality disorder diagnoses have increased dramatically since then (Hacking, 1995). Of particular interest for the multivoiced nature of the self is the increase in the number of "alters" in this disorder. In the beginning of the 20th century, the few patients with these kinds of troubles were simply "double personalities." At the end of the same century, patients diagnosed with multiple personality disorder were frequently found to have a great variety of alters, at some extremes numbering in the hundreds (Putnam, 1989). Not only the number but also the nature of the alters have changed over time.

In earlier diagnoses, typical symptoms included alters that were ascribed to the etiology of the dysfunction: childlike positions and persecutors, in case of a diagnosed history of child abuse. Today, however, alters show increasing variation: Frequently, they have the names of characters in soap operas, TV movies, and comedies, some of them being of the opposite sex and differing in race, religion, and age ([Hacking, 1995](#)). It is very hard to imagine a patient of Pierre Janet's in France at the end of the 19th century displaying an alter with Black skin and devoted to Islam. The changing pattern of diagnostic symptoms, implying differences in the number and nature of the alters, suggest the workings of cultural factors. For other pathologies such as schizophrenia, whose cause may be of a more genetic nature, such an increase of incidence is not reported ([American Psychiatric Association, 2000](#)). Therefore, we propose that cultural changes in the realm of psychopathology reflect the increasing density and heterogeneity of positions in a globalizing age.

Dialogue and Social Dominance

Often the notion of dialogue is regarded as essentially different or even as opposed to the notion of social dominance. Usually, *dialogue* evokes an image of people sitting at a round table discussing their views and problems as perfectly equal partners. As far as there is any dominance, it is the power of arguments that count. Such a conception of dialogue, however, can be regarded as an ideal speech situation or even a romantic ideal. In apparent opposition to this image, [Linell \(1990\)](#) has argued that asymmetry exists in each individual act–response sequence. As participants in a well-organized turn-taking process, the actors continually alternate the roles of “power holder” and “power subject” in the course of their dialogue. As long as the one party speaks, the other party is required to be silent. As long as the dominant party talks, the subordinate party allows, or must allow, his or her contributions to be directed, controlled, or inhibited by the interlocutor's moves (interactional dominance). Moreover, one party can predominantly introduce and maintain topics and perspectives on topics (topic dominance). The amount of talk also reflects dominance relationships: The party who talks much prevents the other party from taking a turn. Finally, the speaker who makes the most strategic moves may have a strong impact on a conversation without needing to talk a lot. In other words, although the topic of a meaningful conversation is under mutual control, relative dominance is not extrinsic but rather intrinsic to the dialogical process (see also [Guilfoyle, 2003](#), for a discussion of social dominance as an intrinsic feature of dialogical relationships between psychotherapist and client).

Social dominance and institutions

Social dominance plays a more structural role when the positions of people in institutions are taken into account. This can be illustrated by referring to two basic forms of dialogue in the sense of [Bakhtin \(1973\)](#): (a) the play of question and answer and (b) relationships of agreement and

disagreement. When differences in dominance between parties are minimal (as in a conversation between two good friends), the dialogical process is reciprocal, that is, the parties involved are relatively free to ask questions of each other at any time in the conversation. In the situation of a legal interrogation, in which differences in dominance are strongly increased, questions and answers are highly uneven, with one party posing the questions and the other party forced to answer within the frame determined by the questioner as a representative of the institution. In similar ways, relationships of agreement and disagreement are organized on the basis of institutional positions. In modern schools that aim to stimulate the personal responsibility and creativity of the learners, pupils are permitted to disagree not only with their classmates but even with their teachers, provided that these teachers regard such disagreements as signs of a creative, independent mind. In traditional, hierarchically organized educational settings, however, pupils are not permitted to disagree with teachers on any subject at all, as any disagreement is regarded as questioning the self-evident authority of teachers as the exclusive power holders within the educational setting. As these examples suggest, societal institutions entail social positions that deeply influence the dialogical process in structural ways. When one of the parties is not allowed to play a role as an active and reciprocal contributor of the interchange, dialogue is reduced to monologue because one voice is in control of the situation at the expense of the active contribution of the other to a commonly produced result.

Social dominance and hierarchical organization of self

Similar processes can be found when localizing forces reduce the multiplicity of voices of globalization in protective or defensive ways. In a study of Jewish orthodoxy, [Kaufman \(1991\)](#) was interested in women who grew up in secular Jewish homes in the United States and felt that the secular values of their education did not give them an adequate foundation for their lives. Despite the limitations that traditional beliefs place on women, they converted, in their teens or 20s, to orthodox Judaism. They did so in the conviction that an orthodox religious system offered them a meaningful place in the world and the experience of being rooted in a long, durable tradition. Placing Kaufman's study in the broader context of globalization, [Arnett \(2002\)](#) discussed the emergence of fundamentalist movements in both Western and non-Western societies and argued that many of these movements arose in the late 20th century as a reaction to the changes caused by globalization. Apparently, such worldviews can be regarded as localizing reactions to the process of globalization. They provide the self with a stabilized religious position that is based on a belief in a sacred past, a social hierarchy of authority of men over women, adults over children, and God over all ([Arnett, 2002](#); [Marty & Appleby, 1993](#)).

In a similar vein, [Kinnvall \(2004\)](#) argued that the emergence of Bin Laden and al-Qaeda cannot be grasped without taking into account the extent to

which many Arab countries pursued paths of modernization that were inspired by Western developments in the early post–Second World War period. Initiated by the state, not by the people, such reforms were often rationalized by the conviction that the “modern” few were planning the future for the more “traditional” and less educated segments of society. The uncertainty created by the problems and failures of such experiments motivated young people to revolt against these reforms and to seek refuge in older and more familiar concepts. In the case of Egypt, this led to identity constructions based on patriotism and religion, whereas Saudi Arabians tried to find certainty in ethnicism and Islamic guardianship (see also [Ayubi, 1999](#); [Haddad & Esposito, 1998](#)). Also, [Nandy \(1997\)](#) has pointed to the destabilizing effects of the process of globalization and the tendency to withdraw into local niches. He observed that in recent years many expatriate South Asians in the West have become “more aggressively traditional, and more culturally exclusive and chauvinistic” and “more protective about what they think are their faiths and cultures” (p. 158). From a dialogical point of view, religious orthodoxy, the rise of fundamental movements, and the phenomenon of patriotism find their expression in collective voices that encourage a hierarchical organization of the position repertoire of the self and a reduction of the heterogeneity of positions with a simultaneous avoidance of internal disagreement, conflict, and uncertainty. The dominance of one voice or a few voices over the others leads to a reduction of the experience of uncertainty, but at the same time, it has the questionable effect that other voices, as possible contributors or innovators of the self, are silenced or split off.

Recognition of social dominance in theories of self

For a deeper understanding of the process of globalization and its implications for self and identity, the notion of social dominance is indispensable. Contemporary theories of the self, with their strong emphasis on unity, often lack insight about the intense interplay between relations of dominance in the society at large on the one hand and relations of dominance in the “minisociety” of the self on the other hand. In a recent review of the literature on the self, [Callero \(2003\)](#) listed a number of concepts representing the focus of mainstream psychology: self-enhancement, self-consistency, self-monitoring, self-efficacy, self-regulation, self-presentation, self-verification, self-knowledge, self-control, self-handicapping, and self-deception. In one of his critical comments on these concepts, he raised the issue of social power:

The self that is socially constructed is never a bounded quality of the individual or a simple expression of psychological characteristics; it is a fundamentally social phenomenon, where concepts, images, and understandings are deeply determined by relations of power. Where these principles are ignored or rejected, the self is often conceptualized as a vessel for storing all the particulars of the person. ([Callero, 2003](#), p. 127; see also [Sampson, 1985](#), who criticized from a social constructionist point of view the self-contained individualism as typical of many psychological

theories of the self in the West.)

Because dominance fights are usually controversial, they require a more explicit psychology of emotion. Therefore, we discuss in the following section the role of emotions in relation to globalization, localization, and identity formation.

