Doctoral Thesis

Postcolonial Perspective on International Knowledge Transfer and Spillover to Indian News Media
From Institutional Duality to Third Space

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Abstract

This thesis examines the ways in which postcolonial ambivalence – a symptomatic condition of postcolonial societies in which they simultaneously embrace and reject the cultural, political and economic processes and expressions of the “ex-colonizer” – plays out in current globalization. This dialectic may be particularly apparent in the transfer of knowledge from developed-country MNCs to subsidiaries located in formerly colonized, now developing countries. It may also play a prominent role in the spillover of such knowledge onto local industries. Mainstream studies in these two fields, however, converge on the argument that institutional differences between the MNC’s home country and the subsidiary context – institutional duality – plays a key role in explaining knowledge transfer and spillover, in particular the failure of these processes. Such conceptualizations, however, deprive supposed knowledge recipients of agency. The work of postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha, on the other hand, shows that when meeting the (ex-)colonizer, postcolonial subjects may draw on both cultures to create hybrid expressions. Rather than stressing the negative effects of differences between institutional logics, this conceptualization allows for the potential of innovation in encounters between cultures in what can be referred to as a third space that does not fully represent the MNC or the local context.

Drawing on Homi Bhabha, I perform an interview-based study of Reuters’ transfer of knowledge of newsgathering practices to its Indian subsidiaries in Mumbai and Bangalore. I also undertake an interview study of knowledge spillover among practitioners in Mumbai’s news media.

The study on knowledge transfer shows how, in a process of mimicry, postcolonial subjects aspire to, reinterpret, adopt, reject but are also unable to internalize and implement knowledge in its entirety. The result may be hybridization of MNC knowledge, finding expression in hybrid values, practices and work outcomes. In the study on knowledge spillover, I find that foreign knowledge enters a political space where debates on FDI and existing local practices influence spillover process and outcomes. When mimicking Western practices locals take a reflective stance where local and foreign values and practices are critically examined and applied in discerning fashion – selective spillover. These findings lead me to suggest that, rather than viewing processes of globalization in a celebratory-bleak binary framework, future research should consider the dialectic between the power of MNCs and the agency of local actors to subvert that power. This dialectic may potentially be captured by considering the institutional situatedness of both Western and local knowledge rather than automatically assuming the superiority of the former over the latter.
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PART I
INTRODUCTION
I Setting, Purpose and Scope of Research

In the first chapter of my thesis, I set the stage for my purpose by relating the FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) controversy in India (1.1), a debate characterized by what may be described as postcolonial ambivalence, a state in which the cultural, economic and social (among other) signs of the (ex-)colonizer are both aspired to and rejected by the (ex-)colonized (1.2). This state is rarely recognized in international business and management research (1.3), and my overall purpose is to bring these into conversation (1.4). My more precise research purpose involves generating a deeper understanding of the influence of postcolonial ambivalence on international knowledge transfer and spillover (1.5). I pursue this purpose by privileging the knowledge recipients’ perspective (1.6) and drawing on postcolonial theory to study the transfer and spillover of knowledge related to newsgathering practices (1.7) to Indian news media (1.8). I conclude the first chapter by presenting my intended contributions (1.9) and outlining my thesis (1.10).

1.1 Setting the Stage: the FDI Controversy in India

After an eight-year critical debate, on June 25, 2002, the Government of India made a major policy decision to allow 26 percent foreign direct investment (FDI) in the news and current affairs segment, annulling a 1955 cabinet resolution barring foreign ownership in the newspaper sector. Critics claimed that foreign ownership would bring a “mixture of imperialist propaganda and attempts to subvert whatever independent views the Indian print media has upheld” (Karat, 2000) and declared the move a “direct attack on the Indian constitution” (Moorthy, 2000). Indian Newspaper Society chief Pratap Pawar even labelled FDI the “death knell of the Indian Press” (www.rediff.com). Proponents of FDI, in contrast, argued that MNCs would not only help break the oligopolistic and monopolistic concentration of the media industry (Sonwalkar, 2001; www.pib.nic.in) but would also introduce global best practices. One report described this event as a “logical, timely and careful opening up” by the then Information and Broadcasting minister Sushma Swaraj (www.frontline.in), “logical” and “timely” as liberalization of the print sector coincided with the opening of the Indian skies to satellite television and “careful” referring to limitations on ownership. In fact, the

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1 See Sonwalkar (2001) for details on the debate related to FDI in the Indian print media.
legislation introduced two safeguards protecting news content from foreign influence. First, a single Indian shareholder must have at least a 26 percent stake, and similarly, foreign ownership may not exceed 26 percent. Any change in shareholding patterns requires prior permission from the Information and Broadcast Ministry. This would prevent Indian firms from being crowded out by foreign firms and ensure structural plurality, particularly because foreign investors can only invest in existing enterprises. Second, to ensure that editorial control remains in Indian hands, at least three-quarters of the board of directors as well as all key editorial posts, including chief editors, must be resident Indians.

A decade later, a similar controversy arose regarding FDI in the retail sector. Small shop owners and local retail chains joined forces to protest against the coming of foreign chains. The fears were largely the same — foreign actors would crowd out local businesses, resulting in job losses and influences on consumption patterns and even life-styles (Bhattacharya, 2012). Local shops’ margins would be squeezed and consumer prices would increase, it was argued (www.ndtv.com). IKEA and WalMart were among the most vociferous would-be foreign investors, lobbying heavily for restrictions on FDI in retailing to be removed. Foreign investment would benefit consumers through increased competition and better products, it was reasoned. In the view of FDI proponents, consumer prices would actually decrease with more efficiently managed supply chains and more professionally run retail businesses. This change could also act as an inspiration to local businesses in a sector traditionally characterized by poor productivity, lobbyists argued (Jhamb & Bharadwaj, 2006). In December 2012, the Indian parliament adopted a middle-ground solution; 51 percent foreign ownership stakes were permitted, forcing foreign retail chains to collaborate with local actors.

Discussions on FDI and multinational corporations (MNCs) are invariably political in nature, and contentious debates have arisen many in postcolonial/developing societies. On the one hand, there is often a desire to attract MNCs for development purposes, not least for the knowledge that they are expected to bring. Many developing countries that strive to emulate the West, therefore, open their economies to foreign investments. However, such enthusiasm often exists alongside fears of foreign domination and control. Nightmares of neo-colonialism rank high alongside fears of homogenization or

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2 Resistance to FDI and MNCs occurs in developed countries too, but the focus of my thesis is on MNCs from developed countries coming to developing countries under the garb of promoting economic development. Throughout the thesis, I use the terms "Third World", "developing countries", and “postcolonial societies” synonymously since most so-called developing or Third World countries are also postcolonial nations (Escobar, 1994, 1995) with around three-quarters of the world’s population having been, at one point or other, subjected to colonization.
what is commonly called “westernization” of the world, resulting in the annihilation of one’s own socio-cultural world. Such fears are often channelled into resistance against multinationals. Debates on MNCs are thus often characterized by a desire to embrace globalization but at the same time preserve one’s socio-cultural core. For instance, while arguments against FDI in India have invariably invoked the fear of a return to colonial rule, there is a concomitant desire to partake in the capitalist system. This ambivalence — of simultaneously embracing and resisting globalization and the associated elements of modernity — has often dictated FDI policies. The 26 percent cap on foreign ownership in media and the requirements that foreign retail chains take local partners are examples of the way in which ambivalence towards FDI translates into economic policy.

1.2 Postcolonial Ambivalence

I am interested in the aforementioned dispute as it represents a moment in the present where the desirability of global integration is concomitantly couched against nationalist rhetoric that makes frequent references to India’s colonial past. However, why do we see this eagerness to, on the one hand, validate the need to integrate with the global economy and, on the other hand, expunge it by labelling it as “imperialist” or part of a “neo-colonialist agenda”?

I see this simultaneous impulse as an instance of what postcolonial scholar Ashis Nandy (1989) calls “psychological resistance to colonialism”. Nandy (1989) argues that the imposition of an overarching colonial structure enforces certain ways of thinking about and perceiving the colonized society, forming new cultural, social and political rules for the colonized, rules that translate into new criteria “of being”. These criteria result in a colonial consciousness that is bound to seep into the everyday meanings and habits of colonial subjects. Impositions of colonial conventions often mean that the existing societal frameworks within which the society has thus far perceived itself are altered to set in force new aspirational standards (Dhareshwar, 1989). Conditions of legitimation instituted by the new regime generate as a covert response changes within the colonized space. As a consequence, the ruled are compelled to inhabit a borderland of two simultaneous frameworks: one representing the space of the colonized and the other imposed by the ruler. This creates a psychic space in which the inhabitants can switch from one modality of being to another. Because the subjects inhabit two worlds, thereby generating what Bhabah (1994) calls a “third space”, hybrid identities emerge (Nandy, 1989) as the ruled are psychologically persuaded to mimic the ruler in their language, attitudes and world views.
This change in the psychic realm of the colonized, critics argue, is far more permanent than any structural setup that colonization enforces (Bhabha 1994; Nandy 1989; Fanon 1963, 1968). Various scholars have examined the nature of these changes in the colonial space and their seepage into the postcolonial period (Gandhi, 1998). In particular, Bhabha (1994) emphasizes that hybrid selves are not merely colonial modes; they also represent an essentially *postcolonial* condition, or a way of resisting and yet embracing the power of the dominant. Once the systems of direct political imposition are removed, Nandy (1989) and Gandhi (1998) argue, hegemony operates through the need and will for postcolonial subjects to mimic colonial norms. When discussing the presence of this desire in contemporary India, Nandy (1997:223) notes “*When India resists these global orders, the resistance is articulated and legitimized by this self; when India opens itself up for globalization, that opening up and the zeal that goes with it are mediated through the same self*”. Thus, the altered subjectivity inflicted on the once colonized continues to operate within the psychic realm, even in postcolonial times. For Bhabha (1994), too, contemporary globalization perpetuates the condition of liminal subjectivity instituted during colonial times because globalization, in many ways, enforces the perception of being ruled and having one’s culture suppressed, once by means of force, now through rapid capital flows. Henceforth, I use the term “*postcolonial ambivalence*” to indicate the continuation of this consciousness originally instituted by colonial rule and now exacerbated by globalization, a condition characterized by a simultaneously inward- and outward-looking dialectic, a symptom of postcolonial identity.

## 1.3 Postcolonial Ambivalence and International Business and Management Studies

Postcolonial ambivalence, the state of inhabiting a space that exists on the threshold of two worlds, in many ways dictates the socio-cultural and economic-political contours of postcolonial societies. However, despite its concern with FDI and MNCs, and thus Third World conditions, notions of postcolonial ambivalence have made few inroads into organization and management studies (Prasad, 1997, 2003; Jack et al., 2011), particularly International Business and Management (IBM) studies (e.g., Westwood, 2006; Westwood & Jack, 2007; Banerjee & Prasad, 2008; Özkazanç-Pan 2008; Frenkel 2008; Jack et al., 2008; Jack & Westwood, 2009). There are several interrelated reasons for this neglect.

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3 The term International Business and Management Studies is used by Westwood (2006) to encompass a broad range of research on economic activities pertaining to globalization, including research in business administration and economics traditions.
First, many IBM phenomena, especially those related to FDI, are theorized in ways that preclude any attention being directed at issues of colonization and their continuing effects (Westwood, 2006; Westwood & Jack, 2007; Özkazanç-Pan 2008). In particular, IBM phenomena are often conceptualized as ahistorical undertakings. When placed in a historical setting, references are often made to globalization and rapid technological advances rather than to historical relationships between countries. Although the part played by advancement in communication technologies and global capitalism cannot be ruled out in facilitating contemporary globalization, the enabling role of historical geo-political relations, patterns and structures, meanings and vocabularies (Westwood, 2006) also should not be understated.

Second, while IBM studies largely treat contemporary globalization processes as ahistorical without complicating them with their colonial links and legacies, the field profusely borrows its conceptual framework for understanding and articulating the “Third World” from the colonial framework of progress, modernity and civilizing missions. As a result, the differences between the developed West and the “developing rest” are frequently conceptualized within a dichotomous framework; wealthy industrial nations, not only their economic institutions but also their social and political institutions and ways of life, are taken as the logical endpoints of progress (Westwood, 2006). The differences between industrialized and non-industrialized nations are organized into hierarchical binaries, which gravitate toward the Manichean opposites of “developed/under-developed”, “modern/traditional”, and “rational/emotional” (Prasad, 1997). The cultures, traditions, institutions and, most importantly, people and identities of non-industrialized societies are placed lower in the hierarchy than those of developed countries which represent the supposed aspirations of developing countries (cf., Fougère & Moulettes, 2007, 2009, 2012; Kwek, 2003). An array of terms exists to describe the differences between developed and developing countries in various sub-fields of IBM studies. “Institutional duality”, “psychic distance” and “cultural distance” are a few of these terms (cf., Leung et al., 2005), all of which are grounded within the same dichotomous framework where the characteristics of each category are pre-determined (Fougère & Moulettes, 2007, 2009, 2012; Jack & Westwood, 2009). Though there has been increased academic interest in understanding the differences between cultures and people from the Third World under the umbrella of cross-cultural management, the way in which third-world people and cultures are theorized remains largely the same. The result is that everyone is placed within the same framework, regardless of whether its dimensions are relevant to their reality. Those not conforming to standards or norms are

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4 Of course, institutional duality, psychic distance and cultural distance may exist also between developed countries, but my research deals specifically with a context where geopolitical relations are a central feature in developed-developing country relationships. I therefore use the terms to refer to this specific context.
considered “others”. By “othering” actors that do not behave in line with the norms or standards established in Western research, they are objectified, and little concern is devoted to their context and the factors that may be important to them or relevant to understanding their motivations (Spivak, 1994). In effect, “their cultures are erased, smoothed over, homogenised or ignored” (Westwood, 2006:99). An example of this tendency is Hofstede’s (1980) often-referenced study of cultural dimensions, into which all cultures are located. Critical scholars reject such standardizing frameworks, instead urging an understanding of the context of those who are studied and the creation of frameworks that bear relevance to them (Prasad, 1997, 2003; Westwood, 2001, 2004; Jack & Westwood, 2009). This essentializing of cultures, institutions and identities within a dualistic trap leaves little space or scope to accommodate or account for the “in-betweens”, “the hybrids” and “the third spaces” (Frenkel & Shenhav 2006; Frenkel, 2008) that may result from encounters between new and old, East and West, past and present, global and local. This has significant consequences for the ways in which research represents the Third World and deprives third-world inhabitants of a voice to speak for themselves (Özkazanc-Pan, 2012, 2015).

Third, many sub-branches of IBM studies largely draw on quantitative, positivist methodologies closely emulating the conceptual paradigms of the natural sciences and econometrics by viewing human behaviour in aggregates (Adler, 1983; Jack & Westwood, 2006; Jack et al., 2008; Westwood, 2001, 2004). Common to these approaches is a quest for predictable, law-like explanations and theories of human behaviour and rationality. With prediction as their central feature, such frameworks often look at outcomes rather than generating a processual understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Kwek, 2003). As a result, there is limited room for understanding the ambiguities arising from historical experiences (of locals) and the variability of cultures and identities (Özkazanç-Pan, 2008, 2012, 2015; Jack & Westwood, 2009). Although understanding (cultural) differences has become a central thrust within IBM and cross-cultural management in particular, culture is frequently taken to be pre-determined, monolithic, fixed and quantifiable; identities are taken to be stable, conscious and national in character (Kewk, 2003; Özkazanç-Pan, 2008, 2012, 2015).

Though there is no dearth of theoretical insights and methodological tools within critical approaches to help us understand the finer nuances of lived experiences, hybrid identities and cultures, the dominance of quantification has left little scope for such interpretative perspectives. Econometric models and survey research are posited as more accurate, scientific, objective and generalizable, whereas qualitative interpretative methodology is commonly derided as inaccurate and lacking in the ability to provide generalization and predictability; consequently, qualitative interpretative methodology is approached by many with scepticism (Birkinshaw et al., 2011; Piekkari &
Despite calls to embrace new paradigms in recent years — even in leading IBM mainstream journals such as Journal of International Business Studies and Management International Review — there is considerable institutional pressure on IBM scholars to employ quantitative frameworks to maintain so-called scientific respectability (Birkinshaw et al., 2011). Due to its dominant theoretical and methodological paradigms, the complexities of the human dimension of IBM processes are often unaccounted for in analyses. Thus, there is restricted space and scope for IBM research to accommodate the lived experiences of the Third World with all its ambiguities, contradictions and hybridity. Conceptualizations shy away from addressing the complications that FDI generates in host countries and the way in which the historical context influences these phenomena because they may not neatly fit into quantifiable categories. In particular, failure to account for the complexities that colonization induced and its continued influence on current processes has serious consequences in that it skews the ways in which we understand and research IBM phenomena. By ignoring the ambivalence that is often typical of postcolonial societies, research therefore also ignores the third space that MNCs inhabit (Frenkel, 2008), and we neglect the hybrid identities (Özkazanç-Pan, 2012, 2015) that may translate into hybrid processes and outcomes of many IBM phenomena, leading to inaccurate results and simplistic theorization of IBM phenomena.

Acknowledging and accommodating the condition of postcoloniality and the way in which it influences current IBM phenomena invariably require space for the Third World to speak and account for their experience with the ensuing changes that multinational corporations bring. There is a need to move beyond the current research practices and embrace socially inclusive approaches to understanding the identities and lived experiences of people involved to promote a more inclusive culture of knowledge construction in the field. Critical scholars acknowledge the need to consider and embrace alternative worldviews and eclectic methodological approaches, such as postcolonialism, to examine questions about the Third World in relation to IBM. Postcolonial theory, with its potential to critique the knowledge construction of the Third World, is a useful tool for engaging with the voice and complexities of the Third World that has hitherto been marginalized in the current knowledge construction. Its theoretical concepts of “Orientalism” “Third Space” and “Hybridity” can enable IBM scholarship to attain deeper and richer insights.

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5 The launch of the special journal “Critical Perspective on International Business” in 2006 is specifically devoted to promoting counter hegemonic approaches.
1.4 The General and Specific Purposes of
My Research

The broader and more general purpose of my thesis is to incorporate postcolonial
ambivalence, which is a characteristic feature of postcoloniality, as a qualifying addition to
existing theories of IBM. I argue that academic efforts directed towards understanding contemporary IBM scenarios – especially in postcolonial societies – should engage with the ongoing influence of colonial history and consider the ways in which these forces of history and current international business undertakings intersect and interact. I examine the dynamics of their interplay by undertaking two studies on important FDI phenomena, one study focusing on International Knowledge Transfer and the other focusing on Knowledge Spillover. I perform these studies by exploring the issue of identity around which historical and global influences intersect and interact. I understand identity as a perpetual process of “identification” (Hall 1996) influenced by the interweaving forces of the past and the present. This offers me a lens to engage with the dynamics of power and history that continue to determine current processes of economic globalization. Exploring the manner in which the present global flow of capital, knowledge and ideas and the past project of colonial modernity intersect and the way in which one cannot fully grasp the former without attending to the latter is the central aim of my thesis. I present India, with its globalizing present and colonial past, as a particularly useful site to examine the interplay of these historical and contemporary forces. Indian news media, where discussions of FDI have been particularly heated and where substantial elements of ambivalence towards the foreign can be traced, may be a sector that is well suited for empirical inquiry to support my overall aim. In exploring the way in which the (local) individuals caught up in the process of globalization make sense of the changes underway and the way in which they juxtapose themselves and invalidate essentialist views of who they should be, my attempt is to uncover the intricate role of postcoloniality in a globalizing terrain. Thus, the more specific and narrow purpose of my research is

to generate a deeper understanding of the influence of postcolonial ambivalence on international knowledge transfer and spillover. I pursue this purpose by applying postcolonial theory to a study of the transfer and spillover of knowledge related to newsgathering practices to Indian media.

My project, in this respect, is part of a growing body of work that positions postcolonial theory in a dialogue with IBM, a conversation that provides an important analytical framework that can reveal valuable and new meanings to IBM studies, particularly in relation to postcolonial societies. It is important to note, however, that although adopting a postcolonial perspective means
exploring the capacities and limitations of existing geopolitical categorizations when conceptualizing organizational and other social realities, it does not automatically mean that the findings of all research in “mainstream” traditions need necessarily be rejected or treated as irrelevant. To the contrary, in my view, critical research should enter into a dialogue with established research streams by pointing out some of their fallacies and suggesting alternative routes for future studies by releasing space for thoughts other than the normative enshrined in dominant research streams. That is, in seeking to explore the interplay of postcolonial identities and current IBM processes, I hope to extend existing conceptualizations of IBM by drawing together two fields of scholarship, i.e., IBM and postcolonial studies, that are not in as often in conversation as they should be in spite of similar subject focus.

The remainder of the first chapter is devoted to discussing these ideas in greater detail and justifying the scope of my research. First, I discuss international knowledge transfer and international knowledge spillover, two supposedly central vehicles of economic growth in so-called developing regions, as described in the mainstream literature. I also address how, through the parameters of culture and institutions, the Third World is conceptualized in IBM literature, with a particular focus on the knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover streams. These conceptualizations are associated with significant problems, however. I discuss how some of these problems are derived from the ways in which we understand the relationship between “developed” and “developing” countries and a general lack of understanding of the supposed knowledge recipient’s perspective on these processes (1.5). In the subsequent section, I elaborate on what I mean by adopting a knowledge recipient’s perspective in my research (1.6). I then proceed to discuss the “knowledge component” in international knowledge transfer and spillover. In particular, I justify my choice of studying knowledge related to newsgathering practices and place this type of knowledge in the broader discourse on media ethics and objectivity in news reporting (1.7). The subsequent section addresses why India and its news sector in particular are suitable contexts for my research (1.8). In the two final sections, I specify my intended contributions (1.9) and present a thesis outline (1.10).

1.5 Why Study Two FDI-related Knowledge Processes?

Whereas the central thrust of my thesis is to complicate current conceptualizations in IBM studies with issues of postcolonialism, I limit my research to international knowledge transfer and international knowledge spillover. Below, I discuss both phenomena in light of their significance to
Third World economic development. I also explain my choice of undertaking two studies.

1.5.1 The Knowledge Transfer and Spillover Phenomena as Described in the Mainstream Literature

Over the last three decades, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been the dominant form of capital flow in the global economy, especially to developing countries. The enthusiasm of many developing nations for FDI is not surprising when seen in light of powerful theoretical arguments placing FDI as the principle agent of economic development (Findlay, 1978; Das, 1987; Ozawa, 1992; De Mello, 1997; Borensztein et al., 1998; Markusen & Venables, 1999; Blomström, 1991; Balasubramanyam, 1984, 1996; Hansen & Rand, 2006; Li & Liu, 2005; Lall & Narula, 2004). This model of growth is referred to as the “endogenous growth model” and places technological advancement at the centre of development and MNCs as “missionaries” who spread management and technological know-how to the less developed regions of the world (Romer, 1986, 1990, 1993; 1994; Lucas, 1988). In this FDI-led model of economic development, when MNCs enter new markets, they trigger changes in the behaviour of local actors when they participate in and observe activities of foreign firms. The learning of new practices that takes place (Meyer, 2002; Markusen & Trofimenko, 2009) thus contributes to restructuring local economies (Markusen & Venables, 1999; Blomström et al., 1999; Fosfuri et al., 2001; Poole, 2007). In other words, it is theoretically projected that by introducing new knowledge, multinationals act as catalysts that challenge and inspire local actors to alter established behaviours, systems and institutions (Benhabib, 1994; Rodríguez-Clare, 1996). Two main modes of knowledge dissemination are found in the literature. First, when multinationals establish subsidiaries in host countries, they transfer technical and managerial knowledge to their local organizations (Rosenzweig & Nohria, 1994; Kokko & Blomström, 1993). Such knowledge may arrive with expatriates but also as MNCs offer training to local employees (Minbaeva, 2007). This represents a direct mode of knowledge diffusion that is specifically aimed at developing local capabilities and is generally termed “International knowledge transfer” (see Figure 1.1).

A second mode, which is in many ways more important for the development of local economies, involves the positive externalities that are generated in the host economy with the arrival of multinationals (see Figure 1.1). Knowledge, it is argued, has a tendency to “leak” to local actors which also allows them to develop new capabilities (Blomström & Kokko, 1998). This is generally termed “knowledge spillover” (Hymer, 1960; Crespo & Fontoura, 2007). The literature describes three spillover mechanisms: (i) Local firms and people may imitate MNCs’ products and practices. This is referred to as a demonstration effect.
(Findlay, 1978). (ii) Externalities are also generated when local employees trained by multinational enterprises work for local firms, an effect usually known as labour mobility (Fosfuri et al., 2001; Gorg & Strobl, 2005). (iii) Knowledge also spills over to local actors through the development of backward and forward linkages, i.e., ties are created between multinationals and local suppliers, customers and other stakeholders (Lall, 1980).

Figure 1.1: Knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover

With these mechanisms, the spillover literature argues, FDI can raise the levels of human capital, spur competition and increase the allocative efficiency of local firms by compelling them to use either the new advanced technologies employed by MNCs or the existing technologies more efficiently to maintain market positions (Borensztein, 1998; Ozawa, 1992).

Although the two phenomena are studied within different research traditions, they are thus clearly related, not only by their empirical association but because postcolonial ambivalence may operate in similar ways; both phenomena require the participation of the individual, who must be able and willing to internalize and implement knowledge, a process that may be characterized by ambiguous or contradictory impulses. Focusing on these two related phenomena may therefore help me gain deeper insight into postcolonial ambivalence itself and its current contours in an international business context. I may also be able to point to commonalities across different but related fields in what may be broadly understood as the IBM landscape. By showing the influence of postcolonial ambivalence on phenomena that operate at different levels, I can thus make a stronger case for postcolonial ambivalence/identity as a valid qualifier for understanding business realities of the Third World; through a case study on knowledge transfer, I can delve into the ways in which postcolonial
ambivalence works in an organizational context, and a study of knowledge spillover may provide me with the setting to examine the ways in which postcolonial ambivalence operates at an industry level. Though they are visibly irreducible to each other, knowledge transfer and spillover may nevertheless demonstrate similar tensions and interactions between the East and West, old and new, and global and local. Whereas the nature of these processes may be specific to each phenomenon being studied, they may also represent homology in the ways they express themselves in the realm of everyday habits of people caught between, in the liminal or “third” space (Bhabha 1994). Interestingly, there have apparently been no crossover studies that empirically examine the relationship between knowledge transfer and spillover (Meyer, 2004). As both phenomena entail absorbing (foreign) knowledge by locals, they represent moments of interaction in which the dialectic of simultaneously looking inward and outward plays out at an individual level but may also be understood at a collective level as societies grappling with contradictory impulses to adopt and reject the foreign. Although host country nationals are thus central actors in both processes and link the phenomena, we know very little of how such a linkage may be expressed empirically. Although my thesis is primarily concerned with exploring the ways in which postcolonial ambivalence influences the process of knowledge transfer and spillover separately, it may also help illustrate such linkages.

1.5.2 The Third World in Studies of International Knowledge Transfer and Spillover: Where Is the Knowledge Recipient?

The emphasis in both the knowledge transfer and spillover literatures lies heavily on attempting to measure success and explain failure. In both streams, failure is generally understood to occur due to differences between the home country of the multinationals (where the knowledge was generated) and the host country. Conceptualizations in studies on knowledge transfer have advanced further than the spillover field, though, and make frequent reference to the differences between so-called informal institutions, which are often expressed in terms of culture, language and psychic distance (Ambos & Ambos, 2009; Bresman et al., 1999; Minbaeva, 2007; Håkanson & Ambos, 2010; Ambos & Håkanson 2014; Kedia & Bhagat 1988; Bhagat et al., 2002). For example, Kostova and Roth (2002) argue that the greater the institutional distance between the home and host country is, the greater the challenges are in transferring knowledge to a foreign subsidiary. Regardless of terminology and conceptual advancement, studies in both streams generally imply that developing countries are characterized by backwardness, which means that they are un receptive to the presumably superior knowledge from developed countries.
This understanding may be partly attributed to the way in which the knowledge recipient is conceptualized in research. Such conceptualizations fall into either what I call the “empty-vessel theory” or the “sponge theory”. In the empty-vessel theory, it is implied that when knowledge is transferred or spills over, the recipient’s mind is like an empty vessel that can be filled with knowledge or is a blank slate on which knowledge can easily be imprinted. Alternatively, recipients are conceptualized as in the sponge theory, in which they are waiting with rapt attention to be filled with incoming knowledge without resistance or critical judgment regarding the purposefulness of that knowledge in their own context. Due to these assumptions, when transfer and spillover studies record negative results, it is concluded that the recipient’s capacity to absorb knowledge is low (Minbaeva et al., 2003; Mahnke et al., 2005; Björkman et al., 2007).

In both the knowledge transfer and spillover literature, the knowledge recipient is thus regarded as a key success (failure) factor. Spillover studies use terms such as labour mobility and imitation effect to denote the mechanism of knowledge spillover; knowledge transfer studies talk of, for example, low absorptive capacity (Björkman et al., 2007) and poor motivation (Minbaeva et al., 2003; Minbaeva, 2007) of knowledge recipients. Both streams are thus greatly concerned with human-centred phenomena. It is, therefore, interesting to note that there are so few attempts in either the knowledge transfer or the spillover literature that elucidate the way in which knowledge recipients relate to the knowledge that comes with MNCs, only whether they are able to adopt it. Armed with insights regarding postcolonial ambivalence, however, we may instead conceptualize the knowledge recipient as a subject with significant agency who may both aspire to and reject elements of foreign knowledge in a complex process where historical, geopolitical and socio-economic conditions and relations play important roles (cf., Frenkel, 2008; Mir et al., 1999, 2008; Mir & Mir, 2009). Unearthing knowledge recipients’ responses requires greater sensitivity to their situation and the way in which they relate to the knowledge they face. It also requires a different unit of analysis than the “industry level” which is employed in most research on knowledge spillover. In other words, to understand the way in which postcolonial ambivalence may influence the process and outcomes of knowledge transfer and spillover, we will need to privilege the knowledge recipient’s perspective in a way that significantly differs from extant research.
1.6 Why Focus on Knowledge Recipients, and What Does It Mean?

Conceptualizations of knowledge recipients according to the empty vessel and sponge theories offer little space to understand the role of recipients’ agency and the way in which agency is enacted under conditions of postcolonial ambivalence. Although the role of human agency (of recipients) is acknowledged to influence the outcome of transfer in the international knowledge transfer literature (Becker-Ritterspach, 2006; Becker-Ritterspach & Dörrenbächer, 2011), the agency assigned is still functionalist in nature and is limited in scope. Studies in this vein are largely devoted to the micro politics of organizations in which knowledge recipients are primarily represented by their institutions, paying little attention to the views of knowledge recipients as such. In my endeavour to understand the transfer and spillover process from the recipient’s perspective and, in particular, the way in which the postcolonial setting influences these processes, I aim to move past the limited and institutionally and culturally pre-determined understanding of recipients’ agency that the international knowledge transfer and spillover literatures apply.

The central idea that infuses my analysis of postcolonial ambivalence within the realm of IBM is the issue of identity. An emphasis on identity helps me to explore issues of colonial experience and its continued influence on the contemporary process of globalization. However, given the array of influences (past and present) at work, I do not subscribe to an essentialist or stable notion of identity. Rather, I adopt a more strategic, provisional and contingent one. In my approach to identity I do not subscribe to a stable or settled notion of self through “the vicissitudes of history” (Hall 1996:17) nor core essences that dwell underneath the shallow layers of the many selves to which one holds on. Rather, identity for me means a fractured and fragmented process in which individuals are continuously negotiating who they are. This manner of identity is performative (Butler 1990; Bhabha 1994), constantly “remaking the boundaries” and “exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference” (Bhabha 1994:313).

If understood as balancing on the border between the discursive structures that seek to interpellate us and our moments of resistance against those structures, the analysis of identity provides us with the scope to delve into the dialectic of power and agency. In my upcoming research on knowledge transfer and spillover, I attempt to show how recipients push back against pre-existing labels (through which we understand them so far) creating a slippage from existing categories. In so doing, I challenge notions of stable selfhood that rest upon notions of a complete (national, cultural) identification (Hall, 1996; Özkanaz-Pan, 2012, 2015). Moreover, unlike the pre-eminence of the category of nation
within studies of both knowledge transfer and spillover, my invocation largely
denotes a postcolonial identity.

It is important to note that although my project works more closely with the
idea of identity, the related concept of subjectivity is also an important concern.
Given that the two concepts largely entail notions of selfhood, their differences
must be clearly demarcated; whereas identity is usually understood as a
relational concept that draws on existing categories of, e.g., race, gender, or
nation to which the self may subscribe, subjectivity means being placed into
such (or other) categories by the discourse, institutions or even states. This
understanding of identity, by its very approach, allows for agency, even if the
nature of that agency must be continuously contested. Subjectivity, in contrast,
emerges from the concept of interpellation (Althusser, 2001) and entails the
internalization of a discourse about who one should be. In a broader perspective,
then, whereas subjects are produced by language, institutions and state
machines, identity allows space for at least the hypothetical idea of granting
space to identify oneself. Wetherell (2008), however, argues that the difference
between identity and subjectivity is not a neat one and, while demarcating their
distinctions, scholars must also make room for the two concepts to inform one
another. As Venn (2006:78) indicates, “Subjectivity and identity are necessarily
interrelated. […] Together they institute subjects as specific selves.” This approach to
identity “is guided by the recognition that in the background of the problem of identity one
finds quite basic questions about the ‘who’ – of action, of agency, of lived experience”. Venn
(2006:80) further argues that an analysis of subjectivity and identity “directs
attention to the linguistic, discursive, technical, temporal, spatial and psychological reality of
the processes and to the locatedness of identity and subjectivity by reference to their imbrication
or embeddedness within the technico-material space of culture in which they are staged”. This
implies that identity always consists of subjectivity within particular historically
formed cultural narratives. Any discussion of identity, then, must incorporate a
conscious consideration of narrative, ideology, history, language and material
conditions. At the same time, any treatment of language must include a strong
consideration of identity.

By privileging the knowledge recipient’s view, I thus endeavour to capture
subjectivity, i.e., the discourse into which the knowledge recipient is
interpellated and the discourse of who the subject should be, but also identity,
i.e., their self-conception within these multiple forces that they inhabit and with
which they continuously grapple. In particular, I let the two concepts of
subjectivity and identity combine and contradict to bring out the complexities
of recipients’ agency in knowledge transfer and spillover processes.
1.7 Why Focus on Knowledge Related to Newsgathering Practices?

First, I discuss the types of knowledge found in studies of knowledge transfer and spillover. I then justify my choice of media sector and, in particular, why I choose to look at knowledge relating to newsgathering practices.

1.7.1 Types of Knowledge

In both the spillover and knowledge transfer literature, a conceptual distinction is made between technical and what may broadly be termed managerial knowledge (Kostova, 1999; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). The former literature, though, particularly emphasizes technological knowledge. Indeed, the endogenous growth model on which theories of spillover are largely founded presents technological knowledge spillover as a primary means of economic development (Blomström, 1991; Blomström & Kokko, 1998). Management knowledge is primarily treated as being embodied in technological knowledge, i.e., the former is needed to utilize the latter. Empirical spillover research tends not to distinguish between these forms of knowledge. The empirical knowledge transfer literature, conversely, is primarily concerned with management knowledge (work practices, organizational practices, and organizational knowledge). Conceptually, technological knowledge is presented as “objective” knowledge that can be more easily codified (Kostova, 1999). Management knowledge has a more implicit nature and typically involves the transfer of work practices, which are more value-laden than technological knowledge and may, to a greater extent, rely on the recipient’s interpretation. The transfer of management knowledge therefore implies the transfer of values and, to some extent, the transfer of schemas for sense-making. This greatly complicates the knowledge transfer process, and the management knowledge transfer process may take on a different character than technological knowledge transfer. Many scholars argue that such a distinction may be somewhat simplistic, though, and that technological and management knowledge go hand-in-hand (Kostova, 1999).

The distinction between management and technical knowledge becomes particularly salient in light of discussions on postcolonial ambivalence. It is possible that codified, technological knowledge may generate less ambiguity among recipients and can be managed more effectively. In the case of managerial knowledge concerning work practices, however, the differences in values and value systems, not just the knowledge of how work should be performed, may generate a more ambiguous response in the intended
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recipients. In this case, the differences may operate at a deeper level and may therefore have a stronger impact on transfer and spillover processes.

To understand how knowledge of management practices spill over, it is important to understand the way in which knowledge is transferred to a subsidiary, how local employees learn the new knowledge and how it translates into practices. By focusing on just one type of knowledge and adopting this bottom-up view on spillover, more can be understood about the way in which local actors resist or accept knowledge, and how knowledge spillover transforms practices in the industry. Studying how management knowledge spills over to local industries may also offer insight into how local institutions operate.

If the individual is to adopt new management knowledge, this involves not just understanding and assimilating knowledge of a work practice but often accepting or at least understanding the values that underlie this practice. In a sense, it involves changing attitudes at a level not necessarily required to adopt technical knowledge. Therefore, adopting a knowledge recipient’s perspective may be particularly important to understanding the case of management knowledge. Conversely, studying management knowledge transfer and spillover from a recipient’s point of view might also give more insight into the way in which postcolonial ambivalence operates at the individual level compared to a study of technical knowledge transfer and spillover.

To summarize, in my work I will thus employ a broad understanding of management knowledge; it includes not only abstract knowledge of how to perform a particular task, but involves the values underlying knowledge and the practice of implementing knowledge.

1.7.2 Knowledge Related to Newsgathering Practices and the Objectivity Debate

In news media, journalism practices and operations are rooted in the culture, values and expectations of its society, and they create distinct institutional logics that are at least partly unique to each country’s media system (Herrschener, 2002; Strube & Berg, 2011). In other words, the culturally and societally bounded nature of media operations may present greater challenges to knowledge transfer and spillover than what, for example, manufacturing industries may experience. Many differences in journalism practices stem from different understandings of the concept of objectivity. Although the definition of objectivity in the Anglo-Saxon media system tends to emphasize that objectivity denotes news free of opinion, this is but one understanding which is rooted in the capitalist-driven development of its media system (Hanusch, 2009). To
clarify, with the growing importance of advertising revenue, press in the US and the UK increasingly removed opinions from news reports to avoid alienating potential advertisers. These practices were subsequently given a “moral veil”, generating a strong discourse of objectivity as being partisan-free (Schudson, 2001). Research has shown that even within Europe, there are other understandings of objectivity founded in other historical, economic and social developments (Esser, 1998, 1999; Donsbach & Klett, 1993). For example, in the German tradition, reporters are expected to provide their views on important events and take partisan stands on issues of social importance. Journalists are seen as serving a higher purpose: to criticize, educate and lead opinions. Unlike the more “egalitarian” Anglo-Saxon ideal, where everyone can form an opinion based on news reported without bias, the German system involves an informed elite “talking to the masses” (Deuze, 2002).

Differences in journalism institutions also exist between developed and “developing” societies. News media in colonial societies were largely set up by the colonizers as part of their “civilizing” mission (Golding, 1979). Studies have shown, however, that rather than being carbon-copies of the media systems of the colonizers, current media practices in many postcolonial societies are historically situated in a freedom struggle against the colonizer. For example, attempts to transplant Anglo-Saxon understandings of objectivity to India and South Africa contrasted with the roles played by journalist as voices of anti-colonialism, resulting today in diverging newsgathering practices and principles underlying these perspectives (Rao & Lee, 2005). Though such practices may be deemed inferior and the result of weak local institutions in traditional postcolonial rhetoric, they are historically and socially situated in the same way that Anglo-Saxon capitalist-driven objectivity is.

Thus, contrasting institutional/cultural forces may be more pronounced and more clearly visible in the news media sector than in many other industries. With the increasing internationalization of media industries, media practitioners often find themselves grappling between different systems of journalism tradition (Herrscher, 2002).

Postcolonial ambivalence may therefore be more apparent among journalists working for foreign media firms than among workers in many other sectors. On the one hand, reporters have to abide by the journalism principles established by the multinational media firms where they work; on the other hand, they are pulled towards the practice-logic rooted within the local institutional bounds. There are also heated debates regarding foreign involvement in media, and most countries have some form of legislation in place to regulate foreign media ownership. Because media is usually considered a principal institution of democracy, national ownership of the media sector is seen as a fundamental constituent of political sovereignty (Schlesinger, 2000).
Media is also often perceived by governments as endowed with special “nation-building” properties, giving rise to the doctrine of technological nationalism (Anderson, 1983; Giddens, 1981; Smith, 1980), which maintains that nationhood depends on technology, particularly the communication infrastructure, to create a national identity among citizens. Foreign owners, it is believed, may use media outlets to manipulate public opinion or exert influence over the politics of the host country. Similarly, there are cultural concerns that the unique cultural identity could be undermined if foreign ownership were allowed in media (Doyle, 2002). Journalists working for foreign firms may thus, to some extent, face questions about their work, which may possibly contribute to the postcolonial ambivalence that they may feel towards foreign journalism practices.

In my research, I thus focus on the transfer and spillover of newsgathering practices with special emphasis on news sourcing practices. News sourcing practices is a fundamental part of journalism and is often an important measure of objectivity, especially in a capitalist-driven media system. However, practices related to news sourcing are institutionally entrenched. Focusing on news sourcing practices may therefore contribute deeper insights into postcolonial ambivalence than would research conducted in many other sectors of the economy.

1.8 Why India?

The general purpose of my thesis is to explore postcolonial ambivalence, which is a characteristic of postcolonial societies in which the dialectic of love and hate towards the West (and all that it encompasses, including global modernity and capitalism) operate simultaneously, and to uncover its influence on ongoing processes of globalization, here exemplified by international knowledge transfer and spillover. India, with its colonial history and globalizing present, constitutes an appropriate research setting to pursue my research purpose for several reasons.

India is at the centre stage of contemporary globalization, with particular strengths in information technology and a huge population of young, often English-speaking, people. Alongside economic development, India is characterized by social changes. It is against this backdrop that celebratory accounts of globalization are pitted against bleak critiques of capitalism and cultural imperialism. This ambivalence is often encountered in debates on FDI and MNCs; India is therefore a particularly suitable setting for my inquiry.

On a related note, as IBM issues are to a great extent studied in the context of Western MNCs undertaking FDI in developing countries, it makes sense to
select a similar setting for my research so my findings can usefully contrast to extant research. In particular, it is important to select a setting where management practices of Western MNCs differ significantly from local management practices. By being a so-called developing nation, India offers a suitable context with a cultural and institutional setup that is distinct and different from that of developed countries (Jeffrey, 1993, 2002, 2006). Because India is in the process of shifting from a highly regulated socialist pattern of economic development to one based on market-led reforms, the institutional setting is under pressure; although policy reforms aim at facilitating market-led changes, the legal and bureaucratic frameworks of socialism remain largely intact, as do various other institutions. Thus, a liberal model of development has not fully replaced the mixed economy model premised on a socialist outlook (Shastri, 1997; Aghion et al., 2008). India consequently serves as a good example of cultural and institutional differences, where established socialist institutions along with a mix of colonial culture and language struggle to maintain legitimacy and battle emerging capitalist institutions.

The Indian media sector also allows me to pursue my inquiry into postcolonial ambivalence, as it is often understood to be well developed with journalism practices that are distinctly Indian in nature (Jeffery, 2002). Indian journalism practices are strongly rooted in their historical beginnings, when they acted as a tool for the struggle for freedom against British rule. Journalism also played a significant political and social role as India attained independence as a fledgling democracy in 1947. The news media sector has traditionally also served an important economic role and is surrounded by an extensive legal framework. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the introduction of FDI in the Indian news media was a much-contested process. This debate and the ensuing legislation indicate that journalism operations and perceptions regarding journalists’ roles are embedded in the social, economic and political trajectory of India. Therefore, when multinational media firms come to India, they have to address long-established institutions. This may generate tensions as MNCs try to implement non-Indian practices. Knowledge spillover processes may similarly be shaped by strong, opposing institutions. In other words, postcolonial ambivalence may operate prominently in this setting.

1.9 Intended Contributions

To summarize the discussion so far, knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover are considered key vehicles of economic progress in developing countries. The literature argues, however, that due to poorly developed local institutions, the supposed knowledge recipients may lack the capacity to absorb knowledge from foreign MNCs. This debate is characterized by an ever-present assumption regarding the superiority of Western knowledge and practices, the
essentializing of culture and the associated clumsy operationalizations. It also lacks regard for the lived experiences of those who are supposed to receive the foreign knowledge. These assumptions and approaches may limit our understanding of knowledge transfer and spillover in practice, and new avenues for research can be developed by better understanding the perspective of the knowledge recipient, in particular, the way in which the recipient grapples with foreign knowledge in light of the postcolonial ambivalence that characterizes individuals and collectives in many developing countries. I pursue this issue by focusing on the transfer and spillover of knowledge related to newsgathering practices of Indian media.

A study of postcolonial ambivalence in current globalization must make a strong case for its significance, given the many – seemingly more urgent – causes to which research efforts could potentially be directed. I am motivated by the calls made by scholars who state that complicating current IBM phenomena with a continuing colonial legacy deserves high priority among issues to be analysed and investigated within the general arena of IBM studies (Westwood, 2006; Westwood & Jack, 2007; Jack & Westwood, 2006, 2009; Jack et al., 2008; Özkazanc-Pan 2008). In seeking to unearth postcolonial ambivalence and the ways in which it influences the processes of economic globalization such as international knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover, I seek to instantiate theory. Through an example of India as a site that allows one to see the interaction of these forces given its colonial past and globalizing present, I uncover the links between the two to better grasp the way in which the vestiges of the colonial past affect the present. It is in this light that I position my intended contributions below, i.e., through my study, I seek to add to the existing scholarship on postcolonialism and to the IBM field in general. With its narrower focus, my study makes contributions to the fields of international knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover, but I also strive to contribute to the discussion of FDI policy in the media and the debate on media ethics. More broadly, my thesis can also be seen as a commentary on the ongoing discourse on globalization. Though my intent is not to propose a particular standpoint (for or against globalization), my work can hopefully provide some insights that support a more practice-oriented and less ideological globalization discourse. Finally, I also strive to present implications for managerial practices, particularly with regard to knowledge transfer.

(i) Contributions to the broader discourse on globalization. Although there is a huge array of perspectives that could have been employed to elucidate the role of postcolonial ambivalence in the globalizing terrain, my project represents an attempt to understand the very “human condition” itself. Addressing the ways in which individuals identify and position themselves within historical and global forces in a world that persistently seeks to place labels on them is a key motivation that underwrites my work. Living in a world where individuals on
an everyday basis have to cope with changes also means dealing with the uncertainty of where one belongs. In addressing how subjects in my empirical work cope with this globalizing business terrain, I seek to gain a better understanding of the effect that globalization has on people.

(ii) Contributions to the knowledge transfer literature. By looking at knowledge transfer from the perspective of the knowledge recipients acting in a context characterized by postcolonial ambivalence, I will suggest new ways of understanding how recipients internalize and employ knowledge and suggest ways of studying knowledge transfer processes and outcomes that do not rely on overly rationalistic or positivist models, thus paving the way for a critical approach that is largely missing in the literature. In doing so, I question the concept of absorptive capacity and prevalent understandings of what constitutes successful knowledge transfer.

(iii) Contributions to the knowledge spillover literature. By offering views of local actors, who are the carriers of spillover, I contribute to opening the spillover “black box”, which is a potentially important addition to a literature that stands at the juncture of inconclusive results. More specifically, I provide a critical view on an important spillover mechanism, namely, labour mobility, thereby providing suggestions for new critical research directions and methods in a field that is largely characterized by macro-economic models of growth.

(iv) Contributions to the discourse on Global Media Ethics and Objectivity. The thesis contributes to the ongoing debate on global media ethics and objectivity by offering a perspective from a postcolonial context, which has so far been neglected in the dominant discourse. By highlighting indigenous theories and practices relating to media objectivity, my thesis also aims to provide space for non-western voices in this discourse.

(v) Contributions to the policy discourse on FDI in media. In spite of public and policy interest, academic research on the impact of foreign media ownership has traditionally been relatively limited (Hollifield, 1999, 2001; Zajacz, 2004). One reason may be that the topic falls into a grey zone between academic fields. Communication historians and policy researchers tend to ignore the international context, whereas international communications scholars usually fail to address domestic legislation. As a result, most of the research into the origins of and justifications for limits on foreign ownership in media has been undertaken by legal scholars (Zajacz, 2004). Because foreign ownership in media was prohibited in many countries prior to the 1980s, multinational media ownership was, in turn, also not widespread outside consumer magazines, thus limiting the potential for research on the long-term impact of foreign ownership (Hollifield, 1999). Although media industries in many countries have been partially liberalized since the 1980s and foreign ownership is now wide-
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spread, there are apparently no studies on international knowledge transfer and spillover in the media sector. Therefore, little is known about how local knowledge recipients deal with institutional pressures from foreign owners and how knowledge transferred to the foreign subsidiaries of media MNC spills over to influence local media practices. Thus, there is a legitimate need to systematically study the consequences of FDI in the media to balance the policy debate, which is largely based on ideology rather than empirical analysis. More specifically, the study shows some of the consequences that arise as the host country’s knowledge and values clash with knowledge and values that foreign firms try to introduce. Furthermore, if the aim of governments (especially in developing countries) is to attract FDI so that knowledge spillover can promote economic development, then studying the way spillover works rather than just focusing on its end results (i.e., measuring spillover through increased local firm productivity) will generate insights that may impact policy development, not least in the media sector. Additionally, by exploring the terrain of conflicting host and home country media practices, my research may allay some fears regarding foreign dominance over local media practices with the arrival of FDI.

(vi) Contributions to managerial practice. Although this is not a primary aim of the thesis, its results will allow for some managerial insights generated by adopting the knowledge recipient’s perspective. More specifically, by understanding how and why employees resist new knowledge, firms can develop better strategies for international knowledge management.

(vii) Contributions to post-colonial theory. Many postcolonial scholars note that there is a lopsided emphasis on textual analyses at the expense of “postcolonialism-at-work” (cf., Ahmad, 1992; Dirlik, 1994; Parry, 2002; Srinivas, 2013). That is, scholarship in the postcolonial tradition is criticized for not engaging directly with the people and collectives under study and for not considering their lived experiences. This applies equally to the IBM realm (Srinivas, 2013). Of course, textual analyses in many ways echo postcolonialism-at-work and vice versa. For example, as researchers engage with practitioners and policy makers, the language and attitudes of the latter find expression in research texts, textbooks and policy documents (cf., Fougère & Moulettes, 2012). Conversely, textual expressions have a performative nature because they, e.g. through education, shape practitioners’ and policy makers’ understanding of IBM phenomena, the way in which international business ”should” be practiced and the language that is appropriate in this context. Consequently, by analysing postcolonialism in IBM texts, we may thus understand something of postcolonialism-at-work. However, engaging directly with participants in IBM activities may help us better understand the way in which the postcolonial discourse informs and is informed by everyday experiences. For example, such work may provide a richer picture of how individuals and organizations understand their roles, create their identities and achieve their own ends (cf., Prasad, 2003; Jack et al.,
2011). My thesis also constitutes a forum for knowledge recipients to express their stories and experiences, which have so far been subdued in the IBM literature. Thus, this research is part of a critical corpus of work altering the terrain of international business studies by providing a platform for discussing developing country realities.

1.10 Thesis Structure

The thesis is divided into four parts and has eight chapters (see Figure 1.2).

1.10.1 Part I – Introduction

Part one of the thesis addresses the research background and scope of the study. This part also justifies the critical orientation underlying the research. Chapter 1 sets the stage of the thesis, discusses its research problem, outlines the scope of the research to be undertaken, presents its purpose, and discusses the thesis’s intended contributions. More specifically, it argues for studying the phenomena of knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover by considering the postcolonial ambivalence that characterized many ex-colonies. Chapter 2 discusses postcolonial theory as an approach to unearthing elements of the “orientalist discourse” that underpins the way we talk about and understand many IBM phenomena and may help us understand the ways in which postcolonial subjects may respond to foreign knowledge. The chapter also discusses the potential resistance to the orientalist discourse and the resulting hybridization of knowledge and practices. In chapter 3, I address some methodological consequences of adopting postcolonial theory as my framework and present the design of the empirical research.

1.10.2 Part II – Knowledge Transfer

Part 2 presents a study of knowledge transfer. In Chapter 4, a critique of the discourse on international knowledge transfer is performed using a postcolonial lens. The critique looks at the key dimensions of the phenomenon and main research findings, and evaluates some of the assumptions underlying the discourse. This critical review is the foundation of an empirical study presented in Chapter 5. There, I focus on the transfer of news sourcing practices to the Mumbai and Bangalore branches of Reuters India by allowing knowledge recipients to share their views and understanding of a range of aspects. Reuters is a particularly suitable case for this inquiry since it is a major MNC in the media field, germane to India by representing the former colonial power, and employs a range of formal and informal means knowledge transfer.
1.10.3 Part III – Knowledge Spillover

Part 3 follows the same structure as Part 2. A critical review of the spillover discourse in Chapter 6 challenges some of the literature’s key constructs, findings and underlying assumptions. It also emphasizes the importance of understanding spillover from the perspective of the local actor. The chapter concludes by suggesting an alternative conceptualization of the spillover phenomenon. Subsequently, Chapter 7 lays out the findings of an interview-based empirical study of knowledge spillover and analyses these using post-colonial lenses. In particular, I focus on spillover through employees in the Mumbai news media industry who have past experience from working for Reuters or other international media firms operating in India, but now work for local firms.