Emotional Voices

Dialogical voices can be reasoned or emotional. They can argue, negotiate, and convince, but they can also shout, accuse, beg, regret, laugh and cry, and express anger, joy, sympathy, love, fear, anxiety, hate, or disgust, to mention just a few ways in which people relate to their environment or to themselves. As [Kemper \(1978\)](#) suggested, a large class of human emotions result from real, imagined, anticipated, or recollected outcomes of social relationships (see also [Averill, 1997](#); [Parkinson, 1996](#); [Sarbin, 1989](#); [Shaver, Wu, & Schwartz, 1992](#)). In the field of psychotherapy, [Stiles \(1999\)](#) has expressed the view that voices in the self are emotionally laden, have agentlike qualities, and are more or less integrated in the larger community of voices in the self. As these literatures suggest, a social psychological perspective of emotions can be helpful in understanding the ways in which people respond to the processes of globalization, localization, and identity formation.

Home and homesteading

From a social psychological perspective, the emotional implications of globalization were presented by [Kinnvall \(2004\)](#), who argued that global changes have intensified “ontological insecurity” and “existential uncertainty.” A primary way of responding to these experiences is to seek reaffirmation by drawing closer to any localized group that is seen as capable of reducing uncertainty and insecurity. Particularly, (institutionalized) religion and nationalism are identity markers in times of rapid change and uncertain futures. In more general terms, Kinnvall pointed to the significance of the notion of “home” as a bearer of certainty and security and as constituting a spatial context in which daily routines can be performed in rather stabilized circumstances. Whereas for many individuals feeling at home in a family, neighborhood, workplace, or religious group may be a self-evident part of their life situation, for other people, particularly immigrants, refugees, and those living in diaspora, homes have to be actively created. In this context, Kinnvall referred to the phenomenon of “homesteading” (see also [Sylvester, 1994](#), and [Kronsell, 2002](#)) as a strategy for coping with homelessness. In new and uncertain circumstances, people shape a political space for themselves in order to cope with the uneasiness and anxieties of homelessness. This may motivate people to become a member of an exile community (e.g., the Sikhs in Canada, the Pakistanis in Britain, or the Kurds in Sweden) and to create common places of assembly (e.g., gurdwaras, mosques, or Kurdish community halls). Certainly, the tendency to create homes when

separated from one's homeland has been part of the (voluntary as well as forced) immigrant experience throughout history. However, the increasing global immigration gulfs have stimulated a process of homesteading on a larger scale than ever before in history.

To understand the process of globalization and its impact on identity, [Kinnvall \(2004\)](#) posed a significant question concerning the emotional aspects of the opposition between in-group and out-group. How can we comprehend why feelings of fear, loathing, and even hatred creep into "our" perceptions of "them," and how can we understand these emotions in times of uncertainty? To find an answer to these crucial questions, Kinnvall built on psychoanalytic accounts of identity and identity conflicts. [Kristeva's \(1982, 1991\)](#) psychoanalytic work is particularly relevant from a dialogical point of view.

Subject, object, and abject

A basic tenet in [Kristeva's \(1982, 1991\)](#) and [Kinnvall's \(2004\)](#) analysis is that the psychological roots of xenophobia, anti-immigrant discourses, racism, and the marginalization of others are to be found in "the enemy in ourselves," as the "hidden face of identity." It is an unconscious part of the self that has become internalized as an "enemy" in the past, fueling our imagination in times of opposition or conflict. The important role of imagination can be illustrated by situations in which the enemy is perceived as threatening without actually being present. Anti-Semitism in Poland exists despite its relative lack of Jews, and sometimes stronger anti-immigrant feelings can be found in places with few or no immigrants than in places with a large number of immigrants. This combination of interiorization and imagination produces "another" that is perceived not as a subject, not as an object, but as an "abject." The other is rejected on emotional grounds and not considered an integrative part of the conscious self. This is done in the service of maintaining a secure identity: "The construction of an abject-other becomes a means to securitize subjectivity as it reduces anxiety and increases ontological security" ([Kinnvall, 2004](#), p. 753; see also [Appadurai, 1999](#), for a treatment of extreme violence as a response to the experience of uncertainty and [Moghaddam, 2005](#), who describes the circumstances in which young people living in economically deprived circumstances and frustrated by feelings of injustice, find a "home" by affiliating themselves with terrorist organizations where they learn to perceive nonbelievers as abject others.)

In an attempt to study the abject other in a psychotherapeutic context, [Hermans and Hermans-Jansen \(1995\)](#) examined a dream from a client in which two characters played central roles: an abjected murderer who was depicted as a threat to a village community and another character, the pursuer, who had the responsibility of defending the community against the murderer. As part of a dialogical procedure, the client, Paul, was invited to separately produce some utterances from the perspective of the two positions. Whereas the pursuer phrased socially acceptable

statements (e.g., "I chase him to the pinnacles of the tower"), the murderer expressed his intention in the form of extremely crude statements (e.g., "I hate them, I kill them all"). In the discussion of the dream, Paul recognized himself clearly in the position of the pursuer and accepted this figure and his emotions as very close to the internal domain of his self. In contrast, Paul perceived the murderer as an enemy-other, and the murderer's aggression was regarded as totally external. After a closer inspection of the dream content, however, Paul found out that the pursuer possessed information that he earlier perceived only in the mind of the murderer. From that moment on, he had to admit to himself that the murderer and the associated emotions of hate and anger were also closely related to his internal self. This was reason for the therapist to invite the client to give, from his own position as Paul, an answer to the extreme statements and emotions of the murderer. He then produced some statements that suggested that he opened himself, to some degree, to the unwanted position: "The feelings that are associated with my experiences—I'm not very well aware of them" and "There are a lot of situations in which I have harmed myself by not defending myself" (p. 135). The results of this investigation were interpreted in terms of the identity-in-difference phenomenon (Gregg, 1991). Whereas initially the unwanted position was clearly outside the internal domain of the self, at some later point in time this position stood somewhere in a transitional field where it was at the same time experienced as "belonging to myself" and "not belonging to myself." As this study suggests, the boundaries between the internal and external domains of the self are not necessarily sharp. Rather, it argues for the existence of a field of transition between internal and external, where an individual knows at some level of consciousness that the "bad guy" is part of the internal domain and at another level that this position is part of the external domain. Moreover, these results suggest the existence of a dynamic self that allows, under special conditions, the movement of an enemy-other from the external to the internal domains of the self. If this happens, there is a chance that the abject other, rather than being silenced or excluded, becomes an accountable voice in the polyphony of the self (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995).

As this case study suggests, the inclusion of the enemy-other or the stranger-other is part of a self-construction that is built on the contrasting distinction between "superior" and "inferior." Positions that correspond with one's own national, religious, or ethnic group represent purity, order, truth, beauty, good, and right, whereas those on the outside are affected by pollution, falsity, ugliness, bad, and wrong (Kinnvall, 2004; Moghaddam, 2005). The problem of defensive forms of localization is that the permeability of the boundaries between internal and external domains of the self is closely intertwined with the exclusive opposition between the superior and the inferior. Permeability decreases when particular positions in the external domain are perceived as inferior.

Differences with other theories

There are other theories in psychology and the social sciences that deal with similar phenomena as dialogical self theory. What are the differences? In social identity theory, for example, there is not one personal self, but rather several selves or positions that correspond to widening circles of group membership. An individual has multiple social identities, dependent on perceived membership in social groups (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002). The existence of collective voices in dialogical self theory corresponds with the notion of internalized group membership in social identity theory. An important difference between the two theories is that social identity theory asserts that group membership creates self-categorization in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group, whereas according to dialogical self theory other individuals or groups in the self are conceived of as voices that are able to entertain dialogical relationships with other individuals or groups in the self and are able to dominate and silence each other as a result of internal negotiations and conflicts. In other words, whereas social identity theory is based on the notion of categorization, dialogical self theory is based on the notion of addressivity. Certainly, as a result of inner dialogue in-groups may be favored at the expense of out-groups, but other solutions are possible as different voices can entertain a dialogue with each other and produce an outcome that is different from a straightforward in-group preference.

A comparison can also be made with optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991), which suggests that people, in their affiliations with groups, try to maintain a balance between the desires to fit in and stand out. Whereas feelings of belonging create a need to individuate oneself, feelings of uniqueness lead to attempts to reembed oneself in the collective. There exists a dialectical opposition between these tendencies: Meeting one signals a deficit in the other and leads to increased efforts to reduce this deficit. Whereas optimal distinctiveness theory and dialogical theory both assume the existence of tension and conflict between opposing parts of the self, the latter theory acknowledges sign-mediated dialogical relationships between voices that may agree or disagree with each other and question each other in processes of negotiation, deliberation, and mutual criticism.