1.10.4 Part IV – Conclusion

Part 4 concludes the thesis in a single chapter, which begins by outlining the thesis’ key contributions to our understanding of globalization and the knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover literatures. Subsequently, the chapter discusses contributions to the discourse on global media ethics, FDI policy and managerial practice. I conclude the chapter by reflecting on the transferability of my findings to other contexts and how the discourse on institutional duality relates to third space.
Figure 1.2: Thesis structure
2 Theoretical Foundations of Postcolonial Ambivalence

In my second chapter, I elaborate on postcolonial ambivalence. I begin by justifying my overall theoretical scope (2.1) and then introduce postcolonial theory (2.2). I subsequently discuss two main strands within postcolonial theory that may help me understand and capture postcolonial ambivalence: "orientalism" (2.3) and "hybridity" (2.4).

2.1 Introduction

The colonial experience complicates issues of IBM in the case of postcolonial, usually also so-called developing, nations. The residues of history modulate the eco-political and socio-cultural landscape, as displayed in both foreseeable and unpredictable ways in the everyday habits of nations and their inhabitants. Most importantly, colonization impacts the self-conception of people who are caught in a transitional space propagated by the colonial framework. The subjects of my study, who are all bound up in this in-between space, bring to the fore this historical interaction in prominent ways as the colonial experience persists within the realms that co-create their identity. In particular, this has an impact on the way in which they interact with Western influences in the contemporary business sphere. Though my purpose is to illustrate the way in which these residues operate in relation to the phenomena of International Knowledge Transfer and Knowledge Spillover, an adequate understanding of the way in which postcolonial ambivalence manifests itself is essential before I can attempt to grasp how it informs subjects’ identities and its eventual influence on central IBM phenomena. Examining colonial continuities and the ways in which they dictate contemporary processes and relations is a primary charge of the theoretical development of postcolonial studies, which offers fundamental support for my research endeavours.

Though I do not engage with all concepts within what is broadly understood as postcolonial theory, instead focusing on a few concepts that are useful for my research, this vast field of inquiry implicitly informs my analysis. It helps me to make a case for the relevance of my work and offers an ongoing conversation to which I seek to contribute. Postcolonial theory is thus relevant to my research in three ways: (1) it underpins my research by informing my general understanding of phenomena in postcolonial societies and the relations of these societies with the West, (2) it is directly employed in the analyses of my
empirical findings in subsequent sections, and (3) it helps me position myself as a researcher. In this chapter, I address the first two issues as I draw on the works of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha. Together with Gayatri Spivak, whose work informs my discussions on methodology in chapter three, these theorists are collectively referred to as the “Holy Trinity” of postcolonialism (Young, 2000).

Below, I first provide a brief overview of the key tenets of postcolonial theory (2.2). I then discuss the central concept of Orientalism, which refers to the discourse by which the West created its understanding of the non-West (2.3). Through colonization, colonial subjects were interpellated into this discourse, and its pervasiveness in creating a colonial consciousness means that it can also be considered the very framework in which postcolonial societies and their subjects imagine themselves. Postcolonial ambivalence, a defining characteristic of postcolonial societies, represents the continuation of colonial consciousness in postcolonial times. It can be understood as generating a “third space” where postcolonial societies and their subjects create hybrid understandings and practices that draw on resources available in their own context and that of the (ex-)colonizer. I discuss these issues in the subsequent section (2.4). Throughout the text, I relate such discussions to my own work on postcolonial ambivalence within the IBM realm.

2.2 Postcolonial Theory

The term postcolonialism was first used in the years following the Second World War, when decolonisation resulted in the emergence of newly independent nation-states. Since then, the term has expanded well beyond this temporal marker and is commonly used to denote all aspects of the heterogeneous colonial process, from the beginning of colonial contact to the present day (Gandhi, 1998; Young, 2001; Loomba, 1998, 2007). However, understandings of Postcolonialism as a field of inquiry are as diverse as they are contested (Ahluwalia, 2001; Rattansi, 1997). For instance, some scholars argue that if the term “post” in postcolonial designates temporality, thereby signifying the conclusion of the colonial era, it is “prematurely celebratory” in declaring that end (McClintock, 1992). In announcing the move of societies from one historical phase to another, such an understanding may unwittingly subscribe to the very framework it is trying to challenge. It may also suppresses differences between the so-called postcolonial societies by assuming that all colonial experiences were alike and, in doing so, itself subscribe to the very binary of the colonial/postcolonial that it seeks to challenge. The term postcolonialism is also closely associated with poststructuralism and incorporates a nebulous range of discursive practices, such as slavery, dispossession, settlement, migration, multiculturalism, suppression, resistance, representation, difference,
The central point of postcolonial intervention is the Western knowledge structure and its mode and method of knowledge construction. In particular, postcolonial theory endeavours to deconstruct and critique Eurocentric and Western representations of non-Western worlds and challenges canonical texts and theories that make claims about the non-West (Ashcroft et al., 1995; Barker et al., 1994), theories and claims that would be untenable without presupposing an implicit Other, which comprises what the West is not. This dichotomous presumption favours one category over the other; as a framework of implicit reference, the West becomes the standard setter by which other societies and cultures are judged and measured. Postcolonialism also involves an attempt to recover “native” knowledge that may have been effaced or marginalized under colonization (Moore-Gilbert, 1997). Paolini (1999) argues that not only does postcolonialism redirect our attention to the edge of the Western gaze and enable the deconstruction of eurocentrism, but it also problematizes the categories on which much of the discussion on present-day global relations draw. Thus, postcolonialism critiques contemporary globalization processes as unevenly restructuring world relations around the role of the economic-political, the appropriation of the Other, the spread of modernity with its liberal-humanist rhetoric of universalism, the hegemony of some forms of knowledge and delegitimation of others, and the limited scope of Third World
agency (Chowdhry & Nair, 2002; Goldberg & Quayson, 2002; Lopez, 2001; Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

Although it is important to acknowledge postcolonial theory’s temporal and contextual foundations (Ashcroft et al., 1995; Williams & Childs, 1997; Loomba, 1998), its strength lies not in its historical orientation but in its potential as a set of conceptual and methodological tools for critiquing the colonial foundations of contemporary power structures. In postcolonial theory, the discussion has especially converged on different ways of understanding the relation between, on the one hand, material socio-economic processes and, on the other hand, text, knowledge, culture and ideology, a debate summarized by expressions such as “culture and politics” and “knowledge and power” (Loomba, 1998). These intertwined theoretical developments have enabled postcolonial critics to conceptualize how colonial power is not merely a question of economic and military strength but also concerns cultural representations and politics of identity in a contemporary world order (Gandhi, 1998, Young, 2001).

As a field of critical inquiry, postcolonialism has been particularly enriched by the theoretical contributions of Said, Bhabha and Spivak and by many scholars following their lead. In their work, they highlight the problems of the current meta-discourse and knowledge formation, and some of their insights have been summarised as a set of “analytical tools” or “strategies of analysis” (Ziai, 2000). Although these tools have predominantly been used in analyses of texts, in recent works, they have been successfully deployed to the empirical study of social realities and are now widely applied across various fields of postcolonial inquiry to deconstruct the assumptions on which knowledge about the Other is generated and institutionalized. At their most general level, they share a common commitment to reconsidering the colonial encounter and its continuing impact from the perspective of former colonized countries, regions and peoples, but within the context of contemporary globalization; together, they help us understand not only the power connotations of most discourses but also give voice to the marginalized by questioning the ontological and epistemological foundations of the East-West discourse.

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6 Over the last two decades, there has been an increasing use of postcolonial inquiry in fields as diverse as medicine, education, law, marketing, and tourism, to name a few.
2.3 The Orientalist Discourse as the Foundation of Postcolonial Ambivalence

Relationships between Europe and its “Other” have been the focus of significant scholarly ambitions, particularly following the publication of Edward Said’s (1978) *Orientalism*, a seminal work on the relations between the East and the West that is frequently posited as the discursive origin of the field of postcolonial studies. In his work, Said explored the ways in which the “Orient” as an idea was constructed and created in European minds and became an effective tool in buttressing the imperial ambition.

In his work, Said traces the discursive and textual constructions of Western “truths” about the “East” to illustrate the way in which these truths concomitantly consolidated Western political hegemony and Western cultural power. Edward Said (1978) critically examines over three hundred years of colonial writing, revealing how these literary pieces affirmed an imperialist view of the world during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In particular, the variety of textual forms demonstrated the way in which the West imagined the Orient and reproduced it through various political, social, scientific, and ideological discourses that consequently created and sustained an otherness as part of an imperialist apparatus: colonial rule.

Said (1978) derives three interconnected meanings of Orientalism. First, he recognized it as an *area of specialization* or a scholarly quest of the Orient wherein Western scholars engaged in studying, researching, or teaching about the Orient. Second, for Said, Orientalism also refers to all instances in which a Westerner has either imagined or represented the non-west through various forms of writing. This encompasses a rather long period because it includes roughly two millennia of Western consciousness about the East (Gandhi, 1998). Last, Said conceived of Orientalism as a massive *inter-textual system* for dealing with the Orient. In this regard, Orientalism is a network of “rules and procedures which regulate what may be thought, written or imagined about the Orient” (Gandhi, 1998:76). This final definition is vital because it delivers an understanding, in a Foucauldian sense, of the Orient as a discourse (Hall, 2006).

2.3.1 Characteristics of Orientalism – Binarism and Essentialism

According to Jacques Derrida (1982), Western knowledge structures are based on binary oppositions, a hierarchy in which one term is privileged over the other. Binarism ranges from general binaries such as reality/appearance, good/evil and speech/writing to more complicated and culturally driven
binaries, such as centre/periphery, black/white, man/woman, colonizer/colonized, modern/tribe, and self/other. According to Said, the binary framework is not only the underlying logic in the construction of the “Orient”, but also acted as a means for the justification and success of Western imperialism (Said, 1978). In his work “Orientalism” Said uncovers an elaborate hierarchy of binary oppositions in which the Occident (West) is contrasted in privileged terms over the Orient (non-West). This served to produce a representation of the Orient as something ontologically inferior to the West (civilized/savage, developed/undeveloped, modern/archaic, scientific/superstitious, nation/tribe). Orientalism, argues Said, depicts a systematic “body of theory and practice” that constructs and represents the Orient positing a fundamental “ontological and epistemological distinction” (1978:6) between the Occident and the Orient. Thus, Orient becomes what Occident is not (Loomba, 1998). This hierarchical duality implies “universalism” on the one hand and “essentialised particularism” on the other (Westwood, 2006). That is, the discourse on orientalism essentializes the differences by “othering” the non-west from itself and universalizing the value-system/ideologies/growth trajectories of the West to be the only form of legitimate practices to be followed (Said, 1978). Thus, there are two important components that characterize the binary attitude. The first is the idea of Europe’s uniqueness and superiority over the rest of the world due to its attainment of scientific progress and its embrace of instrumental rationality; the second is the transferability of European models to non-European cultures. Under this guise, Europe becomes not only the leader, equipped with absolute knowledge about development and progress, but also the standard-setter for the rest of the world (Sardar, 1999). By stripping this framework of its universalistic elements, Said profitably demonstrated the way in which these categories became a justification for and principal part of global and cultural imperialism. Said further attested that racism, ethnocentrism and nationalism are central to such modernist universalism rather than antithetical to it (Said, 1993).

Although the colonial/oriental hierarchy was replaced by a development hierarchy during the 20th century, it continues to inform contemporary relationships between the West and the East. Binaries such as developed/undeveloped, modern/traditional, advanced/backward, First World/Third World in the current development discourse are thus a historical continuum with similar connotations that serve the interests of Western imperialism at the present time (Escobar, 1984, 1995; Westwood, 2006; Cowen & Shenton, 1995, 1996). The central reason that these binary tendencies are so persistent and historically extremely successful is that they help Westerners define their self-image. Said argues that the idea of Orientalism is not far from the collective notion identifying Europeans as an “us” against those who are non-Europeans. By defining the “other”, Europe becomes aware of itself. Significantly, Said illustrates that the West is also a construct and that the
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colonised Orient “helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (1978:1-2).

Binary understandings legitimize social, economic and political categories and justify intervention by the superior category toward those in the lower-ranked category. They also silence the critique of themselves in the name of humanitarianism and benevolence. A major theme that resonates within European writing on the Orient is the belief that the West should civilize the East and teach the “natives” the meaning of liberty, development and progress (Said, 1978). Orientals were stereotyped and essentialized as “irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different” as opposed to the rational, virtuous and mature Europeans (Said, 1978:40). The geographic Orient was also depicted as feminine, timeless, bizarre, lustful, backward and lazy, in contrast to the civilized, masculine, moral and productive West. These negative categories (about the Orient/al) appeared to hold an objective truth that, as a result, created a monolithic body of knowledge about the Orient/al character, its culture, history, society, practices and traditions. These ideas were unified into knowledge about Orientals and made their “management easy and profitable” under the “all embracing Western tutelage” (Said, 1978:35-36). Therefore, the Orient/al was (is) considered in need of the civilizing direction of the West. The body of knowledge obtained, constructed and consumed by the West’s textual “scrutiny, study, judgment, discipline, or governing” thus justified Western domination, intervention or interference (Said, 1978:41).

Another important implication of binary categories in understanding the difference is they all involve an interpretation of the Orient rather than the actual description of it. These categories even construct the Orient in a manner that precludes an ability to speak for itself. This issue of (fallacy of) representation is further discussed by Gayatri Spivak (1994) and is, once again, an example of the discursive oppression that, according to Said, has subjugated and continues to subjugate the inhabitants of the Orient (or, perhaps more appropriately today, a metaphorical Orient, as its geographical borders may not precisely match its discursive delimitation).

2.3.2 Textual Representation

The main premises of Said’s approach are based on the notion of a textual system wherein the schematic power of textual description is taken to be more relevant or pertinent than an actual encounter with a particular culture, people or place. He argues that a proliferation of texts supporting specific discursive portrayals of the Orient has resulted in the perpetuation of forms of knowledge that are not necessarily accurate. As Said (1978:165) notes, “Orientalism organized itself systematically as the acquisition of oriental material and its regulated dissemination as a form of specialized knowledge”.

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There are two conditions under which a textual attitude might be privileged. The first of two situations is when a person faces, from a proximity, something relatively unfamiliar, intimidating and previously distant. Said explains that when people are challenged or face some form of frightening uncertainty, it is common to resort to a text for familiarizing oneself. The second situation involves a “complex dialectic of reinforcement by which the experiences of readers in reality are determined by what they have read, and this in turn influences writers to take up subjects defined in advance by readers’ experiences” (1978:94). Thus, it is through the means of this textual power that knowledge and reality eventually produced a discursive practice, and it is from this discursive practice that the textual discourse began to produce the very truth it describes (Said, 1978). By 1850, most major European scholarly universities and institutions (fiction and travel writers, state bodies of research) had established some form of programme on Orientalist studies (Said, 1978). This propagated a system of knowledge which, according to Said, very few scholars seek to challenge.

From the very beginning, the orientalist discourse contained two important features (Said, 1978). First, it held a new scientific consciousness based on linguistic articulation; second, it exhibited a tendency to reproduce and re-divide its subject matter without ever actually altering its approach or ideas about the Orient as always being the same static object. Thus, the orientalist discourse arrested the oriental in a fixed state and precluded the possibility for it to escape the oppression of this Occidental ideology. Said (1978:103) illustrates this when he states, “from being exposed as what texts do not prepare one for, the Orient can return as something one writes about in a disciplined way. Its foreignness can be translated, its meanings decoded, its hostility tamed; yet the generality assigned to the Orient, the disenchantment that one feels after encountering it, the unresolved eccentricity it displays, are all redistributed in what is said or written about it.” Said (1978) contends that this oppression continues in different forms in the present age.

Drawing on a large collection of texts by authors such as Joseph Conrad (1902), Dante (1295-1321) and Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930), Said (1978) argues that these writers generate knowledge about the “orient” from a position of exteriority and produce representations that result in inaccurate depictions of the non-West. It is important, however, to note that Said does not seek some pure Orient. In fact, for him,

“the Orient is itself a constituted entity, and that the notion that there are geographical spaces with indigenous, radically ‘different’ inhabitants who can be defined on the basis of some religion, culture or radical essence proper to that geographical space is equally a highly debatable issue” (1978:322).

For Said, the Orient simply does not exist. Rather, it is an idea, a long-reigning ideology that was created and perpetuated by the European imperial adventures.
and is maintained and managed through a textual system of hegemonic control. The Orient and its inhabitants are thus a fallacy of myths and stereotypes that, over the course of two centuries of European consciousness, have developed into a type of systematic knowledge about the East that presents itself as fact. Therefore, Said explains, “The Orient that appears in Orientalism, then, is a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire” (Said, 1978:203). The perpetuation of this knowledge results in the continuation and maintenance of colonial discourse and its validity, as knowledge acquisition of a foreign culture is equivalent to possessing control or power over that culture, according to Said (1994).

2.3.3 Orientalism as a Discourse and Relationship between Power and Knowledge

Said (1978) explores Foucault’s idea of discourse (Young, 2001) and applies it to the colonial canvas. Although Said ascribes several different yet interrelated meanings to the idea of Orientalism, his principal explanation of Orientalism is that of a discourse in the Foucauldian sense of the term. Foucauldian notions of discourse are always linked to power and its exercise (Foucault 1977, 1978; Escobar, 1988, 2011). To deconstruct the workings of discourse, Foucault explored the relationship between knowledge and power to illustrate how knowledge transforms power, shifting it from its concentration in monolithic entities, such as ‘the State’, into dispersed web-like forces encountered in everyday experiences (Foucault, 1984, 1977). Understood in this way, discourses are systems of meaning that incorporate and are committed to the continuation of dominant social systems. As Said contends,

“without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage — and even produce — the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” (1978:3).

Discourses also control both the mode and the means of representation. In relation to the Orientalist framework, this implied (implies) representing the Orient because of its apparent inability to represent itself. In the process of representing the Orient as Other, negative stereotypes were (are) systematically produced (e.g., primitive, under-developed, backward, savage). By the continual perpetuation of these negative stereotypes, “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (1978:3). Negative stereotyping of the Orient also created an image of “a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves” (1978: 35). Thus, the need of colonial and imperial
rule was (is) perpetually re-confirmed. In the words of Said in his later work “Culture and Imperialism”,

“Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations which include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with that domination” (Said, 1993:9).

Said’s endeavour to use knowledge as a means for ideological and social change has subsequently been applauded by other theorists as one of the key purposes of postcolonial theory. As Young (2000) elucidates, despite the conceptual fluidity of postcolonial theory, the major project of the discourse remains coherent: first, investigating the extent to which European history, culture, and knowledge were part of the practice of colonisation and its continuing aftermath; second, identifying and analysing the causes and effects of continuing international exploitation; and third, transforming those epistemologies into new forms of cultural and political production and enabling the transformation of global material injustice for disempowered peoples. Though there have been criticisms of Said’s study in Orientalism (Fox, 1992), due to its radical impact on intellectual and cultural thought, Orientalism remains the foundational text in postcolonial studies.

## 2.3.4 Contemporary Orientalism and Economic Globalization

At the time of the writing of his seminal text, Said (1978) argued that Orientalism still flourished in a multitude of different forms as a result of the dogmatic nature of representations of the Orient. Subsequent work by postcolonial scholars have supported Said’s claim through various critiques of the discourse that informs contemporary global relations. Said (1978, 1993) notes four tenets of classical Orientalism that he believes continue to thrive in the current era. The first is the entrenchment of a complete and systematic difference between the West and East. This distinction is often entwined with the ideological dichotomies discussed above, such as developed/undeveloped, modern/primitive, and rational/emotional. Second, abstract fixed knowledge of the Orient is always given preference compared to direct, actual evidence obtained from current orientalist realities and experiences. Third, the Orient is viewed as homogeneous, static and not capable of representing itself. It is therefore assumed that a very generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient is necessary and scientifically credible. Finally, Said argues that a fear of and, hence, a need to control the Orient are instituted through discursive traditions. These rigidities reveal a tendency towards generalizing and oppressing the voice and apparent incongruities of the Other through discursive practices. Such generalities and discursive oppressions have been
explored extensively in relation to present day economic globalization. Postcolonial scholars engaged with studying the economic inequalities and global order have highlighted that the contemporary discourse on economic development is nothing but an extension of the orientalist discourse and have extensively drawn parallel similarities between the orientalist and development discourse (Nandy, 1995; Escobar, 1995, 2004; Cowen & Shenton, 1996; Cooper & Packard, 1997; Rist, 1997; Kapoor, 2008). Arthur Escobar is a prominent critic within this tradition. He explains the connection:

“The development discourse is governed by the same principles (as that of colonization): it has created an extremely efficient apparatus for producing knowledge about, and exercise of power over, the Third World […]. In sum, it has successfully deployed a regime of government over the Third World, a ‘space for subjected peoples’ that ensures certain control over it” (Escobar, 1995:9).

Through their critique of the development discourse, postcolonial development scholars have shown the way in which decolonization became confused with the “development process”. The main contention of the critique is that the idea of development is a product of a long-term relationship between Europe and non-European parts of the world that has been determined by colonial power relations (Escobar, 1995). The definitive development discourse that was applied to developing countries in the decolonization era (1950s and 1960s) represented both a clean break and yet a moment of continuity with colonialism. Economic development ideology took over the colonial mission: to develop the underdeveloped. As Kothari (1988:143) states, “Where colonialism left off, development took over”.

The idea of economic development thus gained traction in the decade after World War II, a period during which many (now) so-called developing countries became independent from colonial rule (Escobar, 1995). During this time, a conceptual doctrine was built in which these newly independent nations “started to see themselves as underdeveloped […] and how to develop became a fundamental problem for them” (p. 6). This period marked the beginning of serious intervention by developed countries, particularly the United Nations and its institutions (such as the World Bank, IMF, WTO), in the development of what was then referred to as the “underdeveloped” world. As an ideology, development was understood early on as the incorporation of developing societies into a capitalist modernity with all the implications of the latter: economic, social, political, and cultural (Nandy, 1995; Escobar, 1995). The ways in which developing countries differed from Western industrial and capitalist cultures constituted a central “problem” or obstacle to development, one to be overcome by large-scale, technologically driven aid and investment programs. Homogenization with the Western model was the implicit and explicit objective of economic development. Thus, although decolonization might have appeared
as an emancipatory project in which regions were freed from colonial control, in actuality, only the vocabulary differed; the colonial binary was replaced by development binaries.

In his critique, Escobar (1995, 2011) reveals the way in which the orientalist understanding informed the development discourse. He copies an excerpt from a UN report presented in 1951 that already highlights the orientalist spirit of the development project:

“There is a sense in which rapid economic progress is impossible without painful adjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed and race have to burst; and large numbers of persons who cannot keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated. Very few communities are willing to pay the full price of economic progress.” (United Nations, 1951)

The modernization ideology on which the development discourse is founded has been instrumental in creating the non-West or the Third World as a “development problem”. The idea of development is couched within the same rhetoric of modernity and progress as the colonial discourse. Postcolonial scholars have deconstructed the modernity myth that justified colonialism and present day economic intervention into the Third World in the name of development and progress. The origins of the ideas of modernity date to the revolutionary political and economic change that occurred in Europe during the eighteenth century (Pieterse, 2009). These produced a sharp discontinuity between what European societies had been and what they became after the British industrial and French political revolutions. The history of the period suggested a before-and-after model in which societies that were dormant for centuries suddenly awakened to new forms of thoughts and adapted themselves to higher levels of social organization (see Bendix, 1967, for a detailed analysis on the origins of the concept of modernity). The evolutionary framework under which this shift took place stresses the notion that what happened in Europe amounts to nothing less than the crossing of a threshold between two distinct stages in the history of mankind (e.g., Escobar, 1995; Sachs, 1992). The implication is that although Europe was first to reach new levels of intellectual and social development, it is only a matter of time before the less advanced (or colonized) areas also find themselves at this point. Thus, modernity, the “civilizing mission” of colonization and now development, can be defined within a historical perspective as the ideology of successful Westernization. Its ideological overtones are due not to factual descriptions of psychosocial traits dominant in the West but to the assertion that “progress” and positive change can occur only in other societies through the adoption of the cultural framework integrated by these orientations (Nandy, 2003; Nandy & Frank 1994). Modernity thus sweeps major cultural/institutional differences under the
blanket of tradition and proclaims evolutionary superiority over all other value orientations. The label of underdevelopment/backwardness is attached to most countries by default. It is thus not the non-viability of their social systems or cultures that characterizes them but rather the extraordinary economic performance of a few societies in the West. Western European achievement relegates the rest of the world, with its immense social and cultural differences, to the same category of backwardness. As Eisenstadt (2000:1) states,

“They all assumed, even if only implicitly, that the cultural program of modernity as it developed in modern Europe and the basic institutional constellations that emerged there would ultimately take over in all modernizing and modern societies; with the expansion of modernity, they would prevail throughout the world.”

This assumption has various implications that inform the discourse of development and, in turn, third-world realities. First, understanding the Third World in a historically deterministic model permits particular representations of the Third World and justifies particular intervention by international organizations and the developed world to address this backwardness (Escobar, 2011). The creation of a discourse allows for a particularistic articulation of knowledge and power, a process through which social reality comes into being. Escobar, for example, explains the way in which the “invention” of the development discourse created space for the systematic creation of concepts, theories and practices. This, in turn, determines which knowledge is “produced, recorded, stabilized, modified, and put into circulation”, or what intervention to undertake and how to justify it (Escobar, 2011:5). Westwood (2006) argues that IBM as field of inquiry has blossomed under the umbrella of economic development, modernity and industrialization over the past several decades and therefore shares assumptions regarding the “Third World” with the orientalist discourse.

2.3.5 Applying Orientalism to My Work on Postcolonial Ambivalence

Postcolonial theorists emphasize that the effect of colonialism in the discursive/cultural domain both instituted the basis for (Vishwanathan, 1997) and supported the coercive use of power in the physical domain (Said, 1993). In other words, whereas actual domination may have been carried out in the more tangible (i.e., political and physical) sphere, its justifications were postulated in the discursive realm. My study shares these scholars’ concerns. Given my emphasis on the potential effects of postcolonial ambivalence on phenomena such as International Knowledge Transfer and Knowledge Spillover, I must first examine the way in which the discursive specificities of orientalism, which altered the cultural terrain within the colonized space, continue to inform contemporary postcolonial identities. Said’s (1978) theorization of “binaries”,

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“universalism” and “essentialism” as central features of the orientalist discourse is fundamentally useful for my analysis. I intend to employ these three concepts to review the extant literature on knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover to disinter the orientalist foundations of such studies. More importantly, these concepts enable my exploration of how the people involved in international business activities use and identify with the discourse in their everyday activities. In effect, looking at the discursive practices of orientalism in relation to knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover helps me gain deeper insights into the entrenched nature of the orientalist discourse.

To help us understand its enduring legacy, analyses of orientalism as a coercive apparatus must arguably move beyond showing its role and expressions in the discursive realm. In my specific study, I wish to show how postcolonial subjects address the discourse and the way in which they are transformed in that process. Though it is often understood that material (colonial rule) and discursive structures (orientalism discourse) interpellate subjects and change them as a consequence, attempts to understand the complexities of this process help substantiate such theoretical claims. Although studying different colonial terrains, scholars such as Ashis Nandy, Franz Fanon and Homi Bhabha have attempted to elucidate this very nature of interpellation and transformation of subjects by colonial rule. They have, in particular, examined how colonial ideology – e.g. as expressed in the orientalism discourse – shaped a “dual subject” in colonial times. In my research, I strive to show elements of its continuation in the postcolonial space. Understanding the liminal space that the colonized inhabited is crucial to exploring its continuation and the continued effects on my objects of study. I pursue this in the following section by drawing on scholars such as Fanon (1963), Nandy (1989) and Bhabha (1994), who help us understand the strategies used by the colonized to deal with imperial rule, i.e., to understand the agency of the subject. I particularly emphasize Bhabha’s theorization of the act of mimicry, the idea of hybridity, and the concept of the third space.

2.4 Postcolonial Ambivalence: Continuation of Colonial Subjectivity

The imposition of an over-arching colonial structure introduces a new system of cultural, social and political meaning for the society over which it rules. The new framework enforces new criteria for being, new rules of behavioural legitimacy that are bound to seep into the everyday habits of colonial subjects. Imposition of a new colonial framework means that the existing societal frameworks within which the society has so far perceived itself are altered as new aspirational standards are set into force.
2.4.1 Altered Subjectivity

Changes in the sociocultural space within colonized societies represent implicit responses to the colonial structure and its new forms of legitimation. Several postcolonial scholars have elaborated at length on this point. Along with Bhabha (1994) and Fanon (1963, 1968), Nandy (1989) contends that psychic aspects of colonial rule are more pervasive than the external/material frameworks introduced by the colonized. In the words of Nandy (1989:3), “a colonial system perpetuates itself by inducing the colonized, through socioeconomic and psychological rewards and punishments, to accept new social norms and cognitive categories.” He continues, “More dangerous and permanent are the inner rewards and punishments, the secondary psychological gains and losses from suffering and submission under colonialism. They are almost always unconscious and almost always ignored”. The worst brutality of colonialism, according to Nandy (1989:3), is therefore “that it creates a culture in which the ruled are constantly tempted to fight their rulers within the psychological limits set by the latter.”

Nandy (1989) exemplifies his claims with the case of sexuality in India and argues that the conception of what qualifies as Indian masculinity changed with colonial rule. This resignification of masculinity was based on a resemblance between sexual and political dominance that underlined imperial philosophy. Within the traditional Indian framework, it was the priestly caste, the Brahman, with its “cerebral and self-denying asceticism”, that characterized Indian masculinity compared to the martial warrior caste, the Kshatriya, with their martial ability. The imperial culture, in contrast, favoured masculinity that was symbolized by “aggression, achievement, control, competition and power” (1989:9). The colonial framework thus shifted the qualification of masculinity from the former ascriptions to the latter in the Indian cultural context. This internalization of the imperial framework reflected desires on both side of the colonial divide, i.e., the ruler and the ruled. Instituting a new frame of legitimation guaranteed that as long as there was a desire and attempt to identify with imperial masculinity, the endeavour could only be realized on the conditions set by colonial rulers. The new code of legitimation was founded on the quest for a familiar framework of masculinity with which the imperial rule could identify. The desire for martial masculinity within the Indian context was also based on a need to raise “familiar” Indians to whom authority could be transferred for managing imperial affairs in India. Thus, within the colonial framework, the idea of masculinity was an uncompromisingly defined construct within which traditional native masculinity was effeminized and subordinated.

In the resulting alteration, native gender aspirations were entirely replaced by an imperial code that, in the words of Nandy (1989:8), supplanted the “polarity defined by the antonymous purusatva (the essence of masculinity) and naritva (the essence of femininity)” by “the antonyms of purusatva and klibatva (the essence of hermaphroditism.”
Thus in the imperial framework there was an attempt to put together all forms of androgyny and counterbalance them against undifferentiated masculinity. Klibatva, or androgyne, according to Nandy, was perceived as “the final negation of a man’s political identity, a pathology more dangerous than femininity itself.” Colonial discourse repeated and reinforced the conception of androgyne, negatively described as effeminacy, as something aberrant: in fact, as an incomplete, failed version of English masculinity.

The alterations within the psychic realm of Indian subjectivity that Nandy traces are important for my study because they focus on the deeper psychological effects generated by colonial rule compared to its more external or visible aftereffects. However, the interpellation of native men as effeminate and the sense of absolute powerlessness that this name-calling engendered in them also moved these men into a subject position from which they proceeded to answer back, often in unexpected ways. For instance, Gandhi, the leading Indian freedom fighter during British rule who is deemed the father of modern India, found such an alternative frame of reference/resistance in his struggle against British rule by asserting that the essence of femininity was superior to the essence of masculinity. By finding a mode of anticolonial resistance compatible with this resignification of androgyne, Gandhi drew upon premodern Christianity (he attributed his well-known philosophy of abhimsa to the Sermon on the Mount) and the traditional Hindu spiritualization of androgyne to posit an alternative model of masculinity. That is, he disassociated courage from violence and rewrote the colonial script by suggesting that courage was, in fact, inherent in femininity. The qualities such as passivity and pacifism that the imperial ideology had ridiculed as effeminate and unworthy received a new lease of life under Gandhian nationalism and began to undermine the colonial culture that ruled on the presumption of power contingent upon masculine aggression and violence. Hence, Gandhi resignified the gender configurations by redefining femininity as having a closer connection with power than masculinity. In the Gandhian reordering, klibatva was thus deemed superior to both naritava and purusatva.

According to Butler (1998), the damaging effects of this form of colonial re-labelling of gender, which she terms “hate speech”, operate in a procedure whose repetition consolidates and thereby concentrates its deleterious power. Labelling, then, becomes a tool to dominate: when hate speech is directed at someone, the speaker means to deny agency to its assignee. With its expression, labelling therefore consolidates the subordination of the addressee in a hierarchical social stratum. However, this hate speech also contains within it a subversive strength that has the enabling space to interrogate, and thereby counter, its own inimical force. An act of labelling that may seem deleterious or emasculating (as in Nandy’s example) may thus also be enabling; in recognizing the address that intends to disallow action by placing the recipient in a
subordinate stratum, the addressee can use the social position that has been thrust upon her to exercise the agency that the speech had meant to foreclose. Interpellation, then, may be enabling because it inducts the subject into a temporal and linguistic existence and thereby provides a platform from which the subject can perform. Fanon (1963, 1968) and Bhabha (1994) attempt to instantiate this very aspect of interpellation of subjects by colonial rule. I elaborate further on this within the next section.

2.4.2 The In-between Space: Home and Not Belonging

Fanon and Bhabha are two influential writers who elaborate on the enduring psychological effects of colonialism. Parallels between their work arise as Bhabha, an avid reader of Fanon, borrows from his texts while simultaneously furthering his ideas of inhabiting a liminal space. I therefore briefly discuss Fanon’s work and then elaborate on Bhabha’s theorization of hybridity, ambivalence, mimicry and the ensuing notions of “third space” that have become so influential in postcolonial work.

Frantz Fanon was a practicing psychiatrist in Algeria during the French colonial rule and in his work, he observed psychological and behavioural problems of patients who participated in the Algerian war of independence. Although the psychological symptoms were primarily related to war experiences, Fanon (1963) proposed that the factor of imperial domination should be added to the analysis of his patients’ conditions. Fanon argued that, to acquire legitimacy and power in the new regime, the colonized subject aspired to become like the colonizers who possessed power. That is, by changing the already existing framework of aspirational roles, imperial rule induced the desire in the colonized to be like their master, i.e. submissive imitation. These altered aspirations resulted in “alienation” of the subjects from their own belonging. Fanon (1968), in his analysis, thus argues that every effort to adopt a more “imperial garb” alienates the subject from his own sociocultural surrounding. The consequence is that the alienated subject ceases to belong completely to either place, thus losing his sense of home and, instead, exists on the threshold of two world, becoming a “liminal” colonial subject. Fanon’s analysis signifies an early attempt to conceptualize a condition of in-between, of “being at home and yet not belonging”.

2.4.3 Bhabha’s Concept of Third Space

Inspired by Fanon’s ideas, Bhabha (1994) reworked his concept of submissive imitation to intertwine it with the paradox of subversive mimicry. To Bhabha, the native’s gaze disciplines the colonizer in the same way that the colonizer’s
initial gaze attempted to discipline the colonizer. This potential of reciprocation gives Bhabha’s colonial subject agency to subvert the authoritative gaze, as compared to the more passively interpellated colonized native of Fanon or the voiceless Oriental in Said’s (1978, 1993) work. While significant in itself, this difference is also illustrative of the different time periods during which the theorists produced their work. Fanon’s writings, which were produced during a period of freedom struggle from colonial rule in the 1950s and 1960s, was an attempt to describe the colonial conditions of that time and predate, e.g., Foucault’s (1977, 1978) influential discussions on the changing nature of power. Bhabha writes several decades later, when theorization of power was increasingly accommodating the factor of human agency, which led him to introduce the factor of interstitial space as a qualified and valid identity marker of belonging. In his work, Bhabha placed Fanon’s alienated subject within this interstitial or third space, a site that evades categorization within the binary framework of East/West or colonizer/colonized. Although Bhabha accepts Said’s claim that the binary division between the ruler and ruled was a prominent part of the missionary discourse, Bhabha argues that what characterizes colonial discourse is not monolithic homogeneity but rather fragmentation, contradictions, cracks, incongruities and inconsistencies. For Bhabha, understanding the difference between the colonizer and colonized as a simple binary opposition obscures the huge racial and cultural differences that exist within the identity and difference “categories”. Through development of critical concepts such as ambivalence, mimicry, hybridity and third space, Bhabha shows certain “disabling contradictions within the colonial relationship” and uncovers the inherent vulnerability of colonial discourse, which gave way to subversive strategies of anti-colonial resistance (Ashcroft et al., 2007:37).

2.4.3.1 Ambivalence and Mimicry

Mimicry is the mainstay of the colonial mission, requiring the transformation of the primitive native of the East to resemble the conqueror’s civilization; the colonized is understood to be the submissive subject who imitates the colonizer’s values and habits, which can be considered mimicry of the colonizer. However, there is significant evidence that demonstrates that the native is an ambivalent subject whose mimicry is not an exact copy but may rather represent mockery. For example, in one of Bhabha’s most influential essays, “Signs Taken for Wonders”, he cites an example of an Indian catechist’s account from 1817 of how he tries to convert a group of villagers in Northern India to Christianity. The villagers refuse on grounds of their vegetarianism, arguing that they will accept the sacrament only if they can be convinced that the evangelical utterances do not come from the mouths of meat-eaters. Bhabha interprets the incident as a sign of “spectacular resistance” (1994:121), emphasizing that “when the natives demand an Indianized Gospel (or, in effect, a ‘vegetarian Bible’), they are using the powers of hybridity to resist baptism and to put the project of conversion in an impossible position” (1994:118). Bhabha further argues that
the event is not just “an exchange between a muscular colonial Christianity that was keen to covert an indigenous tradition that resisted conversion” but a “colonial antagonism” that produced a “supplementary” discourse as a site of “resistance and negotiation” (1994:118). Consequently, colonial discourse fails in establishing hegemonic control, and as a result of such failure, a space opens up for resistance and negotiation on the part of the colonized. Thus, Bhabha concludes that “the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference”. Furthermore, Bhabha argues that imitation is not a complete homogenization but a form of metonymic resemblance, a repetition but with a difference, or as he repeatedly states, “almost the same but not quite” (1994:86). This means that mimicry always tends to teeter on the brink of mockery, parody and menace. The subversive effects of mimicry on the colonial discourse, then, are not so much a consciously applied counter-imperial strategy as they are an elusive effect of the colonial discourse itself.

Significantly, Bhabha suggests that the notion of “hybridity” affects not only the colonised but also the coloniser, who must constantly re-define and re-invent himself in relation to the Other. The colonizer’s identity, far from being stable, unambiguous and confident, is characterized by a fluctuation between self-confident universalism and the anxiety of being imitated and mocked. The confident authoritative aspect, phrased from the European perspective as “the white man’s burden”, implies that the colonized are supposed to learn and imitate the universal colonial culture, i.e., “become civilized”. By imitating the colonizer, by becoming almost like them, colonial power is undermined. Bhabha thus envisages that the anxiety of the colonizer must make space for the colonized to resist colonial discourse.

Though it may seem that the colonial discourse anticipates and expects that by mimicking the ruler the ruled expects to become like him, such superficial equality may fail to recognize the central spirit of colonial rule and its ideologies. Because these ideologies assume that there is structural split (binaries) between the superior colonizer and the inferior colonized, a split that justifies the domination of one group over another, Bhabha contends that because mimicry is never quite exact, this very fact exposes colonialism’s grand claims of humanism and enlightenment. Therefore, to Bhabha, there is an apparent disjoint between the actual effects of colonialism and its discourses of ethical and intellectual superiority; mimicry does not merely “rupture” the discourse but morphs into an uncertainty which fixates on the colonial subject as a “partial” presence. Thus, the interplay between sameness and excess makes the colonized both reassuringly similar but also terrifying, and mimicry is “at once resemblance and menace” (1994:86). Mimicry may thus be understood as a consequence of the desire of the colonizer for a “reformed and recognizable Other”
generating a “subject of difference” (1994:122) that, while similar in many ways, would always fail to be an exact copy.

Mimicry can therefore not be understood seamless identification with or copying of the colonizer. Rather, as the colonizer seeks to “civilize” the colonized, the latter gazes at the former and in their exchange of looks something is lost. In the words of Bhabha (1994:127), “the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed” (Bhabha, 1994:127). A striking outcome of such ambivalence is that it can bring confusion to the absolute authority of colonial domination by destabilizing the binary on which the relationship between the colonizer and colonized operates. Bhabha seeks to process this indeterminacy of colonial discourse into an agency of counter-hegemonic resistance, as he contends that “the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention” (1994:112). The ambivalence propagated in colonial discourse thus has the potential to produce instability of colonial power, which may strengthen the anti-colonialist resistance. This indeterminacy can be turned into an agency of counter-hegemonic resistance in both colonial and postcolonial discourse. Mimicry could then be understood as two-way ambivalence that characterizes the relationship between the colonizers and colonized. To conceptualize the location of these contradictory processes of identification, Bhabha alternately uses terms such as the interstitial, in-between space or, more conveniently, the third space.

2.4.3.2 Hybridity

The concept “hybridity” denotes to the mixing (or integration) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures. Bhabha (1994) sees hybridity occurring in an “in-between” or “third space”, a site of translation and negotiation in the cultural encounter, the colonial cultural interface. In Bhabha’s terms, “hybridity is camouflage” (1994:193), and he provokingly assigns “hybridity as heresy” (1994:226) as a disruptive yet innovative and productive category. It is “how newness enters the world” (Bhabha 1994:227) and is caught up with a “process of translating and transvaluing cultural differences” (p. 252). The concept of hybridity is useful for challenging the inadequacy of dualistic categories as it transcends the limits of binaries and hierarchical positioning; it provides the tools to break open the false sense that colonized cultures, or colonizing cultures, for that matter, are monolithic or have essential, static features.

The “in-between” culture of hybridity has an innovative and creative energy as it opens up space to challenge and subvert the authority of the dominant discourse. This hybridity paves the way for negotiation inside a space that is neither one culture nor the other “but something else besides, which contests the terms
In the colonial discourse, hybridity can be characterized by colonial mimicry and subversive intention, both conscious and unconscious. Hybridity can be seen as a phenomenon in which “the colonial governing authority works towards translating the identity of the colonized (the other) within a singular universal framework”, but then fails, thus producing something familiar but simultaneously new (Papastergiadis, 1997:258). Such a state is thus characterized by the drive towards colonial mimicry and anti-colonial resistance. Bhabha (1994:108) states that such ambivalence responding to colonial power “enables a form of subversion” that is based on the “undecidability” that turns the dominated “discursive conditions” into the “grounds of intervention”. Hybridity, then, is inevitably characterized by the discourse of subversion.

How, then, does hybridity qualify as functional resistance? Bhabha adopts Mikhail Bakhtin’s insights on the way in which the hybridity of social languages can work to undermine the single-voiced authority of authoritative discourse (Young, 1995). Robert Young (1995:21) further explains this as

“[T]he moment in which the discourse of colonial authority loses its univocal grip on meaning and finds itself open to the trace of the language of the other, enabling the critic to trace complex movements of a disarming alterity in the colonial text”.

In the same vein, Bhabha (1995:82) emphasizes that the colonized can distort the language of authority by altering it and that this “splitting” of the authoritative discourse can shake the “calculations of the empowered, and allow the disempowered to calculate strategies by which they are oppressed and to use that knowledge in structuring resistance”. In the instance of hybridity, the authoritative discourse of the colonizer not only loses its absolute command, but the authority will also be transformed and twisted by the colonized. For Bhabha, “small differences” and “slight alterations and displacements” are often the most significant steps in the process of subversion. Thus, in relation to subversiveness, Bhabha explains that it is not necessary to practise resistance in an oppositional pattern because resistance can be an outcome of ambivalence in the authoritative discourse. He writes (1995:82),

“[R]esistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or exclusion of the ‘content’ of another culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of
dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power-hierarchy, normalization, marginalization and so forth.”

Therefore, if difference, translation, alteration integration and displacement are introduced to the colonial discourse, hybridity can be perceived as an operational resistance. Furthermore, an important aspect of the process of hybridization is that some “denied knowledges” of the colonized will unavoidably be inscribed into the dominant discourse during the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized. These “knowledges” are particularly significant because they can indicate the rooted ambivalence that exposes the meaning of “difference into sameness, and sameness into difference” and become a force of subversion or an anti-colonial resistance. As a resistance strategy, Bhabha (1994:114) defines it as

“A problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, which results in other ‘denied’ knowledges can enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition.”

To summarize, an inevitable effect of power is hybridization, in which the “denied knowledges” of the colonized make their way into the domination discourse, which, in turn, causes the authority of the colonizer to be challenged and subverted. When the two cultures encounter each other, translation, transformation and distortion will thus emerge in a space of hybridity, thereby generating subversiveness within the dominant discourse. Bhabha’s concepts of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence are aimed at drawing conclusions about this space, a site that exists on the threshold of two worlds. The colonial context is, then, neither one nor the other, and created nations and imaginations, identities and subjectivities are a palimpsest where a new formation cannot erase the existence of a predecessor.

2.4.4 Inheritance of Loss: Postcolonial Continuation

Mimicry and hybridity are not merely colonial modes; the terms also represent an essentially postcolonial and present-day global condition: a way of resisting and yet acknowledging the power of the dominant (Appadurai, 1990, 1996). It can be argued that the act of mimicry in fact joins together the condition of colonial and postcolonial; even if the direct rule of the colonizer is removed, colonial power operates through the desire and will to mimic the colonial norms by the postcolonial subjects (Nandy, 1989; Gandhi, 1998).

Then, how do the memory and affective attachment created as a consequence of colonial rule translate into the post-colonial era? In which ways does the
colonial ambivalence created by an authoritative discourse continue to inform postcolonial identities and subjectivities? In The Intimate Enemy, Nandy (1989:3) argues that political freedom did not constitute the end to colonialism since colonization was not just a political undertaking; rather it “begins in the minds of men (and therefore) must also end in the minds of men.” The effects of colonization thus endure within the psyche of the formerly colonized; the colonial past flows into the postcolonial present in the same way that the West flows into the East. In this vein, Gandhi (1998:7) argues,

“that the postcolonial dream of discontinuity is ultimately vulnerable to the infectious residue of its own unconsidered and unresolved past. Its convalescence is unnecessarily prolonged on account of its refusal to remember and recognize its continuity with the pernicious malaise of colonization.”

In Gandhi’s (1998) view, notions of breaking with the colonial past thus represents an impossibility, particularly in the psychic sphere where it lingers in ways of which the subject may not be aware and finds unconscious expressions in everyday existence. At the same time as the erasure of the colonial legacy may be pursued (perhaps even more in the psychic sphere than in material arenas), that very legacy continues to instil in the postcolonial subject an – often equally concealed – affective attachment to the residues of the colonial past. In the words of (Gandhi, 1998:11), the colonial history generates a “puzzling circulation of desire around the traumatic scene of oppression”.

When attempting to comprehend the manner in which such contradictory impulses manifest themselves within the international business landscape of globalizing India, I hope to further Gandhi’s (1998) effort; I hope to present examples wherein the dialectic of love and hate plays out within contemporary business phenomena and I hope to unravel the layers of one to show the presence of the other, thereby highlighting that one cannot exist without the other and that these conflicting forces co-create postcolonial identities.

2.4.5 Searching for Postcolonial Ambivalence: Hybridity and Mimicry in My Research

In Bhabha’s theorization, hybridity is an empowering result of global interactional flows. This perspective puts into question the pro-con dichotomous view of globalization and instead, proposes a position of interstitially as a domain of agency and innovation (Bhabha 1994; Canclini, 1995; Appadurai, 1996). This view challenges all notions of authentic, stable cultures and related identities, asserting that all cultural entities are hybrid to begin with. According to this viewpoint, cultures have always been in a state of flux, and the process of globalization has only further exacerbated and encouraged it. Scholars subscribing to this view contend that, in a globalizing
world, we all exist in the third space. Thus, the interstitial space and the hybrid entities that inhabit it continuously disrupt the notion of static cultural entities that most studies on globalization and IBM may have us believe in (Özkazanc-Pan, 2008, 2012, 2015).

Though theories of hybridity may not necessarily argue against the idea of hegemonic cultures, they do problematize the argument within the globalization (and cultural domination) discourse that supposes the existence of pure, genuine, pre-existing cultural essences. Bhabha (1994), in particular, challenges this notion and instead privileges the “innovative energy” of the third space, a domain of “beyond” or an instance of transit “where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” (1994:2). While this in-betweeness is a characteristic of postcoloniality (or coloniality, for that matter), Bhabha (1994:310) presents the argument that contemporary globalization aggravates the condition of culture and identity in transition:

“Cultural globality is figured in the in-between spaces of doubleframes: its historical originality marked by a cognitive obscurity; its decentred ‘subject’ signified in the nervous temporality of the transitional, or the emergent provisionality of the ‘present’.”

Theories of hybridity and their privileging of agency in understanding human experiences and identity challenge the notion that globalization is standardizing or westernizing the world. The hybridity perspective also disputes the myth of pure and authentic culture and identities, asserting instead that identities and cultures are transient and evolving. However, the possibility that theories of hybridity can go overboard in privileging agency at the expense of the imbalance in geo-political power relations is not entirely lost on critics (Kraidy, 2005), and my study diligently subscribes to this caution. I share the concerns of the critics of hybridity who fear a close relationship between theories of hybridity and the forces of global capitalism. In his work Hybridity or Capitalist Logic of Expansion, Kraidy (2005) examines the way in which the theme of hybridity is used in American newspapers to serve the interests of capitalist expansion and specifically notes that the term has become a buzzword used by American corporations for their global expansion. In particular, the concept of hybridity is deployed to counter the charges of Americanisation levied against these corporations. By claiming that all cultures are hybrid, this position in effect justifies capitalistic expansion around the world. While Kraidy (2005) is not against the possibilities of hybridity as such, he is thus sceptical of its selective usage in serving capitalist interests.

Examining various strands of the debate on what globalization entails for people who are caught “in-between” gives me a basis for positioning my study within an existing discussion that emphasizes the role of power and agency in
shaping conceptions of who we are, where we belong and how we make sense of the changes wrought by globalization. These discussions help me place my inquiry along an existing spectrum of perspectives that vacillate from, at one end, unrelenting first-world hegemony, to, at the other end, a subversive negotiation with power. Though the dichotomous understanding of power and agency that informs debates on globalization are in many ways insightful, they are also limited in that they subscribe to either/or positions within which the analysis on global flow must be placed. In fact, more often than not, power and the resistance towards it operate simultaneously; therefore, an interactional framework that keeps the duo in tension is warranted to understand the working of contemporary power. When expanding on this perspective, theorists such as Foucault (1977, 1978) and Deleuze (1992) argue that the proclivity of power to accommodate disputing forces results in subject formation that must be nurtured even as it is controlled. This transmuting nature of (contemporary) power impacts the identity of subjects in several ways that I attempt to capture in my research; it permits the production of distinct identities and gives scope for resistance while still limiting that scope by its grip.

2.5 Conclusion and My Way Forward

The postcolonial debates that I discuss above help illuminate my research on postcolonial ambivalence in IBM. In particular, they highlight a number of issues that I, in various ways, strive to address in my research.

I am particularly interested in understanding the way in which the vocabulary of orientalism imposes itself on contemporary business undertakings at postcolonial sites; in what forms does orientalism operate, and how does it influence the instances and design of international knowledge transfer and spillover practice and discourse?

Postcolonial theory also allows me to question whether cultural/institutional duality/distances/differences/identities are clear, pure, dichotomous and national in character, as implied by international knowledge transfer and spillover research, or if they are continuously reshaped as a result of the orientalist discourse that permeates the everyday habits of subjects (and research practice).

I am also particularly interested in whether the failure to apply knowledge received from MNCs (in the cases of both transfer and spillover) represents a lack of absorptive capacity or if it can be explained by factors of agency and cultural translation. Indeed, is the failure of knowledge transfer and spillover really even an instance of “failure”, or is it perhaps a sign of productive appropriation? In other words, can the complexities of knowledge transfer and
spillover really be understood through dichotomous outcomes of success or failure, or do we need to complicate these explanations by exploring the ways in which agency is exercised at the site of the knowledge recipient?

I also wish to explore whether we can fruitfully understand agency at the site of the supposed knowledge recipient by employing the lens of hybridity. If so, how does hybrid identity translate into hybrid knowledge, values and practices?