Dialogical self theory also shows some similarities to and differences from intersectionality theory (Collins, 2000). In contrast to theories that consider race, gender, and class as discrete or additive processes, intersectionality theory sees the effects of race, class, and gender as intersecting and interlocking. For example, a woman's gender status cannot be separated from her class or racial status. A Black woman is confronted with other challenges and disadvantages than a Black man. Gender, class, and race work together in creating an overarching structure of domination, creating different outcomes for individuals and for groups positioned at the point at which a particular race meets a particular gender and a particular class

status. In agreement with intersectionality theory, dialogical self theory considers self or identity as located on the interface of social position and as subjected to relations of social domination. An important difference, however, is that dialogical self theory is interested not only in processes on the interface of social positions (e.g., gender, class, gender), but also in personal positions (e.g., I as a victim, I as an optimist, I as ambitious).

On the Mutual Complementarity of the Social and the Biological

In the second part of this article, we discuss some recent theoretical issues regarding the embodied, biological, and neurological aspects of the self and their significance for a dialogical self involved in the process of globalization. There are two problem areas that are particularly central to our argument and, at the same time, challenge us to consider the relationship between the social and the biological aspects of the self: (a) the issue of stability in a changing world and (b) the social nature of emotions.

Need of Stability in a Changing World

Recently, [Falmagne \(2004\)](#) argued for the necessity of establishing a “site” in the self that remains continuous and sufficiently stable through moments of dialogical and discursive meaning construction. Conceptually, the self must be individuated as the same element through the different ways in which it is dialogically constructed and through the experiential and contextual ways in which it moves through time and space. The self is involved in rapid movement and change, as part of the globalizing process, but at the same time, there is a deep need for local stability (for a thorough discussion of the coexistence of stability and change, see [Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallett, 2003](#)).

The apparent need of stability raises the important question of whether a substantial self exists or not. As [Falmagne \(2004\)](#) explained, some social-constructionist conceptions of the self have led to the radical rejection of a substantial self and resulted in a shift toward a nonsubstantial, fluid notion of subjectivity. Because in these views the center of the self “does not hold,” its different parts are decentralized to such a degree that the self becomes scattered and loses its coherence (see, e.g., [Gergen's \[1991\]](#) notion of “multiphrenia”). Apparently, for some social constructionist accounts, nonhomogeneity and contingency in discursive positioning are taken as reasons to reject the self as a theoretical notion. In contrast to these views, we argue, in agreement with Falmagne, for a substantial embodied self that includes multiplicity, heterogeneity, contradiction, and tension. We see such phenomena not as an impasse for a theoretical notion of the self, but as intrinsic aspects that are “owned” by an embodied self. Like the experience of uncertainty, fluidity and

contradictions are regarded as intrinsic features of a dialogical self in a globalizing world. A theory is needed that is able to explain the mechanisms by which individuals, as agentic subjects, do or do not identify with positions to which they are summoned through dialogical or discursive relationships. Part of this identification is how individuals fashion, stylize, and personalize the positions they occupy as participating in global and local situations (Falmagne, 2004; Hall, 1996). In this view, the self is not only a social but also a personal construction. Two or more internal voices can construct a personal space as a productive field for inner dialogues and for the authentic construction of meaning, a field that is continuously exposed to the field of social relationships and expanded by it (Salgado & Hermans, 2005).

Biological needs reduce the position repertoire

Apparently, people are in need of an environment stable enough to feel at home and to experience a feeling of security and safety in a quickly changing world. Moreover, people tend to respond with anxiety, anger, hate, loathing, or disgust when they feel threatened in their need for protection and local security. Such observations require that a psychology of emotions be included as part of the processes of globalization and localization. As Kinnvall (2004) has noted, reducing emotions to present social relations in society would neglect the deeply rooted need for safety and stability in one's life circumstances, strongly emphasized by object relations theorists (e.g., Winnicott, 1964).

Referring to the important role of emotions for survival, evolutionary psychologists (Buss, 1995), psychoanalysts (Lichtenberg, Lachman, & Fosshage, 1992), and cognitivists (Gilbert, 1989) have presented evidence that human behavior can be understood as driven by a set of evolutionary-based motives that grant survival and fitness both to the individual and to the group (in competition, cooperation, sexuality, and fight-flight). When these motives are at risk of being not fulfilled, emotions arise and are expressed in behavior that signals the corresponding states of mind (e.g., shouting and crying by children in situations of threat). In the course of life, a large percentage of self-narratives, populated by a number of characters representing a variety of internal and external self-positions, are built around these universal, transcultural, biological motives. People are motivated to construct narratives centered on themes that help them deal with fundamental life issues while sharing these narratives with others (McAdams, 2006; Salvatore, Dimaggio, & Semerari, 2004). A significant implication of this view is that some positions or voices in the self become exclusively important, and particularly in situations of anxiety and threat, they receive priority above other voices on emotional grounds, moving the self in a monological direction. At the interface of the social and the biological, we witness a paradoxical situation: Whereas globalization has the potential to increase the density and heterogeneity of positions of the self in unprecedented ways, it evokes, at the same time, forms of localization that are driven by deeply rooted biological needs that cause a

serious reduction and restriction of positions in the repertoire of the self.

A Pakistani family

In the field of tension between social–historical developments and biological urgency, the dialogical self is particularly challenged. Let's illustrate this with an example of a Pakistani family living in England. The family is traditionalist and deeply affected by the fact they are not accepted for what they are by the dominant communities in the host country. The collective voice of the out-group community is critical and urges them to change. From the other side, there is an inner voice, deeply rooted in the collective voices of their original culture, that presses them to stay faithful to their origins. This traditional voice is empowered by the myths, stories, and autobiographical memories associated with their attachment history. So they must find a way to negotiate between their wish to be accepted by the host culture, which stands in hard opposition to their original culture, and their adherence to their original culture, which, as an embodied reality of their selves, they cannot renounce. Located in this field of tension, they are forced to negotiate among the several contrasting voices to find a dialogical solution.

Tensions between voices representing original and host cultures are certainly not unique to the situation of globalization. What the example illustrates, however, is that the process of globalization creates new and intensified fields of tensions between global and local positions, with strong differences, conflicts, and oppositions between voices, which require dialogical interchanges both between and within different selves to arrive at workable solutions. Surely, the demands and opportunities of globalization are broadening the range of differing, opposing, and conflicting voices and may lead, along these lines, to an increasing discontinuity and incoherence of the self. However, biological survival needs work as a restricting and even opposing force on these demands and possibilities. Biological needs, particularly if frustrated, restrict the dialogical self.

The dialogical brain

Further arguments for the need of mutual complementation of social and biological conceptions of self and identity can be derived from brain research on the dialogical self. [Lewis \(2002\)](#), proposing the notion of a dialogical brain, questioned the idea of unlimited flexibility within the dialogical self and emphasized the apparent need of people to return to “ordinary positions” in their lives. Lewis based this insight on a study of the workings of the orbitofrontal cortex, a region at the base of the frontal lobe that is tuned to rewards and punishments in social relationships. By its dense connections with the amygdala, a structure primarily responsible for fear, anxiety, and some kinds of anger, the orbitofrontal cortex favors emotionally based monological responses rather than flexible dialogical movements. The tendency to seek, often in an automatic ways, for routine or standardized positions raises the question of whether a dialogical self,

which assumes the existence of a variegated and flexible position repertoire, is possible.

In an attempt to answer this question, [Lewis \(2002\)](#) analyzed automatic phrases like "That was stupid" or "You are dumb" that the person (or an imagined other) is saying to him- or herself during the performance of a task. In these examples, there is no clear-cut other voice and there is not much turn-taking or an explicit sequence of question and answer. Instead, internal dialogues are sublingual and inchoate, and there is not much elaboration and development of a dialogue with another voice. In this case, the person automatically operates from a familiar *I*-position and continuously returns to situations in which this position can be reached. On this sublingual and inchoate level, we are more conservative and monological than innovative and dialogical. In keeping with dialogical self theory, Lewis concluded that in our daily lives we are involved in a dialogical relation with an anticipated, almost-heard other from the perspective of a familiar and rather continuous *I*-position. As part of the external domain of the self, such a position produces statements like "good!" "too bad!" and "stupid!" or more complex utterances like "You see, this leads to nothing, as always!" or "You are not able to achieve anything, whatever you do!" Lewis supposed that these utterances come from voices of significant others in the remote past whose positions are incorporated as stabilized parts into the external domain of the self.

Similarly, in a discussion of the orbitofrontal area in the brain, [Schore \(1994\)](#) pointed to the existence of repetitive neural mechanisms in the working of the dialogical self. He described the emergent capacity of the growing brain to switch adaptively between psychobiological states that are colored by different affects. When the child develops a dialogical self, he or she is increasingly able to transcend an immediate negative state (e.g., distress) and enhance "self-solace" capacities that help the child make a transition between the two states when the mother is not present ("Mommy is away, but she will come back"). As Schore explained, the child develops the capacity to make transitions from negative to positive affective states of mind and realizes, in recurring ways, an adaptation of the self to a problematic situation. This adaptation is seriously reduced in forms of insecure attachment. As this research suggests, the experience of insecurity reduces the self's capacity to make the transition from a negative to a positive position. This reduction impoverishes the variation of the position repertoire and flexible movements between different voices. As discussed earlier in this article, the lack of flexibility associated with strong negative emotions is a central problem in defensive forms of localization.

Both [Lewis's \(2002\)](#) and [Schore's \(1994\)](#) work is focused on the orbitofrontal cortex, which produces, in its linkage to the subcortical limbic system, an affectively charged, gistlike sense of an interpersonal respondent, based on stabilized expectancies from many past interactions. Both models have

the advantage in that they show how relatively stable, sublingual voices and recurrent dialogical routines put limits on the linguistic, dialogical processes. These limits are not to be evaluated necessarily as a disadvantage because they may contribute, in specific situations, to our action readiness and behavioral efficiency.

Fluid and stable dialogical patterns

As the work on the dialogical functioning of the brain suggests, it is necessary to distinguish between “fluid” and “stable” forms of dialogue. Fluid dialogues are contingent on changing situations, highly open to new input, and involved in an active process of positioning and repositioning. Stable forms of dialogue are repetitive, automatic, and closed to new input and information and, therefore, move to the monological end of the continuum. From a developmental perspective, [Fogel, De Koeyer, Bellagamba, and Bell \(2002\)](#) have observed both regularly recurring dialogical routines (e.g., patterns of opposing wills between mother and child) and creative, changing, developing routines (e.g., taking a variety of positions during role playing) in the first 2 years of life. In a clinical setting, [Dimaggio, Salvatore, and Catania \(2004\)](#) found psychopathological analogues of this distinction in patients suffering from personality disorders: Some dialogical patterns were impoverished and rigid, others were disorganized and chaotic. The developmental and psychopathological literatures on changing and stable forms of dialogue are expected to be relevant both for the flux of globalizing processes and for stabilizing forces of protective or defensive forms of localization.

Basic needs as reducing the openness of the dialogical self

In the tradition of Bakhtinian dialogism, it is commonplace to emphasize the openness and unfinalizability of the notion of dialogue (e.g., [Holquist, 1990](#)). The difference between logical and dialogical relationships may serve as an example of the open nature of dialogue.

Take two phrases that are completely identical, “life is good” and again “life is good” ([Vasil'eva, 1988](#)). From the perspective of Aristotelian logic, these two phrases are related in terms of identity; they are, in fact, one and the same statement. From a dialogical perspective, however, they may be seen as two remarks expressed by the voices of two spatially separated people in communication, who in this case entertain a relationship of agreement. Here we have two phrases that are identical from a logical point of view, but different as utterances: The first is a statement, the second a confirmation. In a similar way, the phrases “life is good” and “life is not good” can be compared. In terms of logic, one is a negation of the other. However, as utterances from two different speakers, a dialogical relation of disagreement exists.

In principle, dialogical relationships are open and move toward an unknown future. Every speech act opens a dialogical space ([Hermans, 2001](#)) that allows a broad range of possible statements or opinions in the future,

and at every step in the process the next step is largely unpredictable. Logical relationships, however, are closed, insofar as they do not permit any conclusion beyond the limits of the rules that govern the relationship. A syllogism, for example, starts from a set of premises and leads, through a number of logical steps, to a conclusion that is necessarily true, rejecting any other possibility. In apparent contrast to dialogical relationship, nothing is left to be said, nor is an opening created to the domain of the unexpected.

However, the question can be raised as to whether dialogical relationships are as open as suggested by Bakhtinian dialogism. An everyday example may illustrate that dialogues are highly restricted by vested interests and emotional affinities. Two people, A and B, start a conversation, exchanging a variety of experiences in a casual way. At a certain point, A expresses an opinion with which B disagrees. For his part, B expresses a counteropinion that is not compatible with A's point of view. In the case of an open dialogue, one would expect that the two conversational partners would exchange their opinions and develop them in such a way that they learn from each other and revise their initial position in light of the input they have received from the partner. However, this is not what can be observed in many, perhaps even most, cases of disagreement. As soon as the conversational partners notice that the other party disagrees, they feel that their opinion, in which they have invested part of their identity ("This is *my* opinion"; "This is the way *I* see it"), is at stake, and from that moment they are motivated to "defend" their position against that of their opponent. Given this motivation, they repeat or paraphrase their initial point of view in an attempt to "protect" it against the "undermining" statements from the other. Gradually, the conversation assumes a competitive character, and both partners try to strengthen their own position to make it dominant over the position of the other party. Owing to this repetition and striving for dominance, the openness of the dialogue is seriously reduced and moves to the monological end of the continuum.

The fact that people exchange opinions in a conversation is no guarantee of an open dialogue. In case of disagreement, they defend their point of view against the opinion of the other, and in case of agreement, they use the opinion of the other party as a means to further corroborate or even expand their initial viewpoint. In a globalizing environment, people are confronted with myriad opinions and ideologies that are different from those that they have learned in their local environments. When these views are experienced as threatening or undermining their local point of view, they are motivated to defend their local positions, often in emotional ways. Self-defense restricts the dialogical self.

Social Nature of Emotions

In the preceding section, we emphasized the apparent need for stability, safety, and self-maintenance and have argued that these basic motives

restrict the range of the position repertoire and the openness of the dialogical self. We drew on some literatures from biology and the neurosciences to underline the emotionally tuned need for stability. Does this mean that we propose an essentializing view of emotion? Or are we advocating to physiologize the emotional basis of the self? The answer is a clear no. From a dialogical point of view, emotions are isolated things and not just internal physiological processes. A dialogical view of self and identity in a globalizing world is in need of theories of emotions that are intrinsically social and societal. To underscore this view, we present in the following sections three significant concepts: emotion work, emotion rules, and emotional positions.

Emotion work and the power of expectations

Our treatment of the role of neural connections (e.g., the dialogical brain) in the genesis and development of emotions and our discussion of evolutionary-based needs (e.g., safety, self-defense, and self-enhancement) does not claim that emotions have no significant social and societal context. Our purpose is not to downplay the role of social factors in the field of emotion theory, but rather to bring biological–neural and social–societal factors together as interconnected elements of a dialogical approach (see also [Blackman, 2005](#)).

A concept that links emotions to social positions is the notion of “emotion work.” Emotions are not things in themselves or purely internal processes, but parts of a highly dynamic social and societal process of positioning. Depending on the positions in which people find themselves, particular emotions are expected to emerge in a particular situation, whereas other emotions are expected to be absent or suppressed. Under the influence of position-bound expectations, some emotions are tolerated, accepted, emphasized, exaggerated, or denied, whereas others are not. In an extensive treatise on the management of emotions, [Hochschild \(1983\)](#) gave the following examples: A secretary creates a cheerful office that announces her company as friendly; the waiter fashions an atmosphere for pleasant dining; a tour guide makes us feel welcome; the social worker makes the client feel cared for; the funeral parlor director makes those who are bereaved feel understood; and the minister creates a sense of protective outreach. Such emotion work is typical not only of social positions that are organized on the basis of social or societal expectations but also of expectations or requirements of a more personal nature. People act on their feelings when they are trying to feel grateful, trying not to feel depressed, let themselves feel sad, permit themselves to enjoy something, imaginatively exalt their feelings of love, or put a damper on their love. In all those cases, emotions are conceived of not as purely internal impulses that have an existence on their own or as purely physiological reactions that take place within the skin, but as integral parts of an agentic process of social or personal positioning. Depending on the positions and the dialogical spaces in which they find themselves, people act on their emotions, under the influence of position-bound

expectations and requirements (e.g., "As a rich guy who has everything he wants, I expect myself to be happy").