In other words, will my empirical findings allow themselves to interpreted and explained by the role of monolithic cultural differences, or do the human beings involved complicate these processes? If so, how?

By addressing these issues within the scope defined by my purpose, my project is an attempt to answer calls by IBM (e.g., Westwood, 2006; Westwood & Jack, 2007; Banerjee & Prasad, 2008; Özkazanç-Pan, 2008; Frenkel 2008; Jack et al., 2008, 2011; Jack & Westwood, 2009) and organization and management scholars (Prasad, 1997, 2003) who have theorized the idea of (post)colonial continuity in conjunction with contemporary globalization. These scholars have consistently argued for applying a postcolonial lens when attempting to understand contemporary business phenomena. As a result, the recent years have witnessed a steady increase in scholarship that complicates the theories of management in general and IBM in particular with postcolonial scholarship. Though these studies are useful and offer me a space within which to position my work, there are few studies that directly engage with postcolonial ambivalence and its influence on IBM phenomena. One of the most important works in this fairly small cluster is Frenkel’s (2008) article on international knowledge transfer, where she convincingly makes a case for the “Third Space” that multinationals inhabit and how current conceptualizations of knowledge transfer elide any discussions of geo-political power play. Although my project is fundamentally indebted to Frenkel’s connection of the notion of third space and MNCs, I strive to extend her analysis to include postcolonial ambivalence, a symptomatic characteristic in which the dialectic of love and hate operate simultaneously, continuously creating and nurturing the in-betweens. To explore postcolonial ambivalence within the everyday habits of my subjects, similar to Bhabha (1994), I focus on the idea of human identity within the global flow of knowledge, people and capital. Identity, understood as a juncture of influences and ascriptions and as an ongoing process of “identification” (Hall, 1996) with historical and contemporary forces of colonization and globalization, grants me the space to engage with issues of history and its ongoing influence that continues to determine the global flow of knowledge. I am centrally concerned with what that global knowledge flow, of which knowledge transfer and its spillover are both central instances, does to people and how people make sense of knowledge that is (perhaps) new and different.
to what they already possess; a focus on identity helps me probe just these intricacies.

Examining issues of identity generates several methodological challenges, though, challenges that are accentuated by my use of postcolonial theory. Similar to researchers in other critical traditions, postcolonial scholars have called for caution and reflexivity on the part of researchers in their attempt to give voice to the “others”. The challenges of representing the “other” are extensively dealt with by postcolonial scholar Gayatri Spivak (1994), who famously asked “Can the subaltern speak?” In the next chapter, I address debates on representation and elaborate on the process of my fieldwork in that light.
3 From Theory to Method

This chapter discusses issues of methodology and research design and breaks down into three main sections. First, I address some methodological consequences of using postcolonial theory (3.1). Second, I present the more practical details of my two empirical studies such as selection of research site, interview guide and study participants (3.2). Third, I discuss how I went from “fieldwork to text” by reflecting on the interlinked processes of interviewing, analysis and writing (3.3).

3.1 Methodological Consequences of Employing Postcolonial Theory

The question of methodology is a loaded one in postcolonial studies. The apprehension that methodological tools might often blur rather than lead to insights has led to rigorous methodological contemplation within the discipline. The field shares its concerns with other critical interpretative genres such as feminist, postmodern and (largely) poststructural methodologies. Such approaches to knowledge contest any “true knowledge” claims and therefore open possibilities for partial knowledge. Constructionist inquiry often has an emancipatory goal because it signals the potential for creative ways of producing knowledge that are explicitly tied to our own ideals rather than covertly tied to established ideas under the guise of objectivity (Harre, 1986). Instead of engaging in a laissez-faire approach towards political aspects of theorising, therefore, these critical paradigms adopt an ethical stance that recognises theory as political (Harding, 2003) and emphasises — the relationship between — “power and knowledge at the inception of theory” (Calas & Smircich, 1999:659). Within this methodological approach, what is challenged is the implicit belief concerning the knowability of “others” and the tendency to essentialize the “other” through fixed meanings and categories available within the established knowledge system of the West. Critical interpretative methodology endeavours to provide alternative ways of understanding knowledge and the process of knowledge construction that allow for a more accountable and reflexive engagement between knowledge and power, knowers and the known, the self and the other (Calas & Smircich, 1999). In terms of its epistemological orientation, then, my research is located within social constructionism and poststructuralism, which are informed by feminist and postcolonial theory.
3.1.1 Theory and Method Dialectic

A salient feature of postcolonial scholarship is a strong theory-method nexus that brings forth a particular interpretive focus on research, acknowledging the role of colonial history. Undertaking postcolonial research implies recognizing and reconsidering how we currently theorize and reconfigure our modes of theorization to address wider emancipatory aims. Problematizing theorization helps challenge the universalism of Eurocentric theories and ways of thinking, thus enabling scholars to move towards more decolonized and inclusive versions and visions of knowledge. Thus, the postcolonial method involves thinking about why we are doing research, how research questions are formulated, whose experience is included in the study, how data are collected, how meanings are derived and interpreted, and how research findings are understood and represented. However, no prescribed techniques exist for data collection or data analysis. Rather, different methods can be used depending on the focus of the inquiry (Young, 1999). Study foci are derived from particular epistemological perspectives within postcolonialism. That is, the postcolonial lens always acknowledges the context in which each experience is located, and helps understand how multiple organizing categories such as gender, race, class, and historical positioning intersect at any given point to form experience in the here and now. Because emancipation and justice is the (political) imperative that guides research in this genre, inclusivity is a key epistemological principle. The application of a postcolonial line of inquiry thus has implications for how we undertake and understand research. Although there are no restrictions concerning the type of questions that postcolonial scholarship can pursue, two topics emerge as particularly pressing within the postcolonial sphere of inquiry: (1) difference in its various forms, e.g., race, subalternity, underdevelopment, ethnicity, class, hybridity, intersecting oppressions (e.g., blend of gender, race, and class), and (2) power in its many guises (covert and overt). Thus, research in the postcolonial traditions is inevitably political in nature (Gandhi, 1998); it employs a political lens to its entire research project, from micropolitics to the macrodynamics of domination, power, subjugation and resistance.

Attending to difference and power as meta themes within postcolonial research gives rise to certain epistemological challenges. First, there is an apparent risk that the researcher’s interpretation of subjugation might not match well with that of the research subject or that the researcher will perceive structural conditions and their influence on people’s lives in a way quite removed from that of the research subjects’ perceptions. The nexus between people’s subjective understanding of their realities and the understanding generated by politically motivated and positioned (postcolonial) critique can thus be a difficult hurdle in the research process (Lather, 1991). A solution propose by some critical scholars in overcoming such a dilemma is to employ a particular
dialectic approach between theory and research so that the theory and empirical work can inform each other simultaneously. As Lather (1991: 62) describes,

"Data must be allowed to generate propositions in a dialectical manner that permits use of a priori theoretical frameworks but which keeps a particular framework from becoming the container into which the data must be poured".

### 3.1.2 Giving Voice and the Politics of Representation

A hallmark of postcolonial research is the deliberate decentring of dominant culture and practice so that the worldviews of the marginalized become the starting point in knowledge construction. Calls to study the “Other” involve the weaving of the perspectives and experiences of those marginalized by history, discourse, practice and research. Thus, postcolonialism calls for the prerogative of the subjugated and silenced to speak rather than being spoken for, to represent themselves rather than being represented, or, as in many cases, rather than being completely erased. The task for the researcher is to make way for the subaltern’s perspectives to allow our knowledge to become inclusive not only of the dominant majority (or dominant minority) but also of those who exist on the periphery. This task may be achieved through purposively privileging the historically marginalized and listening to their lived experiences.

Although giving voice to the subjugated “Other” stands at the centre of postcolonial scholarship, the difficulties surrounding representation of “Others” has been a constant source of concern and debate within the field. A key concern that frequently emerges is, is it possible for scholars located within the dominant knowledge systems of the West to understand the circumstances and experiences of the marginalized and the related complexities of marginalization? Can they meaningfully give voice to the “Other”, those who are more polemically understood as the “subaltern”, without perpetuating the very order they strive to challenge? Thus, the problem of how to operationalize attempts at giving voice to the others is a recurring concern within postcolonial scholarship.

The issue is radically taken up by Gayatri Spivak, a leading theorist in postcolonial studies. Spivak articulates her uneasiness with the challenges and contradictions latent in raising a “subaltern voice”. In particular, she is concerned about the pitfalls of essentialism and the dangers inherent in constructing another monolithic category that is “the subaltern voice”. In her groundbreaking essay, Spivak (1988) addresses this issue in depth and scrutinizes the attempts at retrieving the subaltern’s perspective. Spivak’s stance is highlighted by a recurring question – “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988:294, 296). Through a historical example from colonial India concerning the issue of
widow immolation (or sati)⁷ and its abolition by the British, Spivak suggests that both British colonialism and Indian patriarchy operated not as separate but as two mutually supporting systems of domination that intersect in the lives of the subaltern sexed subject, or “the brown woman” (in this given example). The British prohibition of this rite is by Spivak (1988:297) interpreted as “white men saving brown women from brown men.” Searching the archives, Spivak (1988:297) also found the Indian nativist argument that she sees as a “parody of the nostalgia of lost origins: the women actually wanted to die.” Not found in the archives, however, was the voice of the subaltern woman herself. As Spivak (1988:297) laments, “one never encounters the testimony of the women’s voice-consciousness”.

Spivak identifies an epistemic violence that, she argues, lies in eradicating the “itinerary of the subaltern subject” (1988:287). For Spivak, in this context, epistemic violence is one of ventriloquization and subject effacement. The working-class Indian woman is spoken for, or represented by, the dominant male, whether he is the Western intellectual or the indigenous colonial administrator, and is thus “doubly effaced” (1988:287). The effect is multiple subordination, making it extremely difficult for the subaltern to speak (although elite brown men might have found a voice because they were further up in the colonial hierarchy). Spivak (1988:287) concludes, “both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant”.

Spivak’s main predicament is, then, the twice-silenced subaltern who is always spoken for. She calls upon scholars to question the silencing of the subaltern and not simply attempt to speak for the silenced subaltern. Spivak is concerned about scholars reiterating the colonial exercise of “speaking for” the subjugated and cautions against appropriating the voices of the subjugated by imposing a unitary homogeneous identity and speech upon them. In such attempts, the specificity of the subjugated masses blurs and promotes the colonial practice of cultural erasure. In other words, Spivak addresses the issue of the responsibility of the researcher who tries to uncover the subaltern voices from amidst elite discourse. However, the proclivity of intellectuals to use Western vocabulary is integrated even within critical endeavours such as feminist and postcolonial inquiry when attempting to give voice to the subaltern. This tendency results in effacing the voices of the subaltern and shutting them off from their context-specific scrutiny. Therefore, Spivak urges intellectuals to examine their privileged position because they must equip themselves to “speak to” rather than speak as or on behalf of the subaltern.

⁷ The traditional Indian rite of widow sacrifice, in which a widow apparently places herself on her husband’s funeral pyre to be immolated. Spivak retrieves the account of a particular example of widow immolation from the historical archive during the time of British rule in India.
Some scholars propose that studies that approach topics of domination and subjugation are best performed by matching the researcher with the researched (Smith, 1987; Visweswaran, 1994; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Stanfield, 1998; Smith, 1999). From this stance, researching one’s own culture is considered advantageous due to the cultural proximity between the researcher and the researched (e.g., women doing research on women issues; Third World scholars doing research on the Third World; indigenous ethnic minority scholars studying indigenous populations and issues surrounding ethnic minorities). This approach insists upon interpretation from an “emic perspective” (Maxwell, 1992) or what Geertz (1973) calls experience-near, emphasizing that the researcher’s nativeness likely results in more accurate descriptions and interpretations of a culture. The idea of “cultural intuition” advanced by Delgado Bernal (1998) is also a compelling concept that validates researching (within) one’s culture. That is, researchers studying their own culture are in a position to understand their own culture from an insider’s perspective due to cultural intuition; as insiders, many scholars achieve a sense of cultural intuition that is different from that of other scholars (Delgado Bernal, 1998:567). However, other researchers argue that “matching” researcher with researched creates risks of perpetuating further marginalization and can even sanction the dominant discourse (Figueira, 2000).

There also exist problematic tendencies among certain minority scholars to either essentialize or privilege otherness in their well-intended endeavours to reconstitute more-culturally nuanced knowledge. This potential to reify others – or privilege otherness – is a point well noted by Jayati Lal (1996) in her critique of the tendency amongst certain scholars to “fix” and “fetishize” others. According to Lal (1996:198),

“the presumed epistemology of the native insider [is] essentialist and reduce[s] either the native or Third World (women) to an assumed homogeneous entity […] furthermore [these] constructions have the unintended effect of reinforcing the very distinctions that they are supposed to erase”.

Spivak is more hesitant about the prospect of subaltern agency within the scope of hegemonic discourse of colonist and patriarchy, in which she encounters excessive interpretation involved when voicing the circumstances, intentions, and concerns of the subaltern. However, in Spivak’s own attempt to understand the complex nature of subalternity, in her example of Sati (widow immolation), the sexed subaltern does acquire a voice, but only within Spivak’s text. In her endeavour to understand and communicate the subject position of immolated women, Spivak thus paves space for the articulation of the subaltern agency and identity, but the agency derived is so far removed from the moment of the discursive act that this instance of enabling is perhaps difficult to accept. Subaltern discursive acts must thus constantly struggle with representational
politics that might elucidate their attempts at agency in a manner that evades their goals and weakens the power of such acts.

Although Spivak’s critique appears to be a call for a holistic revival in the current postcolonial approach, for many scholars, Spivak’s work has led to self-reflexivity and a re-signification of the postcolonial subject. Ashcroft (2001) in his work speaks of many postcolonial theorists following the call of Spivak’s critique. He states, “the phrase ‘the subaltern cannot speak’ need not imply that the subaltern is silenced and has no voice whatsoever” (2001:46). For Ashcroft, the phrase “suggests that the voice of the subaltern does not exist in some pure space outside the dominant discourse.” Ashcroft (2001:46) is in agreement with Spivak that “the subaltern can never speak outside the discourse of power”, but he insists that “all language is like that”. For Ashcroft, the subaltern can have access to the hegemonic discourse and utilize this discourse to transform the prevailing hegemony.

Similarly, acknowledging the challenges involved in locating subaltern voices, Mani (1995) suggests that the “Can the Subaltern Speak?” quest might be more systematically rephrased as a series of questions such as, “Which groups constitute the subalterns in any text? What is their relationship to each other? How can they be heard to be speaking or not speaking in a given set of materials? With what effects?”

Accordingly, what might be called “postcolonial reflexivity” is not a renewed attempt to unearth some pure properties belonging to others. The endeavour to challenge dominant knowledge forms and their approach to knowledge construction can no longer be tackled, for instance, by interpretative approaches to understanding “the native’s point of view” (e.g., Geertz, 1973) because there exists no “exotic other” waiting to be discovered. Rather, the postcolonial challenge relates to the researcher’s ability to account for local voices and knowledge in the context of our knowledge and knowledge construction practices, along with an equivalent imperative to consider the other as active subject-agent, engaged as much as everyone else, in the making of our contemporary world. The lack of such reflexivity implies not only that differences and otherness are constantly in danger of being essentialized but also that the discursive and material bases of inequality, knowledge and constitution, and power and voice informing relationships between self and others are silenced yet again (e.g., Radhakrishnan, 1993, 1994). Knowledge, in this sense, is not so much about the predictability of others as it is the practices of constructing for ourselves, the knowability of our objects and subjects of study. In other words, the issue is about how others are made known or knowable by and to the self. It is about how we know and how we construct knowledge; what becomes significant is the need to be attentive to how the self is involved in constituting and reconstituting others through knowledge. Therefore, postcolonial reflexivity demands careful attention to the researcher’s positionality (social and historical) in relation to research participants to avoid
perpetuating elements of the very practice and discourse that the research project is intended to challenge.

3.1.3 Reflexivity and the Researcher’s Positionality

Reflexivity is commonly applied as a methodological tool to better represent, legitimize, or call into question data among qualitative researchers inclined towards critical methodology (Clough, 1992; Fonow & Cook, 1991; Johnson & Duberley, 2003). This approach emphasizes that the researcher is part of the social world that is studied, thus calling for exploration and self-examination. Within the postcolonial framework, reflexivity has been posited and accepted as a method researchers can and should use to explore and expose the politics and pitfalls of representation or, as Wasserfall (1997) notes, to represent difference better.

Reflexivity is not only about investigating the power embedded in one’s own research but also about doing research differently. The need to do research differently arises from the ethical and political problems and questions raised by critical paradigms about traditional research methods. These questions include, How can one be a non-exploitative researcher? How does one produce research that is useful and empowering to the marginalized? How do we make research that is linked with political action? How would our research practices be different if we were reflective at each step of the research process (i.e., from forming our research questions, gaining access, and conducting interviews to analysing data)? Critical research thus indicates that there are multiple places for reflexivity to work and work differently in the research process.

Reflection on the researcher’s positionality, both in relation to the research participants (fieldwork) and potential readers (analysis process and textual representation), is deemed an important criterion to achieve the above goal. Attending to Researcher’s positionality implies challenging the classical notion of objectivity, authority and validity of knowledge, as it is espoused that researcher’s position (who one is, relation with the research subjects, and purpose of undertaking research) is inseparable from their findings. This argument is also supported by postcolonial scholars who attempt to eschew the role of the colonized/colonizer and constantly review the relationship between researcher and researched (e.g., Villenas, 1996).

Emphasis on the researcher’s positionality aims to challenge the idea of any universal and value-free knowledge claims and promotes the notion that a knower’s location impacts his/her research aims, questions, interpretations, analyses and writing. Positionality attends to issues like how the researcher’s interest, and position impacts partiality and thereby stipulates knowledge claims (Harding, 1987; Smith, 1987; Hawkesworth, 1989; Haraway, 1991). The
insistence on one’s own situation and perspectives is based on the idea that research is invariably social and political process (Harding, 1987, 1991; Smith, 1987; Gaskell, 1988; Punch, 1998) annulling any grand theories or omniscient perspective claims (Haraway, 1991). Meta-theories is replaced by more partial, locational and relational knowledge (Lather, 1991; Britzman, 2000). Unravelling the embedded power relation through partial knowledge is equally crucial to constructionist perspective as they strive to disclose in what specific context knowledge has been produced and legitimized, i.e. situating partiality within power relationships.

Addressing issues of positionality within critical tradition is seem of significance due to the idea that construction of knowledge is always a compromised endeavour entwined with power relations between the researcher and the researched. Challenging modernistic assumptions regarding reality, objectivity and knowability, poststructuralists question the validity of insider advantage that supports research with/in one’s own culture. The researcher’s fixed social position, such as woman, migrant, and native, becomes much more complicated by other relational categories that determine the interactions with participants (Delgado Gaitan, 1993). There exist no personal experience or insider’s perspective in pure form, instead, experience, is always relationally formed. Delgado Gaitan (1993) shares her predicament to show that the researcher’s ethnic and social positionality actually becomes more complicated by the claimed role and that the researcher’s changing positioning transforms the direction of the research.

This understanding of knowledge and what (how) the self is renders particularly important the reconstructive aim of postcolonial reflexivity to actively write-in the presence of the researcher and the knower self. In other words, this attendance to the presence and engagement of the knower helps situate knowledge in terms of “who is speaking” and “where this speaking is coming from” (e.g., Calas & Smircich, 1999; Escobar, 1994; Faucault, 1980; Haraway, 1988; Radhakrishnan, 1996, 1994). Such attentiveness not only affords the opportunity to be accountable to social conditions giving rise to knowledge but also provides more situated knowledge about others (Radhakrishnan, 1996; Calas & Smircich, 1999; Escobar, 1995). By attending to these social particularities organizing others, it is possible to transition away from practices of knowledge construction that serve only to reinforce potentially essentialized notions about the “other” (Chaterjee, 1987; Lal, 1996; Radhakrishnan, 1996).

3.1.4 Conclusion: Methodology and My Work

The discussion above informs my own epistemological rooting and provides the foundation upon which my fieldwork and data analysis follow. The overall aim of my study is to complicate theorization of IBM phenomena with
postcolonial ambivalence. In doing so, I privilege and prioritize the experience and context of people from postcolonial societies caught in-between spaces engendered by the colonial past and globalizing present. I explore the issue of postcolonial ambivalence through a focus on identity. I look not only at language which has been the dominant realm of postcolonial inquiry, but also at the performative dimension of postcolonial ambivalence (cf., Bhabha, 1994). The two FDI-related phenomena that I choose to delimit my work are international knowledge transfer (an organizational perspective) and knowledge spillover (an industry perspective). In both of these studies, I attempt to place at the centre the experiences of knowledge recipients and their local context through a focus on their identity. Following the aims of postcolonial theory, my thesis is an attempt to deliberately engage with the experiences of local knowledge recipients, experiences that so far have only been represented in measurements and, thus, marginalized. By placing at the centre the experiences of knowledge recipients and their local context, I attempt to offer an understanding of both of the phenomena from a purely postcolonial standpoint. My research aim from this perspective can be understood as an ideological approach located within the political and emancipatory tradition of constructionist and postcolonial inquiry. Having located my study within the qualitative paradigm and its critical interpretive tradition, below I discuss my choices relating to gathering of empirical material.

3.2 Data Gathering and Study Participants

This section first discusses those aspects of data gathering that are common to my two studies. Subsequently, it discusses those aspects that are unique to the knowledge transfer and spillover studies.

3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews and Narrative Approach

Empirically, critical interpretative inquiry such as the present one necessitates working with the stories individuals tell. Given my focus on exploring the encounters of postcolonial ambivalence through the lens of identity, semi-structured interviews became the most plausible and useful method available. Proponents of interviews as data collection methods commonly argue that interviews may generate rich descriptions of research subjects’ experiences, viewpoints, and knowledge and that this can be documented (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). However, because semi-structured interviews as a data-gathering technique can be applied to various other epistemological positions, I had to make further choices that were in line with my epistemological bent. Because my goal is to understand the recipient experience through a focus on identity, narratives seemed a well-suited
approach since it allows voice and agency to the narrator and enables self-
deterministic storytelling. The narrative approach is based on the premise that
we construct our identities and “ways of knowing” through our stories. Because
narrative inquiry is one of the best ways to reflect upon experience, this
methodology is well suited for insights about how people identify and the
process of identification.

Narratives also seemed well suited to my study because, in addition to giving
me descriptions of everyday activities relating to newsgathering, narratives also
pick up emotions, thoughts, and interpretations and pave the way for people to
engage in retrospective meaning making. All of these aspects are relevant and
useful in understanding the issue of identity in my study. As Bruner (2014)
argues, we narrativize our experiences of the world and the roles we play.
Through people’s stories, we can thus understand their views and how
experiences have shaped those views.

Furthermore, narratives as empirical material not only allow me to study the
dominant discourses and stories but also accommodate counter-discourse and
stories, primarily because counteracting narratives elude the censor (Gabriel,
2000). It is important to note, however, that whereas narratives and stories are
often used as synonyms, they can be separated by the fact that stories must be
plotted within a narrative (Czarniawska, 2004:20). Thus, stories are a sub-form
of narratives. I structured my interview questions to encourage storytelling.

However, stories are not to be understood as benign and uncomplicated
accounts of events and practices. “Omissions, exaggerations, shifts in emphasis and a
license to ride roughshod over the facts” are all central to story-telling (Gabriel,
1995:480). However, I still privilege the storytelling approach because, although
it might contain inconsistencies about events and facts, it also discursively holds
many “felt truths”, providing an important link in the dynamic interplay of
meaning making and identity (Horrocks & Callahan, 2006). Seeing stories as
interpretive resources that are influenced by the dominant discourses can
enable an effective challenge of the very discourses that shape them. This
perspective is an important aspect in my understanding of narratives and stories
in my research. Stories might therefore bring up aspects that foreground
unattended “collective shared” everyday experiences by talking them into existence
(Brown et al., 2008:1046; also see Ciuk & Jepson, 2009).

My approach to narratives embraces individual lived experiences but recognizes
that all experiences and their narratives are rooted within a backdrop of broader
historical, social, political and cultural discourses. I apply a discursive approach
to narrative storytelling for the study of identity for the following reasons: First,
from this premise, who we are, our identities, are attained from the collective
ideas and discourses that make up the larger social and cultural contexts of our

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lives. Theoretically, these ideas and discourses are the discursive resources available to us in sense making. Second, this approach also implies that talk is the means by which identities are constituted by the discursive resources made available through the wider context. Third, as Wetherell (1998) proposes, identities are in part conferred through positioning in discourse (cf., Davies & Harré, 1990) and in part actively constructed, contested and negotiated by active speakers.

3.2.2 Study on International Knowledge Transfer

My first study focusses on international knowledge transfer, in particular, knowledge transfer from MNC headquarters to a subsidiary, where headquarters is located in a developed country and its subsidiary in India. Below, I further discuss the choice of research context for this specific phenomenon.

3.2.2.1 Choice of Reuters as a Case of Knowledge Transfer

Entry into a transnational media firm’s headquarters and subsidiaries was required for my research because I wanted to perform interviews with representatives of “both ends” of the transfer process (i.e., sender and recipient) to contrast their perspectives on knowledge transfer. Another important criterion for case selection was to ensure that the sender unit was located in a developed country and the receiving unit in a developing country; otherwise, issues of postcolonial ambivalence might not play out in an observable manner, and it would not be possible to contrast my findings to extant theorization of institutional duality/distance. I also needed to access various documents such as journalism guidebooks and training manuals because these would help me further understand the principles behind the work-process and knowledge related to the journalism ethics. Thompson Reuters fulfilled all of the above criteria.

With headquarters in New York and a second important unit in London, Thompson Reuters has expanded into the Indian market in recent decades and has subsidiaries in many large cities there (e.g., Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Calcutta, and Bangalore). Setting up subsidiaries in India often involves complexities relating to training, a situation in which institutional and cultural differences might play out in a particularly observable manner and relate well to issues of postcolonial ambivalence. Institutional distances between Reuters’ main branches from where knowledge flows (US and UK) and India might also be understood as great (at least in the general understanding that underpins knowledge transfer and spillover research, and in the general discourse on IBM in India). Thus, it was determined that Reuters’ operation in India was a good
case in point. When approached, its representatives were positive towards participating in my research.

Reuters is also a good example of a situation in which practices of newsgathering in general and news sourcing in particular are well established and are cornerstones of its organizational identity. Conversely, in the case of India, largely due to its booming expansion in the last twenty years with upcoming news media outlets, newsgathering practices are not necessarily documented by organizations, although there are well-established industrial rules and codes of conduct that prevail in the industry. Thus, studying Reuters’ operations in India made a good case because it allowed for a contrast between an organizational practice coming from the West and established local practices in the Indian news media industry.