Sometimes emotion work becomes a struggle of the person with him- or herself. In a moving excerpt, [Hochschild \(1983\)](#) described a woman who felt in love with the "wrong guy." Although in love, she discovered that he had regularly broken off relationships with his many former girlfriends after only a short time:

I attempted to change my feelings. I talked myself into not caring about him ... but I admit it didn't work for long. To sustain this feeling I had to invent bad things about him and concentrate on them or continue to tell myself he didn't care. It was a hardening of emotions, I'd say. It took a lot of work and was unpleasant because I had to concentrate on anything I could find that was irritating about him. (p. 44)

Apparently, this person found herself to be in two different positions in clear conflict, "I'm in love" and "I must protect myself." As part of this conflict, she entered into a series of internal dialogues in which she tried to change her feelings of love in the service of self-protection. In her internal fights, she aimed at a "dominance reversal" ([Hermans, 1996a](#)) in which the self-protecting forces would become stronger than her feelings of love.

Emotion rules and emotional positions

Emotion work takes place under the guidance of emotion rules. Such rules are standards used in internal and external dialogues to determine what it is right or wrong to feel. Emotion rules serve as standards that tell us what is "due" in a particular social or personal position. From a social constructionist view of emotions, [Averill \(1997\)](#) has argued that the rules of emotion help to establish a corresponding set of emotional roles or, in our terms, "emotional positions." An emotional position can be analyzed in terms of privileges, restrictions, obligations, and entrance requirements. There is a privilege when, for example, a person in love may engage in sexual behavior that otherwise may be viewed as socially inappropriate. *Restrictions* refer to limits on what a person can do when acting under emotion. For example, lovers are expected to be discrete and honorable in their affairs. Whereas restrictions forbid a person to feel and do particular things, obligations instruct the person what should be felt or done. For example, in all societies those who are bereaved are expected to perform particular mourning practices. An individual who fails to comply with these expectations is often subject to severe sanction. Finally, most social positions have entry requirements, that is, they can be occupied only by persons of a certain age, sex, training, or social status. This also applies to emotional positions. For example, persons higher in authority (e.g., parents) are afforded more right to become angry than persons lower in authority (e.g., children; [Averill, 1997](#)).

Implications for Globalization and Localization

In the preceding sections, we have discussed some neurologically and biologically based literatures that deal with the emotionally based tendency to return to ordinary, familiar, and self-protecting positions and to engage in repetitive dialogical routines. In addition, we presented research that refers to the social and societal nature of emotions. Both literature streams have in common that they restrict the openness of dialogical relationship and the range of possible positions. As we have argued, evolutionary-based motives that grant survival and fitness and the need for safety, protection, and stability lead to establishing a set of positions that create a split between in-group and out-group in the service of confirming the identities of individuals and groups. The neurologically based tendency to return to ordinary and familiar positions and the existence of automatic dialogical routines have the advantage that people can use an economical set of stereotypical or abbreviated dialogues (Lyra, 1999), but they do not permit the individual to move easily beyond the constraints of traditional or familiar interactions. The socially based emotion rules, on the other hand, help individuals and groups to interact in ways that are shared and appreciated by the community to which they belong, but they restrict the range of positions and limit the openness of dialogical relationships with people outside the community. What are the implications of these insights for the processes of globalization and localization?

Emotion rules and globalization

Contemporary social scientists are confronted with a situation in which privileges, obligations, restrictions, and entry requirements typical of emotion management in a particular society are basically challenged by the process of globalization. Emotion rules about love, anger, or grief are typically limited to a particular group, community, or culture, but they can be very different in different cultures. Such rules organize and regulate interactions between people within a particular community that are accepted as belonging to the culture to which one belongs, but that may be strange, unfamiliar, or even offensive to people from another community (e.g., the rage of Muslims over the portrayal of Mohammed in those Danish cartoons within a Western liberal democracy with strong traditions in favor of freedom of expression). In the contemporary world, one and the same individual is increasingly confronted with the emotion rules from different communities in which the individual participates as a member of a globalizing society. The result is an increasing sense of uncertainty, particularly in situations where there are different sets of rules and where it is not clear which set has priority. An example may illustrate this.

American gay tourist Chris Crain was walking hand in hand with his male friend in Amsterdam at the festival of the birthday of the Queen of the Netherlands in 2005. Suddenly, he was spit on by a passing man, who

was raised in a Moroccan culture but lived in the Netherlands. When the victim objected, he was knocked down. This event, reported and discussed in the Dutch newspapers (and in some American media), happened in a city that, for many decades, has been known as the most gay-friendly city in the world. However, in the past decades, the Netherlands has become populated by inhabitants from an increasing variety of different cultures (e.g., Turks, Moroccans, and Surinamese) and has become a multicultural society. As a result of this process, the emotion rules concerning gay love that were accepted by large parts of the traditional Dutch community in earlier times are now highly controversial in the eyes of some cultural groups of the "same" country.

Emotion work and globalization

The accelerating process of globalization requires increasing amounts of emotion work. When emotion work is required and organized by one position (e.g., the flight attendant being friendly, the minister being protective, the funeral director understanding those who are bereaved), it does not imply an excessive amount of emotion work as long as these social roles are felt as "ordinary positions" (Lewis, 2002) by the person in charge. Emotion work may even take place in automatic ways when performed in usual circumstances and when it is part of one's daily routines. However, in the case of different, conflicting, or opposing positions a significantly greater amount of work is required. A simple example may illustrate this. On one of his travels, a German man falls in love with a woman from Cuba. She reciprocates his love, and they decide to marry and begin living in Germany. However, while he goes to work each day, she regularly phones her family members in Cuba to whom she feels strongly attached and tells them how much she misses them. She is in love with her German husband, but does not like the German setting (no work for her, cold climate, lack of music and street dancing). Although she is not happy in Germany, she is convinced of her love for her husband and is doing her best to be a good partner to him (happy, active, and caring). After some time, however, she gets depressed and has to admit that she can no longer stay in Germany. Her husband takes leave from his work and goes with her to Cuba. However, after some weeks he has to return because of work obligations in his own country. Finally, the couple decides to live separately, and eventually they divorce. In this example, the woman feels herself in a field of tension between at least two conflicting positions, "I as loving my husband" and "I as loving my own family and country." Stretched between two strongly attractive positions, she vacillates and must convince herself that she loves her husband, particularly at those moments in which she most wants to return to her homeland. In general terms, the process of globalization locates individuals and groups in fields of tensions between different cultural positions. Each of these positions represents a different or even conflicting cultural voice that requires multivoiced emotion work, with one voice speaking in ways that are different from and even opposed to how the other voice speaks. Such multivoiced emotion work coexists with

intensified internal and external dialogues that aim at the reduction of tensions.

In the preceding sections, we discussed two groups of factors that are considered highly relevant to the processes of globalization and localization: neural and biological factors and social–cultural factors. We have argued that both groups of factors restrict the openness of self and the range of the position repertoire. We discussed the tendency of the brain to return to ordinary and familiar positions; the pervasive influence of the need for safety, protection, and stability; and the role of biological survival needs as they organize the self and restrict its boundaries, particularly in times of globalization and uncertainty.

In the following sections, we continue our exploration of self and identity by resuming the three issues that were central to the first part of the article: the other as extension of the self, the role of social dominance, and the significance of emotions. We argue that the three concepts (the other, dominance, and emotion) require a linkage between three levels of analysis: global, local, and individual. By distinguishing these levels, we want to integrate the insights that emerged from the exploration of the biological and the social domains of inquiry.

A Three-Level Proposal: Global, Local, Individual

In the presented theoretical framework, we have analyzed self and identity at three levels: the global level, the local level, and the individual level. We have done so in the conviction that the process of globalization, which forms and changes the lives of an increasing number of people in the world, requires theoretical approaches that overcome any self-contained individualism. As we have argued, globalization is not to be equated with homogeneity, uniformity, or cultural imperialism, but can only properly be understood in its dialectical relation with localization, resulting in heterogeneity, difference, and cultural diversity. To create a link between the level of the self and the levels of globalization and localization, we discussed the self as being extended to the social environment, a conception that has played a central role in both theoretical and empirical traditions in psychology (e.g., [Aron et al., 2005](#); [James, 1890](#); [Rosenberg, 1979](#)). We argued that in the present era, self and identity can only be properly understood as being extended to the global and local environment and as being formed and transformed by processes on these levels. An important implication of the self as globally extended is the experience of uncertainty that is pervasively present in the selves of people of our world today.