At this juncture, it might also be appropriate to emphasize that because I apply a postcolonial lens (exploring postcolonial ambivalence) in an organizational setting, I do not primarily examine the construction and expressions of “national” cultures but rather focus my attention on MNC culture in relation to its corresponding “industry culture”. That is, I examine Reuters’ practices and values in relation to what might be broadly understood as Indian newsgathering practices and values. However, corporate and industry cultures are not created in isolation from their broader cultural settings. On the contrary, we might expect that local subsidiary employees associate MNC practices with more general characteristics of the MNCs home-country context (or, more broadly, the (ex-) colonizer context). Similarly, we might expect that MNC expatriates link expressions of local industry culture to various characteristics of local culture. Postcolonial ambivalence – and its constituent orientalist discourse, mimicry and hybridity – might therefore play out in a multitude of ways in an organizational setting, ways that arguably reflect postcolonial ambivalence in the broader society.

3.2.2.2 Interview Guide

I positioned my interviews in a manner to show that I was eager to learn more about the experiences of my research participants in their journey of being a reporter in a globalizing media landscape. Given my epistemological stance, my research participants were not conceptualized as “cultural dupes” (Czarniawska, 2004:50) but rather as critical subjects, capable of reflexive existence in their everyday work activities. This approach was central in providing them the epistemological space to exist and speak.

During the introduction phase of the interview with each participant, I explicitly acknowledged two things: First, I specifically used the term local worker or local knowledge recipient to refer to them. In doing so, I hoped to encourage them to tell stories that were pertinent in instances in which their
“local worker identity” was made salient in their reflections. Second, I informed them that I valued their stories because I was attempting to understand the difficulties of applying Reuters’ mandated newsgathering practices in an Indian context. I encouraged them to bring out stories of conflicts, emotions and contradictions in their everyday newsgathering work. I made this suggestion so as to subdue the “myth of rationality” (Domagalski, 1999) that commonly influences people’s response in organizational research context (Dougherty & Drumheller, 2006), but more importantly, it also helped me detect strategies that participants apply to subvert structures and discourses that seek to pigeonhole and police them. Additionally, the strategy of informing research participants about the political and emancipatory goal of my research allowed me at the very onset to see their immediate responses to the validity of my study by either confirming or denying the importance of problems in knowledge transfer as I conceptualized it.

Often in an interview process, researchers make a common mistake of using academic jargon rather than applying concepts from the verbal repertoire of research participants (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000), which might distort the storytelling process. Qualitative researchers therefore generally agree that interview questions must be open ended and framed using everyday common language (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2007). In this vein, many of my questions were rather prompts, such as “tell me”.

I designed the interviews and discussions around three broad aspects:

(i) Research participants’ autobiographical narratives as journalists – their journalism career, how they entered the profession, their role as a journalist, who have been their role models, their ideas and impression of the contemporary media landscape, both global and local, challenges they face as a journalist in current times, the state of Indian media and their own role in it.

(ii) Stories of working with Reuters – challenges, contradictions and conflicts they encounter when working as a Reuters journalist in an Indian media environment. How working for Reuters has influenced their professional identity and self-conception as a journalist.

(iii) Stories of working in an Indian context as a Reuters employee. Here, I directed focus to their experiences and perspectives related to straddling different cultural contexts (working as a Reuters employee in the Indian media sector).

These questions were intended to capture the complexities of their experience as (Indian) journalists and how they identify with the forces that tend to interpellate them. The questions were also intended to capture the journalists’
moments and strategies of resistance to being categorized. Thus, my aim was to capture the “borderland culture” or, in Bhabha’s (1994) words, the “third space” they inhabit.

In some instances, research participants requested the set of interview questions prior to our meeting. I formulated a small set of questions based on the three categories stated above.

However, although I had a question set, the intention was also for the conversations to be flexible. It was important to let the interviewees provide a full account of what they deemed important, although their responses were not specifically related to the questions posed. I did not consider each interview situation to be one generating precise data; rather, the interview space took on a political nature in which the identity of both the researcher and researched evolved (cf., Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). I therefore did not always ask a question to obtain a precise answer but often rather as a teaser that could open up conversation and allow different viewpoints to emerge. I thus had broad interview questions to give consistency to my interviews, but during the course of my conversations with the interviewees, these questions were only a rough guide to see whether I covered aspects that I considered important to analyse the process of knowledge transfer. Based on advice from narrative researchers, I made conscious attempts not to interrupt my participants and disrupt the flow of narratives, allowing those narratives to emerge naturally from conversations. The emphasis for me as an interviewer was to avoid having preconceived notions of what I “planned” to hear from my study participants. My goal was rather to investigate what I could learn from their stories about the process of applying new knowledge to the local context and how this process might affect their self-conception as journalists.

Because my interviews mostly focussed on issues of news sourcing and the instances and conflicts that emerge from it, I wanted to know what the recipients felt about these issues. What types of tensions arise when trainers (or senders) think that knowledge transfer does not work? Did such conflicts arise often? Did interviewees care strongly? Early on in my interviews, I became aware that some employees were hesitant to speak of topics they considered controversial, e.g., what they felt when asked to re-do reports or when someone else had to re-do their work if it was not up to Reuters’ standards. When talking about such conflicts, study participants would often “go off the record” to explain certain situations and to provide their understanding of such issues. I accepted this limitation because I wanted to obtain the viewpoints of recipients who are often neglected (or blamed when recognized) in accounts of knowledge transfer.
Conversations were thus elicited by encouraging participants to speak as freely as possible about issues they encounter when trying to implement new knowledge in their daily work routine. As an active interviewer, I often paraphrased participants’ responses to clarify my understanding and to encourage them to continue opening up the narrative.

I digitally recorded all but two of my interviews, always with the prior permission of each participant. My own “countertransference”, fantasies or musings about the participant or interview, were recorded in detailed field notes.

### 3.2.2.3 Study Participants

Most interviews were conducted at Reuters’ offices in Mumbai and Bangalore (see Table 3.1). I spoke to the respective bureau chiefs (both expatriates; one from the UK and the other from the US) at both sites and requested further access from them. I was granted a two-day access to the Mumbai office and three days at the Bangalore office. At the Mumbai site, the bureau chief assigned who I could interview, but he assured me that he would select a range of employees belonging to different age groups, employment spans in the company, experience and areas they covered. Thus, he helped me obtain a range of perspectives from employees belonging to various intersectionalities in terms of, for example, age, work experience, gender, and previous employment history. At the Bangalore office, I was provided a three-day access, and the trainer there helped me organize my interviews with different employees. I spent full days at the site, from 10 am to 7 pm, and I spoke to team leaders, expats and reporters on various teams working with the UK and the US (different teams had different time shifts, so staying all day ensured that I spoke to members of each team and obtained their perspective on knowledge transfer).

Interviews at the subsidiaries were conducted in November 2011, although other information about Reuters and its operation in India was gathered over a period of 3 years from 2011 to 2014. I performed five additional interviews with subsidiary employees at a later date, two in person and three via Skype.
Table 3.1: Interviewees at the Mumbai and Bangalore sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Designation (broadly defined)</th>
<th>Years at Reuters (in 2011)</th>
<th>Work experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journalist since 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Journalist since 2007 (international work experience and experience from other Reuters branch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Journalist since 2000 (international work experience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journalist since 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Journalist since 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journalist since 2008 (only worked at Reuters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>Filer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>In media industry since 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>Journalist, trainer, expat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Significant experience outside India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journalist since 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Journalist since 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>Senior editorial team member, expat</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Journalist since 1999 (international work experience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journalist since 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Team leader</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Journalist since 2005 (first job at Reuters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Journalist since 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Senior editorial team member, expat</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Extensive experience in journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Editorial team member</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>In journalism since 2003 (first job at Reuters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Journalist since 2008 (first job at Reuters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>Senior editorial team member</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>In journalism since 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>In journalism since 2004 (first job at Reuters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journalist since 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>Expat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Worked extensively for Reuters in different countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B10</td>
<td>Team leader</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>In journalism since 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B11</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Journalist since 2009 (first job at Reuters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B12</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journalist since 2007 (first job at Reuters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B13</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Journalist since 2005 (1 year international work experience)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: M1-M12=Mumbai site participants (incl. expats); B1-B13=Bangalore site participants (incl. expats).
Although some of the participants permitted me to disclose their names, I have chosen to keep all interviewees anonymous to protect their identities and maintain consistency.

### 3.2.3 Study on Knowledge Spillover

#### 3.2.3.1 Challenges of Studying an Industry-level Phenomenon

Conceptualizations of knowledge spillover treat the phenomenon as an industry-level occurrence. That is, the coming of MNCs is projected to affect local industry performance through dissemination of MNC knowledge. Research has, however, paid little attention to how knowledge is actually received by actors in the local industry. We therefore have little understanding of the dynamics involved in the spillover process. I will address this issue by complicating knowledge spillover with postcolonial ambivalence and — in particular — how spillover relates to identity, or the identification with, for example, ongoing social, economic, and political processes in the individual’s context. In other words, I will investigate what scholars consider an industry-level phenomenon by examining identity.

Of course, my method will not allow me to capture (or disprove) the precise causality that spillover researchers argue for and whose “strength” they seek to establish. However, that is not my purpose; rather, I wish to unearth dynamics that help me question the assumptions underlying spillover studies, such as the “empty vessel” and “sponge” theories of knowledge spillover. By questioning these assumptions, I can also propose and instantiate an alternative view of the phenomenon. To use positivist language, I hope to suggest an alternative “causality” that recognizes the agency of the knowledge recipient; however, I do not pretend to prove that causality.

#### 3.2.3.2 Interview guide

The spirit of the interview process for my spillover study was largely similar to that of my knowledge transfer research. However, some aspects of the interview process were very specific to the data gathering process of the former study. First, the spillover interviews were not as organized timewise as the ones conducted at Reuters. My interviews with various journalists were scattered over time and often did not occur at their workplace. Second, because my interviews were not confined to limited time schedules such as most of those conducted at Reuters, there were greater possibilities to follow up interviews, and I met some of my research participants more than once. Third, because the interviews were often conducted at press clubs, coffee shops and other public arenas, and while shadowing the journalists on their fieldwork, the interview
structure was comparatively more informal than the interviews that I performed at Reuters.

Interviews were open-ended, typically lasting 1-2 hours. Although they were often relatively informal in nature, I did have a broad set of open-ended research questions to guide the flow of the conversation in such informal settings. In parallel to the questions asked of knowledge transfer research participants, these questions were broadly divided into three categories:

(i) Research participants’ autobiographical narratives as a journalist – their journalism career, how they entered the profession, their role as a journalist, who have been their role models, their ideas and impression of the contemporary media landscape (both global and local), challenges they face as a journalist in current times, the state of Indian media and their own role in it.

(ii) Stories of working with international media in an Indian context (previous job experience) – challenges, contradictions and conflicts but also how working for international media has influenced their professional identity and self-conception as a journalist.

(iii) Stories of working in an Indian media organization (current job) – focus on comparison to working for international media organizations. Differences they encountered in practices of newsgathering and in applying practices learned at the previous workplace (i.e., international media organization) to their current jobs.

Similarly to the questions in the knowledge transfer study, these questions were intended to capture the complexities of their experiences as (Indian) journalists and how they identify with forces that tend to interpellate them but also to capture their moments and strategies of resistance to being thus categorized. My aim here was also to capture the “borderland culture” or, in Bhabha’s (1994) words, the “third space” they inhabit.

3.2.3.3 Study participants

Most interviews were conducted in the city of Mumbai in 2011. My list of interviewees comprised journalists, editors, media activists and media analysts working within the Mumbai news industry (see Table 3.2). Although some of the interviewees I spoke to were working with local media firms, others were freelancers. Out of 27 people I interviewed, 11 had work experience from Reuters, and others had experience from with other international media firms such as the New York Times, BBC World and the Wall Street Journal, several of them abroad. Although not all had experience of working for high-profile international news media, all had work experience as a journalist in international
news media organizations, thereby representing direct channels of knowledge spillover.

**Table 3.2: List of interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Designation (broadly defined)</th>
<th>Stated work experience in journalism when interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IJ01</td>
<td>Editor-in-chief</td>
<td>30 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ02</td>
<td>Freelance journalist</td>
<td>20-25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ03</td>
<td>Bureau head, editor-in-chief</td>
<td>40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ04</td>
<td>Freelance journalist</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ05</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ06</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>8-10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ07</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>35-40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ08</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>20-25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ09</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ10</td>
<td>Media analyst</td>
<td>20-25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ11</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ12</td>
<td>Freelance journalist</td>
<td>5-10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ13</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>25-30 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ14</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>20-25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ15</td>
<td>Freelance journalist, activist</td>
<td>20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ16</td>
<td>Bureau chief</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ17</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>30 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ18</td>
<td>Editor-in-chief</td>
<td>25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ19</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ20</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ21</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>15-18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ22</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>8-10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ23</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>30-35 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ24</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>20-25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ25</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>5-10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ26</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>35-40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IJ27</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: IJ=Indian Journalist

A large number of my research participants had thus worked for Reuters previously or had training on Reuters mandates while working for Time Now (an English news channel launched in 2008 based on a partnership with Reuters; however, that partnership was dissolved in 2012). Having interviews with ex-employees of Reuters was very useful because the interviews provided me some understanding of the link between knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover. However, they also made for a more systematic and focussed comparison between the local newsgathering practices and Reuters practices.
I gained access to interviewees partly through my former contacts among the journalism community in India of which I was once a part. Others were found through the interview process; when research participants completed the interview, they were often happy to offer me some more contacts, often two or three. Some would speak to potential contacts on the phone in my presence, seek their permission for an interview and then provide me their contact details. Therefore, rapport formation in the interview process had a positive effect on securing additional research participants. In two instances, I spoke to editors-in-chief who, after the interview, allowed me access to more reporters from their team. Therefore, I applied the snowballing sampling technique (Creswell, 2007) productively. I also performed three face-to-face interviews during a visit to Reuters Institute of Journalism Studies at the University of Oxford in 2014 and three interviews while attending a conference on Indian media in Lund in 2015. The latter were somewhat shorter (but more focussed) than the other interviews (typically approximately 30 minutes). In addition to these six interviews, I performed three Skype interviews in 2014.

The media sector in India reflects the complexities and diversity of Indian nation space with little commonalities in terms of language, religion, culture and caste, to which is added the complexities of colonial language and culture. Therefore, I tried to ensure that I had a balance in terms of demographic profiles (age and gender), religion and caste (which remains an important social divider in India in spite of extensive government policies to combat its presence and effects), representing a variety of participant identities.

To live up to my promise to my interviewees that my endeavour was entirely scholarly and that participation in the study would not lead to their identification, I use codes instead of names in the text.

3.3 From Fieldwork to Text – Reflection

3.3.1 I, the “inside outsider”

I conducted my fieldwork in three phases. I initially gathered preliminary impressions of the media landscape in the city of Mumbai in July 2010. The major part of my fieldwork was conducted in 2011 from September to November. My field research began with the comfort of feeling at home. After years of academic training in Europe (first in the UK and then in Sweden), I was flying back to my home country (India) to do research on locals working in the news media industry.
My choice of researching in India was logistically suitable and methodologically sustainable within critical tradition, for my familiarity with India and its cultural ethos and my emotional comfort benefited my research process a great deal. Additionally, as a former reporter in India (I worked as a reporter for two years at an India youth magazine), I fairly well understood the prevalent institutional practices and procedures of reporting and news gathering in the Indian media system. I therefore knew how to approach reporters, what to ask and what not to ask. More than anything, I was glad that I was able to eliminate the communication barriers that could have arisen had I researched somewhere else. My being an Indian often enabled me to construe occasions – which required silent understandings and culture-linked expressions and phrases. Most of the time, I was able to interpret what working in a certain media firm meant and what a certain dress code or gesture implied. I thus had what might be referred to as an emic outlook on Indian newsgathering practices.

My own experiences as a former reporter also provided me the scope to gain more insight into my participants’ experience. That is, when reporters narrated their daily experiences, I usually could easily imagine how things worked. In this sense, the interpretivist argument applied well – my cultural insider position was a license to be able to interpret culture. Furthermore, my position as an insider in Indian journalism helped me share political/developmental issues surrounding Indian news media because I was well aware of dominant practices, policies and ideologies. For example, I could empathize smoothly with my participants’ frustration at arbitrary and absurd media policies and practices of which I have long been aware.

However, the comfort and ease offered by geographic affinity also compelled me to reposition myself as a researcher with my affiliations from abroad (i.e., a Western university). My cultural proximity did not work in the same way as discussed in feminist research in which it is propounded that women researching women provides the women researcher the insider position by means of shared experience between the researched and the researcher (e.g., shared sentiments of oppression or unity against the patriarchy or men). In fact, rarely did my status of being an Indian evoke the feeling of “shared sisterhood” during the course of my interviews. My Indianess was anything but surprising in the specific geographic boundary of the Indian subcontinent. I did not particularly experience a “we Indian” sentiment that would have been evoked among Indians, for instance, while watching a cricket match or debates relating to Indian culture.

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8 Although Indian language media has experienced exponential growth in the last twenty years, it still operates in the shadow of its English counterparts. For a detailed analysis of politics, position and class division in Indian media, see Jeffery (2000).
My research thus did not begin with a strong, shared tie of affinity between researched and researcher. To the contrary, my fieldwork journey started with a presumed difference (between the interviewees and me) and a blindingly obvious power imbalance. At my research field sites, I was constantly perceived by my interviewees as the “Other”, primarily due to my non-resident Indian status (I no longer lived in India, so I was not one of them. In fact, in two instances when describing the status of Indian journalism, interviewees questioned me about journalism practices in my country – Sweden), but I was also now a researcher and not a former journalist, and my affiliation was with a university abroad rather than a media organization. Thus, in the course of my fieldwork, I was often referred to as Swede, academic from the West, NRI (non-resident Indian), but never an Indian. Thus, the fact that my interviewees and I shared the same cultural/national boundary was not significantly important in my research endeavour. Rather, envisaging research questions required confronting the differences rather than any similarities that my interviewees and I shared. When I related and reinstated my cultural inheritance in the particular interview setting, I neither saw myself positioned as an insider, nor was I perceived as one. More importantly, my ever-lurking outsideress within the research setting was a consequence of a binary structure that I inadvertently created in formulating research questions.

I conceptualized the interviewees as (silent) knowledge recipients rather than as reporters and intended to investigate these recipients of (Western) knowledge as ones who had a distinctive experience, i.e., a knowledge recipient experience, that they as journalists were clearly aware of and that it was something unique to them, something that I did not have. This conceptual dichotomy between my interviewees and me generated a relational space accentuating my outsideress. Therefore, the mode through which I negotiated my entry into the research setting (as a researcher coming from abroad) designated me an outsider, vitally directed the modes of interaction and thus shaped the boundaries of the data (cf., Ceglowski, 2000).

Maintaining my research self was a deliberate process quite unlike most social interactions. Some reporters, stating my inability to understand their professional work, retorted to my interview requests with comments such as, “you need to be one of us to understand the complexities of things you are trying to simplify; why don’t you take up a job of a reporter and see it yourself?” Despite my attempts to become closer to them, cultural disengagement, professional distance and my perceived authority as researcher all made it difficult for me to enter their world fully. Contrary to my expectations that I would interview them in a natural setting, I had to make a conscious effort to befriend many interviewees. (I went to hang out in the evening with some of the reporters so that I could become better acquainted with them, or met some for coffee and dinner and clubs; I shadowed two reporters in the field while they covered their stories.) Moreover,
I was not able to understand all the current prevalent jargon, in particular because I had been away from India for several years during which I pursued my graduate studies. More importantly, however, due to developments in media technologies, an entire new gamut of terms and concepts has come into force about which I was uninformed. When I asked the meaning of some jargon, interviewees often made fun of me and regarded me with suspicion, reflected in joking questions to me such as, “do you really have a background in media?”.

The researcher role and how I negotiated my entry also prevented me from accessing interviewees in another identity. Some were hesitant to tell their innermost stories to me because they were conscious of my institutional position (this caution was more frequent at Reuters because they often perceived me as an ally of their immediate and distant authorities). Some imparted their stories conditionally, stating, “I can only tell you off the record”. However, at times, my position as researcher provided an advantageous opportunity to elicit stories. Due to my positional authority, some reporters very willingly responded to my interview requests and shared their everyday experiences as journalists.

As most critical interpretative scholars assert, and I agree, truth is always partial. The data I collected were only from my positions, never from an omniscient view. No matter how I positioned myself, I failed to grasp the whole picture of my interviewees’ lives. More often than not, I failed to establish a smooth rapport but rather struggled with limited responses, evasion, or conversation that drifted off topic. I also often found myself in the place of an interviewee rather than the interviewer because many younger reporters wished to know how I went abroad, did I take a GRE exam, why Sweden, why not the US. With senior reporters, on the other hand, the conversation might drift to why I am not back in India, when will I come back, and what is my parents’ take on my living abroad. In many such instances, I felt vulnerable when the focus became my life history and me. I initially obliged most queries; doing so was only fair because they were giving me time from their busy schedule and this response was a means of working towards good rapport. Not often, but in some cases, engaging in conversations off topic provided room for rapport building for more insights due to crossing over one another’s comfort zone, but often when the questions became too personal, I found myself uncomfortable and evasive.

In this respect, my field experiences supports poststructural claims that distance between researcher and the researched can “never be fully consumed, conquered, and experienced” (Marcus, 1998:389) and that there will always be a difference that cannot be dialectized. Therefore, reflections on how power relationships are embedded in the particular relationship between interviewer and interviewee become crucial; thus, positionality becomes an analytical tool for examining the
power relationship embedded in the specific interaction between researcher and research participant (Foucault, 1977, 1978; Butler, 1992). The focus here is to illuminate power relationships to better understand partiality of knowledge. Because poststructuralists “frame power not simply as one aspect of a society but as the basis of society” (Kinchelelo & McLaren, 1998:274), they consider the individual an intersection of interactions, struggles and negotiations with social forces embedded in a variety of discursive fields. Thus, the interaction between the researcher and the researched is not simply directed only by social categories such as race, gender, and class; according to poststructuralists, power relationships are situational, i.e., individuals simultaneously find themselves subjected as well as exercising power (Foucault, 1977, 1978).

3.3.2 Analysis Process

The approach to data analysis and interpretation that my thesis adopts is a combination of narrative interpretive reading and postcolonial interpretation in a reflexive manner. Narrative reading helps me accommodate the intersubjective nature of the narrative material, which acknowledges my own position as the co-creator of the narrative (Weick, 1995); postcolonial theory allows me to complicate my interpretation with overarching concepts of orientalism, hybridity and third space.

For the analysis of my interviews, I applied the three-stage critical reading of narratives, proposed by Czarniawska (2004) based on Hernadi’s triad. These three stages involved explication, explanation and exploration. The first stage of explication consists of gathering common strands of narratives. The next stage – explanation – generally includes reading the selected strands of narratives with the chosen theoretical lenses. Exploration, the last stage, involves reflexive reading of the material, which includes the researcher’s own concerns and reflection.

Although this three-step interpretation forms the basic framework of both of my studies, the approach of each stage of reading differed significantly between the studies. For instance, in the explication stage of the study of knowledge transfer, I sorted narratives based on two main themes derived from the knowledge transfer literature, namely knowledge internalization and knowledge implementation. The literature on knowledge transfer commonly understands the phenomenon of international knowledge transfer through this process. My choice of using knowledge internalization and implementation to understand the knowledge transfer phenomenon is based on the following reasons: 1) The concepts are widely accepted within the knowledge transfer literature as elements in understanding the transfer phenomenon. 2) The concepts proposed by Kostova (1999) have emerged from deeper psychological and processual needs to understand the knowledge phenomenon. 3) To have a conversation
with scholars studying transfer, it becomes meaningful to base the studies within recognized elements of the phenomenon. More importantly, whereas my attempt is to study the phenomenon from a purely postcolonial stance, my work is not an attempt to nullify the extant literature. In fact, my aim is to offer complementary understanding of the phenomenon and extend the use of the postcolonial perspective in understanding some of the complexities that transfer entails.

Although the themes that provided the overall structure for the analysis of the knowledge transfer data were derived from the literature (e.g., training, internalization, and implementation), it was more challenging to find a similar basis for the spillover study. This difficulty was largely due to the differences in levels of conceptual development in the fields. Whereas the international knowledge transfer literature has come a long way in understanding institutional differences and the field has attained a certain conceptual maturity in relation to the knowledge transfer process, the body of spillover research has yet to reach this stage. Under-conceptualization of the spillover process thus made it challenging to derive themes from the literature as a basis for analysis. Therefore, in the explication stage, a somewhat more inductive approach was employed in which I derived central themes from the interviews. These themes, I argue, represent important determinants of spillover success and provide alternative perspectives on spillover compared with extant, generally simplistic, understandings of knowledge recipients and the spillover process in general.

For the second stage of the reading, the explanation step, I then navigate through the narratives to view them through a postcolonial lens. In this stage of reading, I apply the analysis tools derived from Said’s Orientalism (1993), i.e., Binarism, Universalism and Essentialism. These tools of analysis allow me to engage with the issue of discourse interpellation and subjectivity. Furthermore, I apply Bhabha’s (1994) concepts of Hybridity, Mimicry, and Third Space to interpret instances of resistance and subversion of the very discourse that interpellates. Bhabha’s concepts allow me to engage with aspects of agency and resistance to dominant discourse. Thus, in the second stage of reading, I apply concepts proposed by Said and Bhabha to interpret the narratives. I have argued that when used in conjunction (see chapter 2), Said’s and Bhabha’s works can help generate a more holistic view on issues relating to power and resistance, and it is important to see the given phenomenon from these angles. This stage of reading the narratives was largely similar for both the knowledge transfer and spillover studies.

In the final stage of reading, exploration, I attempted to see how my own involvement, personal prejudices and hunches, experiences, interpretation, and so on influenced my interpretation and the selection of what became the text. In this stage, I made use of methodological insights offered by scholars from
constructivist genres such as poststructuralism, feminism and, primarily, postcolonialism.

It is important to recognize here that the textual presentation of the analysis (see Chapter 5 and 7) in neither study is organized according to the three stages of analysis. The stages of reading have supported me in arriving at my findings (through, e.g., data sorting, making sense, and challenging interpretations). However, although they form the backbone of my analysis, they would not make for very good reading. Rather, the textual presentation represents an effort to present in illustrative form my findings, interpretations and conclusions.

### 3.3.3 Writing-in: Confronting the Concealed “I”

Through the example of my fieldwork, I have attempted to indicate that data are mediated not only by specific social constructs such as age, gender, class and educational background but also by the relationships and politics that exist between the researcher and the researched. Importantly, however, data are also influenced by the researcher’s unseen positioning through hunches, preconceptions, prejudices, cultural beliefs, theoretical dispositions and common sense.