Self as Dialogically Extended

We propose to conceptualize the self not only as extended to the world, but also, and more specifically, as *dialogically* extended to the world,

because we believe that a globalizing world can only be a livable world when dialogical relationships play a central role in the relationships between individuals and between groups. One of the main tenets of this article is that our world can only be dialogical when the self is dialogical as well. The self as a society is not separate from society at large.

The other as self-extension serves as a first link between the three levels. Given the basic extension of the self to the world, we argued that the other is not simply outside the self but rather a constitutive part of the self, in terms of a multiplicity of voices emerging from global–local dialectics. In the field of psychoanalysis, object relations theorists (e.g., [Guntrip, 1971](#); [Winnicott, 1964](#)) have made important contributions to understanding the role of the other as interiorized parts of the self. In an era of increased globalization, however, the number and nature of voices in the self have been expanded dramatically, and we are increasingly involved in mediated forms of dialogue: In contrast to earlier times, dialogical relationships make use of technological advances such as the Internet, E-mail, mobile telephone, multi-user dimensions, and short message systems that expand our dialogical possibilities beyond the boundaries of self and identity as described in traditional theories ([Annese, 2004](#); [Cortini, Minnini, & Manuti, 2004](#); [Hermans, 2004](#); [Hevern, 2004](#); [Ligorio & Pugliese, 2004](#); [Van Halen & Janssen, 2004](#)). As we have discussed, globalization in particular increases the number of individual and collective voices and their mutual relationships dramatically, whereas localization aims more at the stabilization and even limitation of voices in the dialogical field. Particularly when localizing tendencies function as exclusive identity markers (e.g., the own nation or religion as opposed to and above other nations or religions), the localizing voices move the self to the monological end of the continuum between dialogue and monologue. On the global–local interface, we see two risks: One is the monological domination by only one voice (e.g., nationalism, fundamentalism, sexism, or terrorism); another is the disorganized and chaotic cacophony of a multiplicity of voices (e.g., identity confusion, lack of a meaningful direction in life, or rootlessness). Taking these risks into account, individuals and groups in our time are placed in fields of tension between globalizing and localizing forces. In these fields, they are challenged to make creative use of the experience of uncertainty and to open and close themselves dependent on their own needs and the possibilities offered by their situation.

Institutionalized Dominance

The notion of dominance also points to the necessity of a linkage between the three levels. Because dominance relations are intrinsic features of the society at large, they are also characteristic of the functioning of the self as a minisociety ([Gillespie, 2005](#); [Tappan, 2005](#)). Therefore, dominance relationships suggest the existence of linkages between the levels of the individual, the local, and the global. It should be emphasized that social dominance is not regarded as necessarily positive or negative from an

evaluative point of view. In the present theoretical context, it is regarded as an intrinsic aspect of a well-ordered dialogical relationship. Relations of dominance, however, become problematic when institutional and societal structures and ideologies prevent individuals and groups from expressing their voices from their own particular points of view and on the basis of their own specific sources of experience. As we suggested earlier, social dominance is an important reaction to experiences of heightened uncertainty as it results in protective or defensive forms of localization. Such localizations tend to sharpen and essentialize the differences between in-group and out-group, and between self and other, with one's own group or self defined as superior and the other group or self defined as inferior. The consequence is that particular positions in society (e.g., jobs, responsibilities, privileges) remain inaccessible to particular individuals or groups and result in a forced restriction of their position repertoire (Hong & Chiu, 2001). (For the role of social power in relation to gender, race, and class, see Falmagne, 2004; for a discussion of the self in the context of racialization and diaspora from a dialogical point of view, see Bhatia, 2002; Bhatia & Ram, 2001.)

Emotion and Defensive Localization

The third linking concept, emotion, is a necessary element in the dialogical self because, particularly in the context of defensive localization, voices can express indignation, anger, and even hate, and such emotions often lead to uncontrollable escalation (Valsiner, 2002) of violence and destruction on a societal level. It should be noted that it is not our intention to restrict the psychological implications of globalization to negatively experienced emotions only. On the contrary, the loosening of boundaries between cultures, groups, and traditions and the global interchange of (local) goods, practices, and ideas may be a source of positive emotions. In this article, we have emphasized negative emotions as they are characteristic of protective or defensive forms of localization. We have elaborated on the role of such emotions by referring to the distinction between the other as object and the other as abject and described the reaction of excluding this other from one's own self-definition. Again, we want to emphasize the significant role of imagination in the depiction and construction of the abject other. In the context of globalization, Appadurai (1996) has proposed a distinction between individual and collective senses of imagination and has emphasized that the faculty of imagination is not restricted to the individual mind. Collective experiences of the mass media, especially film, video, and DVD, can create communities not only of worship and charisma, but also of animosity and abjection. Conditions of collective reading, pleasure, hate, rejection, and exclusion make groups imagine and feel things together and lead individuals to feel themselves as part of a group that derives its identity not only from separation from other groups but even by their rejection and demonization. Rejection and demonization of other groups, fueled by individual and collective imagination, can be regarded as emotional responses to situations of

intolerable uncertainty. The significant role of emotion in relation to the abject other or group of others, the collective experience of animosity, and the dynamics of escalation between groups in the service of identity protection require an analysis in which emotions of individual people are linked to processes at the local and global levels. Finally, globalization may cause uncertainty about emotion rules as the individual person is exposed to different rules originating from different cultures. Moreover, globalization increases the number and heterogeneity of positions, often leading to tensions between conflicting or opposing positions. Such conflicts require excessive amounts of emotion work and, as a reaction, may motivate individuals to retreat to local groups, practices, and traditions.

In the preceding sections, we have dealt with three main concepts (other-in-the-self, dominance, and emotion) that function as bridges between the levels of the individual, the local, and the global. At the same time, these concepts can be used to demarcate settings and situations where there is no dialogue. Dialogue is not everywhere. It is restricted or even impossible when the self is populated by a high number of disconnected voices of other people, resulting in a cacophony in which any meaningful exchange is impeded (P. H. Lysaker & Lysaker, 2002). Dialogue is even impossible when social dominance in interpersonal or institutional settings becomes so unbalanced that the voice of the subjugated party is silenced or suppressed so that it has no chance to express itself from its own particular point of view. Dialogue is also seriously restricted when the person is absorbed in a particular narrative and its corresponding emotional state to such an extent that the flexibility to move to another emotional state (or the capacity to understand the different emotional state of another person) is seriously reduced.

Some Research Implications

Although it is not our purpose to present a review of literatures that provide empirical evidence or contra-evidence for dialogical self theory, we want to briefly sketch some lines of empirical research that can be suggested by some of the insights described in this article. We do so in the expectation that the presented views have the potential of connecting existing lines of psychological research with the challenges posed by the processes of globalization, localization, and the experience of uncertainty. We limit ourselves to three lines of research: (a) a dialogical approach to private audiences, (b) friendship with out-group partners, and (c) the innovation of the self as a result of globalization.

A Dialogical Approach to Private Audiences

Inspired by the work of symbolic interactionists, Baldwin and Holmes (1987) assumed that a sense of self is experienced in relation to some audience: people who are present or imagined, specific or generalized, actual or

fantasized. These authors referred to the common observation that people respond to a range of different significant others, who represent distinct ways of evaluating the self. They termed such an evaluating other as a "private audience" that could include such divergent figures as a spouse, best friend, religious leader, or business colleague. In one of their studies, a group of undergraduate women visualized the faces of either two friends from campus or two older members of their own family. Later they were asked to read a sexually permissive piece of fiction. When they were afterward asked to rate the enjoyableness of the story, it appeared that participants who had thought of friends from campus reported liking the story more than those who thought of their (supposedly more moralistic) older family members. Apparently, they tended to respond in ways that were acceptable to their salient private audiences. The self-evaluative process was guided by cognitive structures that were primed by the preceding perception of significant others. (For a similar study, see [Baldwin, Carrell, & Lopez, 1990](#).)

The concept of private audience is very well in agreement with one of the premises of dialogical self theory, that positions or voices are always addressing somebody (Salgado & Hermans, 2004). Voices convey messages, knowledge, or information in sign-mediated ways to somebody who is assumed to listen to the message and may respond, in one way or another, to it. The existence of private audiences is quite compatible with the idea that a person or a group is imagined to respond to messages that have become part of the self. However, it should be noted that in Baldwin and Holmes' experiment the audience is imagined but does explicitly convey a message. The respondents see faces, but the faces do not speak or give any sign-mediated response.