As my experiences indicate, data are intricately bound up with the researcher’s position. Similarly, what comprises data is also inevitably constrained with researcher authority vis-à-vis representation. Although categorical identities shape the contours of social and technical interaction, the unseen positioning of the researcher/author persistently drives the direction of data collection; as Lincoln and Denzin (1998) insist, a gaze always involves politics.

Only when I undertook the task of working with my transcripts did the investigation of “who I am” and “where my understanding of the given phenomenon comes from” become an unavoidable part of the analysis and representation process. In many cases, I was surprised at the misalliance or even incommensurability between my questions and the responses I received from my research participants. For instance, although I had taken up the task of creating space for the knowledge recipients’ perspective, my understanding of their perspective originated from the normative understanding of the phenomenon itself. I envisioned that reporters who have had experience working for international media firms would by default have preferences for either their current workplace or their previous workplace, at least in relation to newsgathering practices because that was an important distinction often raised whilst illustrating differences between Reuters and local media firms. I naïvely thought that reporters who had worked for both national and international media firms were in a position to make clear-cut choices between practices and
From Theory to Method

values underlying those practices prevalent in those organizations. However, their answers made me aware that my understanding of both the knowledge spillover and transfer phenomena was limited to a normative perspective. Later, I realized that quite a few of my study participants (particularly ones who have had experience working for Reuters and national firms) had no particular preference for one practice over the other, despite seeing clear differences between newsgathering (and other related routines and practices) in national firms viz-a-viz Reuters. Despite the fact that I had taken up the challenge to take a more grass-roots approach to both transfer and spillover, I thus found myself caught in the established conceptual web. As a result, I began to reflect on the significance of the context within which phenomena such as knowledge transfer and spillover can occur and if, from the perspective of locals, local conditions that would nurture or thwart them. I also had to confront the difficulties in accurately capturing a phenomenon such as spillover. As I related more and more to the responses of my participants, I realized that a macro-level phenomenon such as spillover must be studied in relation to its particular context. For instance, I realized that the dynamics of the local industry and its peculiarities and its own institutional and organizational logics all played a significant role in the very nature of knowledge spillover and that if we really want to understand the dynamics of such phenomena, attending to the industrial, social, organizational, national and historical context is vital.

In qualitative research, interviewing is often deployed as a technique for learning about participants’ perspectives, stories and experiences. To a good extent, my interview questions allowed me to understand some of their points of view, but more importantly, the interviews compelled me to reflect on my own perspective, my own understanding of the phenomenon, perspectives of the participants as knowledge recipients, as Indians, and as journalists. Thus, they became a ground for interrogating my preconceived notions. Therefore, the poststructuralist claim that research is ultimately researching oneself (Richardson, 1994, 1997; St Pierre, 2000) seems very applicable to my work.

The two conversations below are demonstrative of the significance of the researcher’s invisible positioning. These examples are excerpts from interviews conducted for the spillover study. Both reporters have previous work experience with Reuters and worked for national media firms during the time of the interviews. Their answers are in response to my question concerning differences between newsgathering practices in their previous and current workplace and the transferability of practices learned at international media firms to their current jobs. As one reporter stated,

“No it’s not applicable most of the time. Foreign media come here to make money. They will bring in more capital no doubt, but that is where the problem is. More money will only strengthen the problems we have. Do you think companies like
Reuters would be interested in doing feature stories on, say, caste system and how our financial sector and business sector are still deeply rooted in this? I can tell you from experience they will not, and why should they as long as profits are made? They pay good salaries, you get many perks like travel facilities, a cell phone, etc. But these are just superficial changes. What about challenging established orders here? Will they devote any time and space to do meaningful stories? I became a journalist as I wanted to expose the vices of the caste system and how it is so entrenched in our country, it’s everywhere you know, in education system, business sphere, and media too, media is the worst, they perpetuate this order through and through. [...] I got admission in college based on my merits, but often people thought I got it through quota [so-called positive discrimination where quotas are reserved for particular castes]. Through my work, I want to expose this issue. I left Reuters as I saw no scope of tackling this issue. There, it was all about straightforward business reporting. They serve the rich business class. These problems don’t concern them.”

Another reporter gave a very personal answer:

“To apply Reuters’ reporting procedure, you need that kind of organizational support, which is lacking here. I would love to apply things learned at Reuters here. It will be good if we have some organized rules on sourcing, it will be handy for newcomers and also reporting becomes more accountable. Not that our sourcing is always questionable. But I am a person who loves to have neat plans. Things are clearer. I had several discussions with some of my seniors over this, but who takes a guy like me seriously? People think I am too effeminate. My voice is very girlish – you might have noticed it yourself and that is a big problem if you want to be heard. I am not the kind of guy whose opinions matter. The mindsets of people here are so rigid and that could be bottleneck to change.”

The above vignettes called for substantial reformulation in my understanding. My original intention to focus on recipients’ acceptance or resistance to new knowledge shifted to their structured context, and I set out to investigate the contextual forces that influenced knowledge transfer and spillover. Instead of a dichotomous scheme of “resistance” versus “co-optation” or “dominance” versus “subjugation”, I began to see knowledge recipients as subjects who negotiate, accommodate, and resist their social conditions.

My interview questions were originally designed to characterize reporters’ experiences; however, the participants’ narratives were constructed and constrained by my questions and to a certain extent by my relationships to them. Given the co-constructed nature of stories, I began to take a sceptical view of the authenticity of participant voices. When I began examining each narrative in the light of positionality, numerous doubts haunted me. How much of these narratives were influenced by my relationship to them? I wondered whether some of the participants obliged my interview request and shared with
me their experience because of my location as a researcher. I wondered whether, if the same question had been asked by their friend or someone else, would they have answered similarly? If they were conscious of my position, what made them think that I wanted this type of answer? In two instances during interviews at Reuters, both participants agreed to provide accounts of their position as reporters off the record, but after a certain rapport building, they were happy to have their position known. In light of these speculations, a more troubling dilemma emerged; how much and what part of their stories should I represent in my text and what part of their stories should I edit? I began interrogating the validity of my interpretation as I faced the predicament of how much I should trust their stories.

Then, I came to a point at which I interrogated my interest in studying knowledge recipients’ experiences. Why, in the first place, was I interested in this topic? What does it mean to research “others”, if knowledge recipients are truly others? My research involving knowledge recipients from developing countries ended up with me researching, critiquing and interrogating myself and my interpretation of such a phenomenon. The more I engaged in this research, the more I learned who I was, what I believed and of what my gaze was constitutive. This rigorous interrogative exercise made me question my textual authority as an author – can I truly represent others? Can my text qualify for more than a personal account?

Notwithstanding the validity of speculations and doubts that reflexivity generated for me both as a researcher and as a writer, I turned to authors who suggested measures to overcome this impasse. I heeded Alvesson’s (2003) advice and took rescue in what he terms “reflexive pragmatism”. Although this approach emphasizes exploration and self-examination on the part of the researcher, Pragmatism means a willingness to postpone clearing up some doubts and still use the material for the best possible purpose(s). Pragmatism builds on an awareness that “time, space, and patience” are limited. It also means holding aside some of the “radical doubt and self-critique” to allow the attainment of results. Alvesson (2003:25) argues, “There is an adaptation to the constraints and a willingness to compromise between reflexive ideals and the idea to deliver knowledge.” However, results are informed by reflexive considerations of how the empirical material can be interpreted.

Thus my attempts at giving voice to the local recipients, i.e., their representation, are guided by Alvesson’s advice on pragmatism. This approach also complements my intention to engage actively with the literature on both international knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover. My aim is to provide a complement rather than replace existing understandings. A pragmatic approach allows me to be critically reflexive along with paving the way for a meaningful conversation with the existing literature.
PART II
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER
4 Review and Postcolonial Critique of Knowledge Transfer Literature

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of the literature on International Knowledge Transfer with particular emphasis on the notion of institutional duality/differences, which is presented as a key knowledge transfer success/failure factor (4.1). Subsequently, I critique the literature from a postcolonial perspective (4.2). Finally, I briefly suggest how my research can address this critique (4.3).

4.1 The Phenomenon of Institutional Duality as Seen by Knowledge Transfer Studies

Knowledge transfer has been studied in an array of settings including intra-organizational, inter-organizational and cross-border exchanges. With increasing economic globalization, the literature has increasingly come to focus on the international setting, specifically addressing knowledge transfer in multinational corporations (Teece, 1976; Mansfield & Romeo, 1980; Bresman et al., 1999; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000). Since Hymer’s (1960) pioneering work on why multinational enterprises exist, scholars have sought to understand what motivates some firms to expand internationally whereas others in the same industry do not. According to internalization theory (Buckley & Casson, 1976), the reason revolves around proprietary assets a firm holds. The mainstay of this internalization approach to multinationals is that, for firms to succeed internationally, they must possess an advantageous, proprietary knowledge base that they can exploit in new markets (Hymer, 1960; Buckley & Casson, 1976). This framework assumes that knowledge-based assets have a public good characteristic that allows firms to exploit the knowledge in various locations at little or no additional cost (Caves, 1971, 1996). Once the knowledge-based advantage is transferred abroad, a firm can compete successfully in multiple country-markets. This view is also promoted by the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, according to which the knowledge base is a key success factor in the global competition, representing a critical asset in companies (Davenport & Prusak 1998; Foss & Pedersen, 2004; Kogut & Zander, 1993; Gupta, 2000). For instance, once a firm acquires a knowledge-based competitive advantage, it becomes easier for the firm to maintain its lead and more difficult for its competitors to catch up (Quinn et al., 1996).
However, possession of advantageous knowledge does not automatically imply that a firm will be able to exploit this advantage overseas (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000). Before the MNC can thrive in foreign markets, it must be able to transfer its proprietary knowledge to its new locations successfully. Scholars now recognize that the knowledge transfer process is far more difficult than the internalization view would have us believe (Caves, 1971, 1996) because the process involves the transfer of whole routines and procedures that are embedded within the knowledge advantage—a potentially very costly and complex undertaking (Teece, 1977; Galbraith, 1990). Thus, knowledge transfer is often difficult and time consuming and substantially affects the performance of foreign operations (Kenney & Florida, 1993; Foss & Pedersen, 2004; Grant, 1996).

Researchers have shown that there are various barriers to transfer success, some relating to the characteristics of the practices that are being transferred and others relating to cultural issues and the nature of organizations. In particular, the more culturally, institutionally and organizationally different the two contexts, the greater the challenges to successful knowledge transfer (Kedia & Bhagat, 1988; Bhagat et al., 2002; Shenker, 2001; Ambos & Ambos, 2009). A prominent discussion within this line of thought has focussed on “institutional distances” that might impede knowledge transfer, arguing that MNC subsidiaries might face “institutional duality” (e.g., Kostova, 1999; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999; Kostova & Roth, 2002). In their words, “there is a within-organization domain that defines a set of pressures to which all units within the organization must conform. At the same time, the foreign subsidiary resides in a host country with its own institutional patterns specific to that domain” (Kostova & Roth, 2002: 216). The subsidiary is consequently subjected to the dilemma of which set of institutions is more important, institutions that make it legitimate within the multinational or those that give it legitimacy in the local context. It is thus generally argued that the greater the “institutional distance” between the home and host countries, the greater the difficulty for headquarters to successfully transfer practices from one context to the other (Kostova & Roth, 2002; Xu & Shenkar, 2002). It can be inferred from this discussion that knowledge transfer will present considerable challenges for developing country MNCs’ subsidiaries located in developing countries characterized by large institutional and cultural distances to the MNC home country.

In the past two decades, the pace of knowledge transfer research has quickened, and numerous scholars now probe the secrets of effective knowledge transfer in its international context. This area of research largely explores how knowledge transfer within a multinational organization is contingent upon the characteristics of the knowledge in question, the characteristics of the knowledge sender, characteristics of the receiver and on their mutual relationship (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002; van Wijk, 2008;
Michailova & Mustaffa, 2012). Whereas some studies focus on one determinant of knowledge transfer, others attempt to combine different factors and examine their joint effects on the process of knowledge transfer (Minbaeva, 2007; Szulanski, 1996). However, no consensus has been reached concerning which of the four determinants is the most important, nor has the combined importance of groups of determinants been clarified. Below, I discuss in greater detail the implication of institutional duality for the four determinants of knowledge transfer and what this duality means for knowledge transfer to developing country subsidiaries.

4.1.1 Characteristics of Knowledge

Before entering into a discussion on the influence of knowledge characteristics, it is important to clarify what is generally understood by knowledge in the (broadly speaking) organization literature. Central to the debate on “what is knowledge” lies the approach proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), now considered a classic work in the knowledge transfer/management literature (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Nonaka and Takeuchi's framework borrows from Polanyi's (1962) framework, according to which explicit knowledge is codified and therefore transmittable in formal and systematic language. Tacit knowledge, conversely, has a personal quality which is difficult to formalize and communicate and is rooted in action, commitment, and involvement in a specific context. In this vein, Nonaka (1994) claims that explicit knowledge has discrete or digital elements that can be captured in records such as databases and libraries. Tacit knowledge, conversely, is viewed “as a continuous activity of knowing” (Nonaka, 1994:16). Explicit knowledge is expressed through its communication (Grant, 1996). Because it is easily articulated and communicated, it is also easier to transfer (Grant & Baden-Fuller, 1995; Grant, 1996). Tacit knowledge, however, is revealed through its application. That is, because it is difficult to codify, it can only be observed through its application and be acquired through practices and experiences (Nelson & Winter, 1982; Nonaka, 1994; Conner & Prahalad, 1996; Szulanski, 1996).

In contrast to explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is thus more “personal” in nature because it is part of an individual’s cognition (Grant & Baden-Fuller, 1995). However, the personal characteristics of tacit knowledge do not mean that tacit knowledge exists only in individuals. Tacit knowledge can also be held collectively. For instance, collective tacit knowledge can reside in top management’s policies and vision, organizational consensus on past collaborative experiences, firm routines, and firm and professional culture (Cavusgil et al., 2003).

Although tacit knowledge is more difficult to articulate, communicate and transfer compared with explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is often considered
more critical to the competitive advantage of the firm, e.g., advocated by the resource-based view of the firm (cf., Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984; Conner & Prahalad, 1996). First, tacit knowledge is more difficult to imitate, which might be referred to as the inertness of knowledge (Kogut & Zander, 1992). In this sense, tacit knowledge is more likely to result in sustainable advantages (Nonaka, 1994). Second, according to Cavusgil (2003), tacit knowledge contributes significantly to the firm’s ability to develop more innovation capabilities. This contribution is because tacit or embedded knowledge is important for a firm’s knowledge creation and new product development (Madhavan & Grover, 1998). Innovation capability, in turn, determines the product performance of the firm (Cavusgil et al., 2003). Therefore, firms might differentiate in performance based on the differences embedded in tacit knowledge and their capability to deploy tacit knowledge.

Another important aspect of knowledge characteristics is type of knowledge. Knowledge types are the elements that firms seek to communicate and transfer to their other units and subsidiaries. Knowledge types within business organizations have been defined and categorized differently by scholars. For example, Bhagat et al. (2002) distinguish between human, structural and social knowledge, whereas Gupta and Govindrajan (2000) distinguish between how relating to functions such as product design and distribution, and declarative types of knowledge such as monthly financial data that exist in the form of “operational information”. Riusala et al. (2007) identify seven types of knowledge transferred through expatriates of MNCs to their subsidiaries, including accounting/finance, management/leadership, sales/marketing, culture, technical/production, product/service and human resource management. Lee and MacMillian (2008) refer to procedural, coordinative and managerial knowledge, whereas Hong and Nguyen (2009) categorize types of knowledge as technical, systemic and strategic. Yet another group of authors examines transfer of organizational practices (Kostova, 1999; Kostova & Roth, 2002), organizational learning systems (Hong et al., 2006) and human resource practices (Sparkes & Miyake, 2000). Although often the type of knowledge under study is not clearly presented (Michailova & Mustaffa, 2012), when examined more closely, most studies are limited to technology transfer (Simonin, 1999). Other types of organizational knowledge, such as management systems and practices or internal processes, are largely neglected in the majority of studies (Minbaeva, 2007; Kostova, 1999).

Kostova (1999) argues that transfer of organizational practices is more challenging compared with technological knowledge or product innovation knowledge because organizational practices are meaning and value-based. Hence, the success of their transfer is determined by the transferability of meaning and value, in addition to the transferability of knowledge. Thus, it is often accepted that transfer of organizational practices (which are of strategic
significance to the firm’s competitive advantage) is more challenging compared with knowledge that is meaning-free and technical in nature (Kostova, 1999; Kostova & Roth, 2002).

In conclusion, there is consensus that knowledge characteristics influence knowledge transfer. The more implicit (tacit) the nature of the knowledge, the more challenging is the transfer process. It can also be inferred that implicit knowledge will be particularly difficult to transfer to subsidiaries when institutional distances are greater. One explanation might be that ties between subsidiaries and headquarters are weak when cultural and language distances are great (Hansen, 1999). Thus, the greater the cultural and institutional distance, more difficult it is to establish strong ties and therefore transfer implicit knowledge.

4.1.2 Source/Sender Characteristics

The importance of the sender’s or knowledge source’s characteristics for the success of knowledge transfer is widely acknowledged but rarely investigated empirically (Minbaeva, 2007). In fact, sender or source characteristics are primarily discussed with respect to the relationship the sender shares with the recipient. Commonly identified factors that lead to effective knowledge transfer from the sender’s side can broadly be categorized as motivation and ability of the sender and sender’s trustworthiness (Szulanski 1996; Husted & Michailova, 2002; Michailova & Husted, 2003), although different labels for similar notions are used, such as willingness to share/express and knowledge stock (Michailova & Mustaffa, 2012).

Willingness to express knowledge (Wang et al., 2001) has been measured using the concepts of protectiveness (Simonin, 1999, 2004), motivation (Gupta, 2000; Szulanski, 1996) and trust (Dhanraj et al., 2004; Szulanski, 1996). When trust is low and opportunistic behaviour by the recipient is assumed, little knowledge will be transferred (Dhanraj et al., 2004). Conversely, high degrees of trust (Collins & Smith, 2006; Dhanraj et al., 2004; Szulanski, 1996; Levin & Cross, 2004), motivation (Gupta, 2000; Jensen & Szulanski, 2004; Minbaeva et al., 2003; Szulanski 1996, 1995) and low degrees of protectiveness (Simonin, 1999; 2004) generally have a positive effect on knowledge transfer from the sender’s side. Knowledge transfer scholars have thus established that, in addition to abilities, the attitudes of the sending and receiving units determine the success of knowledge transfer. Because trust is more difficult to establish under conditions in which cultural and language barriers are high between sender and receiver (Jensen & Szulanski, 2004; Ambos & Ambos, 2009), the findings above again indicate that institutional dissimilarities might adversely affect knowledge transfer success.
4.1.3 Characteristics of Knowledge Recipient

Knowledge-recipient characteristics is the most extensively researched determinant of knowledge transfer. With respect to knowledge sender, structural characteristics such as autonomy, size, age, and ownership structure have received most attention. In regard to knowledge recipient, on the other hand, the most extensively examined characteristic is absorptive capacity (Michailova & Mustaffa, 2012). Scholars commonly agree that this factor is the most important determinant of knowledge transfer effectiveness.

As noted by Michailova and Mustaffa (2012), most studies addressing absorptive capacity use the definition proposed by Cohen and Levinthal (1990:128), i.e., the ability of the recipient to “recognize the value of new information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends”. Although employees’ motivation and ability to acquire new knowledge is a strong undercurrent in many of the constructs (often denoted as ability, capacity, capability, learning capacity or learning intent), empirical studies on employees’ motivation in the process of knowledge transfer have reported mixed results.

Szulanski (1996) is one of the first studies in this area and found that determinants such as ability of the receiver, causal ambiguity and relationships between actors affect knowledge transfer rather than motivation (which was considered a function of the benefits expected by the new knowledge, understanding of the knowledge and the extent to which successful transfer was regarded as feasible). Gupta and Govindrajan (2000), on the other hand, find a positive relationship between motivational disposition (with an emphasis on incentives) and knowledge transfer effectiveness. Minbaeva (2008) argues that the contradictory results of such studies are a consequence of not distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In her study, Minbaeva (2008) examines the interplay of the two types of motivation, the role of HRM practices that foster or impede the two motivation levels, and their resultant effect on knowledge transfer. Her results showed that HRM practices used to promote extrinsic motivation were positively correlated with knowledge transfer, whereas intrinsic motivation had no effect on knowledge transfer.

Kostova and Roth (2002) examine various institutional factors and relational contexts that affect the pattern of adoption of an organizational practice (or the institutionalization of a given organizational practice) in the subsidiary. They argue that adoption has two components, namely implementation and internalization, i.e., behavioural and attitudinal aspects (see Figure 4.1). They further theorize that adoption occurs in four forms: active, minimal, assent and ceremonial. In the active form of adoption, levels of implementation and internalization are both high. This situation is associated with favourable institutional duality. The minimal form of adoption is typified by low levels of
both implementation and internalization. The assent form of adoption entails
low levels of implementation but high levels of internalization. This situation
occurs when the agent believes in the value of the practices but thinks them to
be a misfit in the given environment. The fourth form, symbolic or ceremonial,
occurs when the “subsidiary formally complies with the request of the parent but does not
view the practice as valuable and does not form positive attitude towards it” (Kostova &
Roth, 2002:220), implying high levels of implementation with low levels of
internalization.

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**Figure 4.1: Knowledge adoption as a function of internalization and
implementation (Source: after Kostova & Roth, 2002)**

In their findings (Kostova & Roth, 2002:228) suggest that

> “what really matters for internalization is having social knowledge about a practice
> (shared cognitive categories), which helps people understand the practice correctly, and
> having a set of societal values and beliefs consistent with the practice as well”.

Several reasons are suggested for low levels of adoption. First, active adoption
of a practice might be restricted if an agent feels that the adoption is forced on
it. Second, a low level of adoption could also arise from scepticism about the
particular practice or about the diffusion of practices from headquarters in
general. Such a response is evoked when there is a lack of understanding of the
value of the practice that results from low support from cognitive and
normative pillars. Another reason for a low level of adoption can be that
subsidiaries see the practice as inefficient.

The tensions that results from institutional duality are more prominently played
out at the recipient’s rather than at the sender’s end. The literature has therefore
emphasized absorptive capacity as an important factor in knowledge transfer
and developed a theoretical line of reasoning to support this premise. As
mentioned earlier, countries with higher institutional and cultural distance will
often be defined as lacking absorptive capacity. Relatedly, it is also argued that
the motivation level on the part of the recipient will affect knowledge transfer,
which is related to absorptive capacity; i.e., motivation comes when employees
understand the value of the practice. Thus, the greater the cultural and
institutional differences, the less motivated employees will often be. Furthermore, internalization of practices is achieved when recipients
understand the value of such practices, which, again, is related to closeness
between host and home country institutions and culture. Thus, it can be concluded that the underlying assumption with respect to the recipient unit in these studies is that the greater the difference between the home and host country institutional and cultural characteristics, the less motivated will the recipients be due to lack of absorptive capacity. Consequently, there will be low levels of implementation because the values on which the practices of the MNC are based have little meaning at the recipient unit.

4.1.4 Characteristics the Sender-Receiver Relationship

The relationship between the sender and the receiver is presented as another important determinant of the success of the knowledge transfer process. This relationship has been viewed with very different lenses, and research focusses on characteristics that operate at the dyad or network level (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998; Hansen, 1999; Minbaeva, 2007). Because the attributes of the relationship and the network are associated with social resources, social capital theory (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) has been the basis of some studies. Three main dimensions of the social context are recognized, namely structural, relational and cognitive aspects (see Figure 4.2).

The structural dimension emphasizes the patterns of connections between multiple units. For instance, knowledge flows between two individuals are facilitated when the individuals are embedded in a dense web of third-party connections (Reagans & McEvily, 2003). Knowledge is therefore more likely to transfer between units that are owned by the same parent organization or that are affiliated through the same franchise or chain than across independent organizations.

The relational network dimension refers to the nature of relationships and is manifested in prior research primarily in discussions on strength of relationships and trust. Accumulated evidence suggests that strong ties lead to greater knowledge transfer (Reagans & McEvily, 2003; Rowley et al., 2000). Studies have also found that trust between partners/units determines organizational knowledge transfer (Lane et al., 2001; Szulanski et al., 2004). Although trust is argued to positively encourage knowledge flows both conceptually (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005; Kostova, 1999) and in qualitative empirical research (Buckely et al., 2006; Engelhard & Nägele, 2003), quantitative evidence on the role of trust has been largely mixed and contradictory (Kostova & Roth, 2002).
Figure 4.2: Relationship characteristics

The cognitive dimension refers to representations, interpretations and systems of meaning in the network/relationship (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). The cognitive dimension is embodied in attributes such as shared vision and values that facilitate a common understanding of collective goals and proper ways of acting in a social system (Tsai & Ghosal, 1998). In this vein, cultural similarities and distances are suggested as important determinants of knowledge flows. For instance, cultural distances often hamper the firm’s ability to transfer core competencies to foreign markets (Palich & Gomez, 1999) and increase operational difficulties that emerge from a lack of understanding of norms, values and institutions, thereby hindering knowledge exchange (Mowery et al., 1996). Distance can also lead to misunderstanding that can limit the sharing of important organizational knowledge (Lyles & Sak, 1996; Szulanski et al., 2004). Most research that studies distance-related factors is either conceptual or quantitative, and findings are mixed and inconclusive.
In an extensive literature review, Michailova and Mustaffa (2012:389) argue that, although structural and cognitive dimensions are important, “it is the relational capital that facilitates social exchange in general and cooperative interaction in particular”. This suggestion has implications for discussions on institutional duality because it reflects how employees of subsidiaries located in developed countries relate to employees of subsidiaries in developing countries. In particular, relationships between employees in organizations in which institutional, cultural and cognitive distances are great might be less conducive to knowledge transfer.

### 4.2 Postcolonial Critique of the Knowledge Transfer Literature

In the above section, I have attempted to chart the contours of research related to organizational knowledge transfer in an international setting. The literature review is, however, in no way exhaustive, and I have focussed my attention on bringing out important strands of argument with which I engage. Below, I will critique this field of study from a postcolonial perspective. I specifically use the method of contrapuntal analysis, borrowed from music theory and used by Edward Said (1978) metaphorically. The method entails counterpointing or adding one rhythm, melody, or theme to another as an accompaniment. Contrapuntal critique thus involves reading dominant texts in light of another framework, in my case postcolonial theory. That is, unlike univocal readings in which the account held by the dominant power becomes normalized as truth and acquires the status of “common sense”, a contrapuntal reading enables critique by making visible the erasures and silences around concepts such as culture and institutions, identity and nation.