We suggest performing social psychological experiments in which private audiences are primed and explicitly talking with the participants so that the effect of messages can be studied on subsequent evaluative responses. Moreover, different kinds of audiences could be introduced, not only those who are familiar to the respondent but also those who are unfamiliar, strange, or belonging to other cultures or even those perceived as direct opponents or enemies. The guiding idea is that the process of globalization implies the introduction of a heterogeneous set of audiences to the self to which the self can respond in various ways (e.g., approaching, avoiding, or opposing).

Friendship With Out-Group Partners and Friendship With Oneself

As we have argued in this article, significant others are represented as intrinsic parts of the self. In close correspondence with this idea, [Aron and colleagues \(2005\)](#) have presented an inclusion-of-other-in-the-self model. The basic idea of this model is that when standing in a close relationship with another person, one includes in the self, to some degree, the other person's perspectives, resources, and identities. To give some idea of the

kind of research that this model has stimulated, we restrict ourselves to two examples.

In psychological research, it is a well-known finding that people recall past successes as more recent and past failures as more distant in time than they actually are. Building on this finding, [Konrath and Ross \(2003\)](#) examined whether people are subjected to the same effect when they take the perspective of their romantic partners. In agreement with the hypothesis, they found the same effect when their participants recalled past events for their romantic partners, but only in those cases in which the partners were felt as close, not when they were felt as distant.

In one of the applications of the inclusion-of-other-in-the-self model, [Aron and colleagues \(2005\)](#) investigated prejudices toward out-groups. They reasoned that intergroup contact is most likely to reduce prejudice when intimate contact with an out-group member is involved. Usually, people treat in-group members as parts of themselves and out-group members not as part of themselves. However, what happens when one develops a friendship with an out-group partner? Aron et al. hypothesized that not only the out-group member but also the out-group member's group identity become part of the self. In this way, they expected that it was possible to undermine negative out-group attitudes and prejudices. On the basis of several studies, Aron et al. concluded that there is support for the proposition that contact with a member of an out-group is more effective in reducing prejudice when one has a close relationship versus a less close relationship with that out-group member.

The research on friendship with out-group members opens a welcome avenue for studies on the effect of globalization and localization because it may contribute significantly to the understanding of how prejudices between social and cultural groups can be reduced and closed boundaries between individuals groups opened. However, the process of globalization poses a problem that goes beyond the pure opposition between in-group and out-group. As we argued earlier, globalization increasingly leads to the emergence of a multiplicity of cultural voices within one and the same individual (e.g., an American man married to a Japanese woman, a Polish scientist studying in the United Kingdom, an Iranian artist looking for asylum in France). The existence of multivoiced individuals creates a more complex situation because there is typically more than one group to which an individual feels attached. Given the existence of cultural differences or oppositions, the different voices may criticize each other or may be involved in a mutual conflict although they may come from groups who are all felt as in-groups. An example may illustrate this complexity.

From struggling cultural positions to internal friendship

From the perspective of dialogical self theory, [Clarke \(2003\)](#) studied the clinical phenomenon of burnout in a people living at the interface of different cultures. One of her respondents, Hawa, was a 30-year-old

woman who had immigrated with her family from Turkey to the Netherlands when she was 5 years old. At the age of 30, she suffered from a burnout that was reason for her to contact a psychotherapist. The psychotherapist proposed that Hawa perform a self-investigation in which she told two self-narratives, one from the perspective of her Dutch position and another from the perspective of her Turkish position. The results showed a severe conflict between the two positions. She described her relationships with several boyfriends, which were very acceptable from her Dutch position but from the perspective of her very moralistic Turkish position were a forbidden area. Although her parents were very important in her life, she could only talk with them about matters of business, never about the things that were of emotional value to her. In the course of therapy, she found out that she was investing an enormous amount of energy in suppressing her Turkish identity as a result of her tenacious attempts to defend her Dutch way of life against the collective voices of her family and original culture. She wanted to be an independent and powerful woman but suffered from guilt feelings because she acted in conflict with the mores that she had learned as the daughter of Turkish parents. The result of the therapy affected her in two ways. She discovered that her Turkish / had more facets than she had ever thought. Her Turkish position was not purely moralistic and expressing only a businesslike attitude. She realized that part of her emotions and her aesthetic preferences were the result of her Turkish education. Also, her Dutch position became more multifaceted. She found out that this position did not purely coincide with her independence and freedom to choose her own friends, but also gave her the space to reflect about herself and to see things from many sides. Gradually, she discovered and emotionally accepted that her Dutch and Turkish positions were not purely competitive, with one criticizing the other, but were mutually complementary. At the final phase of therapy, she had enough courage to introduce her new friend to her parents, who, somewhat to her surprise, accepted him as a welcome guest.

The example of the Dutch–Turkish woman exemplifies two phenomena that are significant to understanding the influence of globalization on the self. Hawa was not living in one cultural group as in-group with the other group as out-group. Rather, both groups were parts of her. The problem was that the two cultures presented her with two very different emotion rules that she were not able to reconcile. Her attempts to be a decent woman who obeyed her parents and her striving to become a strong independent woman required so much emotion work that she ended up burnt out. From an empirical point of view, this case study suggests that it is important to distinguish three lines of future research in the context of the process of globalization and localization. The multiplicity of positions in which individuals find themselves as a result of immigration and intercultural contact requires (a) the investigation of conflicting emotion rules, the experience of uncertainty, and the nature of emotion work that is required to cope with conflicts in the self; (b) the investigation of the

ways in which conflicting positions can be reconciled so that they are no longer experienced as competitive or mutually exclusive, but as cooperating and mutually complementing; and (c) the study of the multifaceted nature of each position separately. This idea behind this suggestion is that the chances of reconciling conflicting positions increases when not only the positive but also the negative facets of positions are taken into account (Cooper, 2003). When the multifaceted nature of each position is acknowledged, there is greater chance that the positions can cooperate on the basis of nonconflicting elements and form effective coalitions (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2004).

Innovative Power of Dialogues

One of the central features of dialogical relationships is that they have the potential of innovating the self. The most straightforward way in which the self can be innovated is when new positions are introduced that lead to the reorganization of the repertoire in such a way that the self becomes more adaptive and flexible in a variety of circumstances (Hermans, 2003). From a developmental point of view, Fogel and colleagues (2002) have argued that children innovate their selves in role-playing situations in which they learn to reverse roles (first the mother is the lion and then the child) and build on them in their own play. From a clinical point of view, Dimaggio, Salvatore, Azzara, and Catania (2003) showed how clients, using a self-confrontation method, were able to "rewrite" their self-narratives in innovative ways, and Neimeyer and Buchanan-Arvay (2004) described how clients can "relearn" the self by revising their self-narratives after traumatic loss.

How can dialogical relationships and the introduction of new positions be used, in empirical ways, to innovate the self? Two ways are briefly described, one referring to the communication with real others, the other focusing on the contact of an imaginary other. In an experimental study Stemplewska-Zakowicz, Walecka, Gabinska, Zalewski, and Zuzek (2005) asked students to discuss whether psychological knowledge could be helpful in passing exams. Some of the students were instructed in such a way that they believed themselves to be in the position of an expert, whereas others received an instruction that made them believe that they were in the position of a layperson. In some experimental conditions, moreover, students were placed in the position of expert or layman in a direct way (both participants received the instruction that they were expert or layperson), whereas in other conditions students were positioned in an indirect way (their interlocutor was instructed that they were an expert or layman, but they themselves did not receive this instruction). The experimenters' intention was that in the latter condition the participants not see themselves as expert or layman, but that they be perceived as such by their interlocutors. The experiment provided confirmation for one of the basic premises of dialogical self theory: that different positions produce different narratives (the students positioned as experts gave

more advice than those positioned as laypersons). Moreover, it was found that even indirect ways of positioning showed this effect, although to a minor degree (students positioned as experts by their interlocutor but not by themselves gave more advice than those that were positioned, also in an indirect way, as layperson). (For another experiment with similar outcomes see [Stemplewska-Zakowicz, Walecka, & Gabinska, 2006](#)).

Experimental research in which participants communicate on the basis of a variety of instructed positions may be relevant to innovation in the self. In the context of globalization, people who are in contact with an increasing diversity of significant others raised in other groups, communities, or cultures may become positioned in direct or indirect ways. Experiments like the one described above could be run with participants instructed to believe that they communicate with people from groups of diverse cultural origin. Such experiments could examine under which conditions participants positioned as a member of a particular culture would learn from interlocutors positioned as members of another culture. A particularly relevant question would be whether participants are able or willing to modify their selves, taking the alterity or otherness of the interlocutor into account. (For the relevance of otherness in the self, see [Simão & Valsiner, 2006](#).)

Imaginary dialogues and innovation

Whereas experiments like those performed by [Stemplewska and colleagues \(2006\)](#) are focused on dialogues with real others, other work has examined dialogues with imaginary others. Drawing on [Marková's \(1987\)](#) model, [Hermans \(1996b\)](#) invited clients in psychotherapy to enter into an imaginary dialogue with a person depicted in the 1930 painting *Mercedes de Barcelona*, by the Dutch artist Pyke Koch (1901–1992). The painting depicts a middle-aged woman, placed in a frontal position so that eye contact with the viewer is possible. Clients were invited to select a personally meaningful part of their previously told self-narrative (a so-called “valuation”) and imagine that they were telling it to the woman in the painting. They were asked to concentrate on the picture and imagine that the woman responded to their valuation. After the woman had given an imaginary reaction to their valuation, participants were invited to return to their original valuation with the possibility of revising this valuation in light of the woman's response. In fact, this procedure involved three steps:

Step 1: Participant presents a valuation to the woman.

Step 2: Woman gives an imaginary response.

Step 3: Participant responds to the woman.

Different clients responded in very different ways to the woman's imaginary response. One client, Bob, a 50-year-old man who participated in this investigation after a 4-year period of depression, gave the following responses:

Step 1: Bob: "I always had to manage things on my own; didn't receive any attention, or affection; was superfluous at home; this has made me very uncertain."

Step 2: Woman: "This sounds very familiar to me: I've had the same experience."

Step 3: Bob: "I recognize the sadness in your eyes."

As this example shows, in Step 3 there are no significant differences in comparison with the original formulation in Step 1. Rather, Bob expresses in Step 3 a feeling that was already present in Step 1 and confirmed by the woman in Step 2. In fact, the dialogical movement does not produce innovative elements. A very different process can be observed in the example of Frank, a 48-year-old man, who referred to his work as manager in a company:

Step 1: Frank: "I trust most people in advance; however, when this trust is violated, I start to think in a negative way; this can have harmful consequences."

Step 2: Woman: "You should keep your openness; however, your trust should become somewhat more reserved and take into account the topic involved."

Step 3: Frank: "You are right; I must pay attention to this; reservations in this will also help me to control my negative feelings."

In this case, the woman, in the role of a wise advisor, offers Frank a new perspective (Step 2) that is incorporated in his final reaction (Step 3), so that the original formulation (Step 1) has been further developed. The content of his final valuation in Step 3 involves not only a central element of the woman's response (reservation), but also a central theme in his original valuation (negative thinking). Frank brings together and integrates elements from Steps 1 and 2 in Step 3 and thus constructs a final valuation with a considerable innovative and synthesizing quality. Dialogical procedures are particularly relevant in light of [Appadurai's \(1996\)](#) discussion of the role of imagination in collective experiences in the mass

media and especially in film, video, and DVD that can create not only worship and charisma but also animosity and hate. Three-step procedures like the one proposed by [Marková \(1987\)](#) may be helpful in studying in detailed ways to what extent people involved in contact with remembered, anticipated, or imagined others innovate their selves in dialogical ways or confirm and defend it in a monological fashion. Such studies should pay attention to the ways in which emotions (associated with liked, disliked, and abject others) can be changed and innovated as a result of internal and external dialogues. (For the notion of emotional creativity, see [Averill, 2004.](#))

For the future of dialogical self theory, it is of crucial importance to expand its empirical evidence to avoid a gap between theory and research. Further development of the theory might profit from research traditions and methodologies devised in mainstream psychology. We are in strong agreement with [Sakellaropoulo and Baldwin \(2006\)](#), who proposed interconnecting the recent field of dialogical science and the more established field of interpersonal cognition in this way:

We believe that to further increase the understanding of both interpersonal cognition and dialogical science, researchers should strive to incorporate each area's fundamental principles into the other. Although research into interpersonal cognition has progressed significantly in the last decade, much work remains. Despite dialogue being a core component of self and identity, a dialogical component to interpersonal cognition is essentially lacking. Indeed, the majority of the dependent variables in the studies we reviewed in this article [[Sakellaropoulo and Baldwin's](#) review of developments in the field of interpersonal cognition] are fundamentally non-dialogical in nature (e.g., affect, self-esteem). On the other hand, dialogical science, still a relatively recent enterprise, could benefit greatly from the methods and findings already available in the interpersonal cognition literature. (p. 63)

Future research in the field of dialogical science may very well profit from the foundational work by classic theorists such as James, Mead, Cooley, Pierce, and Bakhtin (see [Wiley, 2006](#), for a review of literature, and [Colapietro, 2006](#); [Leary, 2006](#), and [J. Lysaker, 2006](#), for commentaries). However, to be recognized as a respected science, it is necessary to develop the dialogical field in a theory-guided, empirical direction, taking advantage of both quantitative and qualitative methods and of both experimental and experiential approaches. Building on the work of the founding fathers, new and challenging theories should be created that may profit from equally developed assessment methods and research procedures that are essential to revise and improve existing theoretical notions.

Future Perspective

In our view, the global–local nexus requires a theoretical bridge between social, cultural, and historical sciences on the one hand and biological and neurosciences on the other. Social and cultural approaches offer a welcome contribution to the understanding of self and identity from one side of the bridge, but biological and neuroscientific approaches offer their own contributions from the other side (see also [Cromby, 2004](#)).

Developments in dialogical self theory have the potential to provide a conceptual framework for creating viable connections between the two disciplinary groups. On the interface between culture and brain, we envision a promising field of research that is interested in the question of how experiences of certainty and uncertainty, including their behavioral consequences, can be understood in the context of the processes of globalization and localization.

Around the above-mentioned bridge between culture and brain, we envision a number of other disciplines that can feed dialogical self theory in the future. Some of these disciplines played, directly or indirectly, a significant role in the present article. Sociology has the potential to offer more knowledge and understanding of identity problems and conflicts resulting from immigration, diaspora, and bidirectional global movements (from the West to the East and vice versa; from the North to the South and vice versa). Psychiatry can focus on the conditions under which dysfunctions of the self are the result of the experience of uncertainty or insecurity associated with globalization and can offer knowledge about dysfunctions that are typical of defensive localization. Political science provides analyses of institutionalized power differences and the injustice experienced by many groups who are on the “wrong” side of economic welfare, technology, and digitalization in a globalizing world. Economics contributes insight to the causes of binary economies and poverty on a global scale and develops models for redressing such imbalances. In collaboration with other disciplines, the relation between economic deprivation and identity construction should be studied in depth. Ethics can widen our horizon by studying the ethical implications of self-formation and identity construction. As [Richardson, Rogers, and McCarroll \(1998\)](#) have shown, a moral worldview was self-evident in a premodern era. In the present era of accelerated globalization, it is necessary to revisit the ethical dimension in close connection with dialogical notions of self and identity. Cultural anthropology is well equipped to perform comparative studies of local practices such as witchcraft, health practices, beliefs in demons, and other cultural rituals that influence self and identity. Contributions from history could provide a thorough analysis of the times in which the first signs of globalization were visible and how people of different eras responded to the experience of uncertainty. Philosophy could also deepen our historical awareness. The notion of dialogue has been a central concept in philosophical treatises since Plato. Social sciences interested in the study of self and identity could learn much from philosophical views on the relationship between multivoicedness, dialogue, and agency as exposed in various philosophical traditions. Literary

sciences could function as a bridge to the realm of art. The metaphor of the polyphonic novel, a significant source of inspiration to the theoretical framework of the dialogical self, was originally based on the novels of Dostoyevsky, whose writings can be seen as one of the first signs of the retreat of the omniscient narrator in Western literature (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). Explorations on the interface of literary sciences and social scientific literature regarding the contemporary experience of uncertainty could result in insights that are of immediate relevance to understanding the process of globalization.

The present article can be seen as an invitation to a dialogical approach with contributions from disciplines that are often working in splendid isolation from each other. Such an approach can only be promising if dialogue is not only studied but also practiced. One form of such a practice is to cooperate as scientists and humans originating from divergent cultural backgrounds and working together as members of the same globalizing society.

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