The goal of contrapuntal reading is not to privilege any particular narrative but to reveal the “wholeness” of the text. Therefore, my goal is not to declare extant conceptualizations of international knowledge transfer as invalid but rather to provide space for inclusion of an alternative perspective so that it can also become a part of the transfer discourse. More specifically, in my critique below, I reflect – through postcolonial lenses – on how we perceive issues related to knowledge transfer and what we neglect by favouring particular epistemologies, assumptions and theorization.

#### 4.2.1 The Construct of Knowledge

Although there have been extensive academic efforts to define and theorize the concept and components of “knowledge”, how the “organizational knowledge” construct is developed is rather reductive in nature (Mir et al., 2009). For
instance, in their critique of how research on knowledge in organizations has
developed, Mir et al. (2005) argue that theories of knowledge are dominantly
rooted within the individualistic and cognitive perspective despite the widely
proposed argument that transfer of knowledge is a social process.

When discussing the characteristic of knowledge within the organizational
domain, the research community has also completely ignored the geopolitical
aspect of knowledge. The focus of “knowledge theories” has largely been
knowledge transfer within organizations located in developed countries. As a
result, studies of knowledge transfer have not complicated their findings with
issues of MNC knowledge in relation to existing knowledge at the recipients’
unit. There is therefore little concern for the fact that existing local knowledge
might have developed to suit local institutions and that Western knowledge
might not always be ideal to generate desired practices (and there is little
concern that what constitutes desired practices is also institutionally
conditioned rather than universal). This approach has generated a very lopsided
understanding of knowledge in general and knowledge transfer in particular.

4.2.2 The Construct of Transfer

The term knowledge transfer is used extensively in various literatures, but the
assumptions that underlie its usage have gone largely unexamined. For instance,
most of the literature rests on the central assumption that knowledge flowing
from the West is inherently superior to knowledge existing locally (Mir & Mir,
2009). In fact, the very desirability of knowledge transfer and its role in
justifying FDI are based on this fundamental premise (Frenkel, 2008; Mir &
Mir, 2009). Knowledge transfer is undertaken by MNCs’ headquarters with the
assumption that subsidiaries located in institutionally distant contexts will, by
virtue of adopting the new knowledge, set out on a path towards “better
management”. Again, the power relationship embedded within the transfer
process itself (particularly when knowledge is transferred to a developing
nation) is largely neglected or only mentioned in passing.

4.2.3 Framing Differences

The notions of “differentness” and “duality” are central to the international
knowledge transfer literature, as seen in the review above. Differences and
duality, however, are not neutral constructs when we examine how these terms
are used.

4.2.3.1 Essentializing Differences

One of the most apparent issues in the knowledge transfer discourse is how
institutional and cultural differences are conceptualized and studied. The field
largely subscribes to an *essentialist view* of culture and institution. This view assumes objective boundaries between the host and home country, often by allowing a few elements of culture or a few institutions to represent what in reality might be far less homogeneous and far more complex socio-economic and cultural contexts. Regardless of which determinant of knowledge transfer is in focus, conclusions concerning differences are similar: the greater the institutional distance, the less likely is knowledge transfer to be successful. Whilst research in the area has thus made advances in exploring the possible difficulties in knowledge transfer to regions with greater cultural and institutional distances, most of these analyses tend to adopt simplistic approaches to culture and institutions, e.g., letting culture and institutions be represented by the “nation” in which a subsidiary is located.

4.2.3.2 Binarizing Differences

Relatedly, the essentialist “othering” of host country culture and institutions invariably projects the differences as hierarchical, a scheme in which home country institutions and the practices they support are automatically given a superior rank. There is thus an inherent assumption of the superiority of the transferred knowledge. By default, host country knowledge (and associated institutions) is thus viewed as inferior. This demarcation has a keen resemblance to “the historical dividing lines between colonizers and colonized drawn up in the late nineteenth century” (Frenkel, 2008: 934).

Relational characteristics between sender and receiver, willingness to share and transfer knowledge and trust towards the recipients are also factors that are embedded within the unequal geopolitical relationships of the world (Westwood, 2004, 2006; Westwood & Jack, 2007; Jack & Westwood, 2010; Özkazanc-Pan, 2008; Mir & Mir, 2009). In this global hierarchy, developing countries are invariably placed lower than developed countries. This categorization implies that “economically backward” regions will seek to imitate the achievements of the “developed” world (Frenkel, 2008; Mir & Mir, 2009). Thus, when institutional distances or cultural differences are discussed, they are interwoven with the assumption that regions having cultures dissimilar to the developed West are inferior (Fougère & Moulettes, 2007, 2012).

4.2.3.3 Reification of Differences

Studies that aim at examining institutional distance or cultural distance (e.g., Jensen & Szulanski, 2004; Ambos et al., 2006; Bhagat et al., 2002) are based on a cultural distance index used by Kogut and Singh (1988) which, in turn, is based on Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions. These dimensions have been heavily criticized for their euro-centric perspective and their narrow understanding of culture (Adler & Graham, 1989; Kwek, 2003; Fougère & Moulettes, 2007, 2012), promoting a particular racial and cultural hierarchy.
Nearly all studies on knowledge transfer and spillover between the developed West and the “developing rest” adopt a positivistic approach that focuses on quantifying cultural and institutional differences within predetermined, geopolitically defined categories (Kewk, 2003; Frenkel, 2008; Calas & Smircich, 1993, 1999, 2003; Jack, 2002, 2004; Jack & Lorbiecki, 2003; Jack & Westwood, 2006; Peltonen, 2006a, 2006b). As Frenkel (2008: 937) notes, the IBM transfer discourse

“lacks the tools and methodologies that would enable it to expose the embeddedness of the transfer process in geopolitical power relations and the meaning that the various actors in the field attribute to the practices that they transfer or are forced to adopt”.

The transfer literature has thus not delved into the complexities of how Western domination influences the discourse and practices of knowledge transfer.

4.2.3.4 Limited Agency to the Knowledge Recipient

An important characteristic of knowledge transfer research is its strong focus on success/failure, i.e., outcomes understood in a primarily dichotomous scheme. The idea of successful knowledge transfer implies that the recipient unit has internalized and implemented the knowledge that comes from headquarters (Kostova & Roth, 2002). If knowledge transfer is unsuccessful, there is usually an attempt to place blame, and fault is typically found with weakness in the recipient unit’s capabilities to absorb the superior knowledge flowing from the MNC. This approach leaves little scope to accommodate the experiences of recipient unit actors. Due to this limited understanding of transfer outcomes, scholars do not engage with the possibilities of hybrid outcomes or the hybridization process that knowledge transfer might entail. As Frenkel (2008) notes in her critique of knowledge transfer, MNCs operate between spaces, in a third space that fully represents neither the context of the MNC home country nor that of the host country. In such a space, there is significant scope for actors to hybridize knowledge as they draw on MNC resources and the resources available to them in their local context. Such a perspective is largely missing in the literature. For example, using Kostova and Roth’s (2002) four transfer scenarios gives little space for hybrid outcomes (not to mention hybridization processes) in which institutional practices mix. Rather, because such new practices might be difficult to locate precisely within the original practices of host and home country (cf., Bhaba, 1994), they will be defined as cases of unsuccessful knowledge transfer, regardless of their purposefulness in the particular context (cf., Bhabha, 1996; Shimoni, 2006; Shimoni & Bergmann, 2006; Frenkel & Shenhav; 2006).
4.3 Conclusion

As cultures, institutions and identities are perceived to be stable, rational, fixed, quantifiable, ahistorical and nationally confined within the general scholarship on international knowledge transfer, several blind spots emerge. In particular, there is little scope (i) to engage with knowledge recipients’ agency, (ii) to accommodate hybridization as an outcome, or (iii) to complicate the transfer process and its outcomes with issues of colonization and its lasting effects.

Although attempts have been made to understand the recipient unit context, these attempts are mostly quantified. In a literature review, Michlova and Mustaffa (2012) argue that this approach might hold the field back and that new insights can be gained if alternative methods are applied. I share their concern, in particular regarding the various forms of essentialism and reductionism found in much of the discourse on knowledge transfer, which tends to reduce the complexities and contradictions of the knowledge recipients’ context.

For these reasons, I propose to complicate the analysis of international knowledge transfer with the condition of postcoloniality and thereby extend Frenkel’s (2008) conceptualization of international knowledge transfer as occurring in the realm of the “liminal” or “third” space of MNCs and their subjects. In doing so, I seek to expose the limits of essentialized ideas of culture, knowledge and identities and foreground the colonial experience and its continuing legacy as significant variables in understanding contemporary organizational knowledge transfer processes to postcolonial countries.
5 An Empirical Study of Knowledge Transfer at Reuters India

In this chapter, I present, analyse and discuss my empirical work on knowledge transfer at two of Reuters’ subsidiaries in India. The chapter consists of six sub-sections. In section 5.1, I provide an introduction to Reuters and its Mumbai and Bangalore sites, the focus of my case study. In section 5.2, I provide additional contextual understanding of the case as I address the knowledge transfer process from Reuters’ (i.e., the sender’s) perspective. This includes a discussion on the type of knowledge transferred to subsidiaries and the reason it is transferred. I then adopt the recipient’s perspective in the subsequent sections. Section 5.3 addresses recipients’ understanding of the training offered to bridge the institutional distance, and section 5.4 details local staff members’ perceptions/understanding of Reuters’ objectivity and accuracy principles, reflecting knowledge internalization. In section 5.5, I address some of the challenges that recipients face while implementing new knowledge. In sections 5.2-5.5, in addition to presenting narratives, I provide an ongoing commentary in which I interpret and discuss data from a postcolonial perspective. In section 5.6, I conclude with a discussion of my findings in light of the postcolonial concepts of orientalism (5.6.1) and hybridity (5.6.2) and suggest some directions for future research (5.6.3).

5.1 Case background

Reuters is a global news agency. Founded in London as a legal publishing firm in 1799, its transition to a news agency in 1859 established Reuters as a dominant player in the global news industry. To date, Reuters remains the largest global news agency and is the world’s largest electronic publisher, with a specialization in delivering a wide range of computerized financial data from markets worldwide to a large base of subscribers.

In April 2008, the Thomson Corporation — one of the world’s largest information companies — publicly announced its merger with Reuters Group PLC, forming Thomson-Reuters with headquarters in London and New York. This merger involved embracing the original Reuters news agency business model; however, Reuters operates as a single and independent division under the Thomson-Reuters umbrella company. Although Thomson is a diverse

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This section draws primarily on information available on Reuters’ websites (www.reuters.com and www.uk.reuters.com), Bartram (2010) and Read (1999).
information company, the Reuters news agency remains a news wire operation that maintains its traditional operational business model.

Reuters’ news operations are broadly divided into two areas, “general and political news” and “financial and economic news reporting”, the latter having become Reuters’ main area of news production. Its specialist area lies in combining financial and economic reporting with political context information and assisting businesses in investment decisions. Reuters’ financial news reporting focuses on company reporting — what companies are doing and how they are trading on various stock exchanges. A large part of its subscriber base focuses on such “financial services”.

The majority of Reuters’ correspondents are devoted to financial news reporting, and Reuters divides its reporters between various sectors, including retail, mining, agriculture, energy, and company reporting, such as telecommunication companies and banks. When Reuters’ journalists report on political stories, they seek to explain and frame this news in the context of what is occurring in that particular country at the time. Reuters news also offers an analysis of where a particular country is headed — i.e., news projections. The production of financial news therefore works in tandem with the functioning of its general and political news reporting; financial correspondents monitor the daily activities of commercial companies with regard to their investments and other business activities while general political news coverage provides mainly the context in which events occur. Reuters’ news correspondents therefore also fall into either one of the two focal areas of reporting, that is, general political reporting or financial and economic news reporting. With the ascendancy and transformations in global market capitalism since the end of the Cold War and with increasing economic, political, and cultural integration among nations (viz. globalization), this dual role and service offered by Reuters has given the news agency a unique market position.

Currently, Reuters produces news in French, English, Arabic, Spanish, German, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese and operates offices around the world. News is produced within its own network of journalists, who are recruited by each of its subsidiaries.

5.1.1 The Mumbai Site

Reuters’ Mumbai bureau was established to cover news from the Western part of India. In its current form, the bureau was established in 2001 and has 40 reporters covering areas such as politics, sports, business, banking, films and entertainment. While most of the reporters are local recruits, the bureau also has some expatriate employees to ensure that operations comply with Reuters’
An Empirical Study of Knowledge Transfer at Reuters India

general standards. The bureau head has (so far) always been from the headquarters.

5.1.2 The Bangalore Site

The work performed at Reuters’ Mumbai office differs significantly from the tasks of the Bangalore office, which is essentially an outsourcing unit reporting news mainly from the UK and US markets. It was established in 2004 and employs 120 reporters who are grouped into teams based on the countries they cover. Their tasks primarily include assisting staff in the UK and the US by undertaking background research, but journalists also perform independent coverage of news relating to small and medium-sized companies. Within each team, reporters are assigned certain sectors, e.g., retail business, energy, public gas and petroleum, and the marine sector. Similar to Mumbai, the majority of reporters are local recruits, and since its inception, the bureau-head has always come from headquarters.

5.2 Transfer of Newsgathering Principles Specific to Reuters

As a global news agency, Reuters strives to produce news that is of the same quality and standard throughout its subsidiaries around the globe. Thus, one of the main tasks of Reuters is to enforce its newsgathering principles at its subsidiaries to produce standardized news output that can be identified as a Reuters news product. Interviewees at Reuters frequently emphasize the importance of standardizing the news output between subsidiaries and the challenges associated with this process. B3, a senior editorial team member in Bangalore, explains,

“Every bureau is supposed to uphold the same standards of accuracy, fairness. […] Anything that is produced from Bangalore should read no different than something produced other than Bangalore in terms of the standard or the quality. The customer should not feel like, ‘I am reading something from a subsidiary’.”

She further emphasizes, “There should not be this feeling that, ‘Yeah, I know that story was written by someone not in New York’, so we try to actually adhere to uniformity and consistency of standard”. Financial investors who make decisions based on Reuters’ financial news constitute a large part of the client base, and subscriptions to financial information such as stock market data, market analyses and company analyses constitute a significant portion of Reuters’ revenues. A senior editor highlights, “Investors make decisions based on our reports, so it is important for us to get the information which we are delivering right; there is lot of money involved”. To ensure the
standardization of news output quality, Reuters has developed newsgathering guidelines that all journalists and other staff involved in news production are expected to follow. One study participant argued that this high degree of standardization is especially important to Reuters, as it is strategically positioned as a particularly reliable information provider.

Reuters thus attempts to maintain a high degree of output standardization by ensuring that all its bureaus adhere to similar principles regarding accuracy and freedom from bias. As Reuters’ handbook of journalism states, “Our reputation for accuracy and freedom from bias rests on the credibility of our sourcing”. It further emphasizes, “Accuracy entails honesty in sourcing”. These principles are operationalized into a number of rules that direct news production. The guidebook specifies the following:

- Use named sources wherever possible because they are responsible for the information they provide, even though we remain liable for accuracy, balance and legal dangers. Press your sources to go on the record.
- Reuters will use unnamed sources where necessary when they provide information of market or public interest that is not available on the record. We alone are responsible for the accuracy of such information.
- When talking to sources, always make sure the ground rules are clear. Take notes and record interviews.
- Cross-check information wherever possible. Two or more sources are better than one. In assessing information from unnamed sources, weigh the source’s track record, position and motive. Use your common sense. If it sounds wrong, check further.
- Talk to sources on all sides of a deal, dispute, negotiation or conflict.
- Be honest in sourcing and in obtaining information. Give as much context and detail as you can about sources, whether named or anonymous, to authenticate information they provide. Be explicit about what you don’t know.
- Reuters will publish news from a single, anonymous source in exceptional cases, when it is credible information from a trusted source with direct knowledge of the situation. Single-source stories are subject to a special authorization procedure.
- A source’s contact is with Reuters, not with the reporter. If asked on legitimate editorial grounds, you are expected to disclose your source to your supervisor. Protecting the confidentiality of sources, by both the reporter and supervisor, is paramount.
- Know your sources well. Consider carefully if the person you are communicating with is an imposter. Sources can provide information by whatever means available - telephone, in person, email, instant messaging, text message. But be aware that any communication can be interfered with.
- Reuters will stand by a reporter who has followed the sourcing guidelines and the proper approval procedures.
Although these principles may at first glance seem fairly uncontroversial and universally applicable to news production, transferring such value-based ideas presents considerable challenges, as will be shown in my study. Media practices, particularly those related to news production, often differ from country to country based on the type of media system that region supports (Curran & Park, 2000; De Beer & Merrill, 2004; De Burgh, 2005; Beate, 2007; Herrscher, 2002). The transfer of news practices may therefore come into conflict with existing practices. M11, an expatriate employee and senior editorial team member at Mumbai, explains some of the challenges to implementing these principles in an Indian context. One of his main concerns relates to local staff not following the Reuters guidelines on news sourcing. He states: “They often rely on sources that, according to the Reuters guidebook, would be considered unethical”. In particular, the use of unnamed sources causes him significant frustration with Indian journalists, and he argues that this is not an exception but a common practice in Indian journalism. As Reuters permits unnamed stories only under very special circumstances and often even frowns on single source stories, sourcing practices are an ongoing cause for conflict. M11 adds,

“And when journalists are instructed to follow the guidelines, they say that these practices were fine at their previous workplace, and they see no harm in accepting news leads from sources that are not considered “legitimate” by Reuters’ standards”.

From his perspective, the transfer of news gathering practices and the principles of accuracy and objectivity on which they rest is a significant challenge in practice, one that clearly cannot be overcome by simply instructing local staff to act in a particular manner. To support this process, Reuters has an extensive training program in place. Below, I discuss local Indian journalists’ perspectives on this training and its role in bridging the institutional gaps between Indian journalism practices and those mandated by Reuters.

5.3 Training: Make Me a Reuters Reporter

Studies on international knowledge transfer identify training as an important channel of knowledge transfer in MNCs (Minbaeva, 2007, 2008; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000). The aim of training in a multinational enterprise is first to transfer practices to subsidiaries, and second, to provide a means of monitoring performance (Potter, 1989; Cobb & Barker, 1992; Jaussaud & Schaaper, 2006). However, training programs in subsidiaries located within developing countries often face challenges that training in developed country subsidiaries need not address (Prasad & Prasad, 2002). A particularly important challenge in the former context is overcoming or managing institutional duality, i.e., differences between institutionalized practices (Cobb & Barker, 1992). Indeed, training is often the first instance when issues of cultural and institutional differences are
explicitly addressed as employees enter multinationals, and the “practical” purpose of training is often to ensure that employees “unlearn” some of the practices that they may have acquired while working for local firms. I encountered stories of this nature several times when interviewing both trainers and journalists at Reuters in India. In the words of senior editorial team member B3,

“The local staff may have only worked for a local media company and kind of absorb what they consider the proper practices of journalism. We make sure that we replace that with how we do journalism here”.

To this end, training includes classroom teaching as well as on-the-job training, where each new local staff member is assigned a mentor who guides them through newsgathering practices specific to Reuters.

However, in my study, I am not primarily interested in studying the content of training programs; my focus is more specifically on how trainers and local staff understand what training should achieve and how they associate themselves with it. Taking this approach can provide insight into how new knowledge is perceived in relation to existing knowledge and how the values imbued by training become part of a reporter’s identity. How are training programs designed to develop newsgathering skills, which are distinctly Reuters-specific as understood by the trainers delivering the training and the local employees who are being trained? In other words, how do trainers and trainees articulate the significance of Reuters’ extensive training programs? Bearing these questions in mind, I discuss Reuters’ training at the Mumbai and Bangalore sites below and give some contrasting views from local employees. Thus, my intention in this section is not to look at the content of the training program, which is largely the same for most of Reuters’ subsidiaries. Rather, I focus on the perceptions surrounding training, such as its usefulness and the necessity of inculcating newsgathering practices to which Reuters subscribes.

### 5.3.1 Training at the Mumbai site

As the Mumbai site covers news from India (especially the Western parts), the reporters there are given specific training to cover Indian news. When a new recruit joins Reuters Mumbai, induction training — known as “boot camp” — covers the basics of Thompson Reuters as a company, including its goals, mission and market reach. Mandatory training on news sourcing and media ethics is also provided. The aim of the training is to develop newsgathering skills in line with Reuters’ explicit requirements.

As Reuters bases its claims of its high reliability of news on a very stringent news sourcing policy, the aim of the training at the Mumbai bureau is
important for imparting the news sourcing rules of Reuters. Senior journalist M2 explains,

“As the Mumbai bureau covers news on India, there is a bigger chance that they fall to news sourcing style followed in most Indian organizations. In our training programs, we try to overcome that”.

Reuters Mumbai faces competition from local firms covering the same regions, and there is an ongoing race to be the first (not just accurate) in publishing news. Reuters, however, demarcates itself and its products from local firms. In the training of local staff members, it is reiterated that although Reuters competes with local firms, the product that Reuters provides is different. Reuters positions itself on the basis of its product quality, thus creating a distinction between its news output and that of local media firms. As M2 further explains,

“The ethos of Reuters is that they give 100 percent correct information with no bias anywhere. […] So if you can give correct information before your competitors that is a hugely satisfying feeling. Because our reports take that much amount of skill to do”.

Journalist M1 relates similar sentiments:

“We believe not only in information, but we believe in intelligent information. This is the one thing, I guess which makes us different from other media groups because we don’t only provide information — we struggle to get intelligent information out of our sources, out to the market”.

M8 continues along similar lines. “You [as a journalist] are held accountable because Reuters is held accountable. We are trained to a different standard, to uphold these values”. Although training programs are structured around developing newsgathering skills, these programs apparently also try to convey the superiority of Reuters’ output and the quality of the training that staff members receive, especially in relation to existing knowledge that they may possesses. Sports correspondent M9 comments,

“[t]his is a global news agency and they have a different style of working, it is not the regular stories or something. Anybody can just come into office first day and know if this is the story from Reuters and this is not a story from Reuters. […] So, yeah, you need training to get acclimatized to the style and story value of Reuters”.

As Reuters positions itself as distinct from local media firms through the type of news it produces (specialized financial news), it would appear that the significance of its journalism practices are explained by their differences from practices that are prevalent locally.
Another way in which trainers impart new knowledge to local staff is by informing them of the significance of Reuters’ news to its clientele. For business correspondent M6, readers’ interests are at the heart of Reuters’ work. She argues that Reuters is separate from other local media firms in that Reuters caters to global readers but also that the readers’ profile is different from the target groups to which local media companies cater:

“We have got a very self-informed, knowledgeable class to cater to, and at that time, you will have to be really very careful because they are also equally talented and equally informed. You can’t report just anything like in other media companies here”, M6 explains, adding “You can’t say a line simply because you know this, you have to verify it and you will have justify it, so this is how you learn things, the trainings is very helpful”.

Training in Mumbai thus seem to be more perceived as an attempt to address differences in newsgathering practices that are prevalent in the local industry, partly by describing Reuters’ newsgathering practices as different — superior — to what local firms can achieve. Reuters also attempts to sidestep local practices by insisting on the value of its news to its clients — i.e., what Reuters does is so different that the local staff must not only learn new practices but also abandon their insufficient local practices. From the above narratives, it appears that to identify themselves as Reuters reporters, employees have to demarcate the practices existing in the local industry from those of Reuters. The differences are thus not charted around the axis of work practices (i.e., newsgathering practices) alone but also through the customers to which they deliver their product. Thus, not only is the Reuters product superior, but the subscribers are constructed as educated and intelligent compared to the readers (largely Indian) to which the local media cater.

5.3.2 Training at the Bangalore site

While the same training programs are run at the Bangalore site as in Mumbai, i.e., training on newsgathering, news sourcing and media ethics, Bangalore also has a number of special training programs to cater to its specific needs. As the Bangalore office was established partly to help reporters in the UK and the US with background research, the local staff needs to be in constant contact with their journalist counterparts in these markets. Thus, the Bangalore staff faces not only issues relating to different journalism practices but more explicitly have to address challenges relating to culture, language, geographical distance and historical relationships between their countries.

While there are many back office activities performed in Bangalore, there is a large editorial team that assists the UK and US teams with outsourced activities. The characteristics of this bureau are very much like other call centres
established in Bangalore that work for other markets in different time zones. An important feature of this bureau is that they prefer recruiting so-called “freshers” from college. According to trainer B7, Bangalore has the highest number of young recruits of all of Reuters groups. They prefer freshers in Bangalore because they want to train them in this very particular form of outsourced journalism while limiting influences from past experience that may lead journalists down a different path. While having experience of covering the Indian market is seen as an advantage in the Mumbai bureau, this is thus considered a liability in Bangalore.

Senior editorial team member B3 tells me that the Bangalore bureau has an editorial trainer who is always on the editorial floor and is either training staff members in groups if a new practice has been introduced or monitoring teams and checking their output for quality. She explains, “There has always been a Bangalore-specific trainer because of the nature of the job that we perform here and because of the number of freshers we have here”. The task of the editorial trainer is to acquaint the local staff with newsgathering skills mandated by Reuters. Bureau trainer B7 explains:

“Since we have a lot of freshers who join straight out of college or straight out of journalism course, we have to introduce them to journalism first of all because in most cases, this is their first job, so they need to be taught what we do and how we do it”.

However, even though these are recruits with little or no previous journalism experience, B7 emphasizes that it is still challenging for him as a trainer to make staff understand the differences between Reuters’ method of journalism compared to the way journalism is practiced locally,

“Because they have grown up reading papers and magazines and watching TV journalism in India, and what we do here is totally different, so they need to be inculcated in the way we work and what we do, so that sort of training is important”.

Although the bureau recruits freshers in the hope that unlearning previous practices will not be an issue, a challenge still exists for trainers to introduce new recruits to what Reuters defines as proper journalism; an assumption underlying such goals is that the journalistic practices they have so far been exposed to is of inferior quality. B3 expresses this training goal succinctly:

“The media standards in India are questionable. [People] grow up only reading the local media and not having an exposure to any global standards of journalism. You know people might get a sense that this is the way things are, or stories handled. You know — lacking in facts with no backup sourcing. People could get the impression that this is the way journalism is always done and it is done [like that] everywhere, so that is something that we wipe out by putting everyone through rigorous induction training”.
Two important points emerge from the above accounts. First, new recruits (freshers) have to be familiarized with the journalism business and its practices, but more importantly, they must be trained to shed any ideas of journalism they may have encountered in India by consuming its news output.

In addition to the development of journalism skills, at the Bangalore bureau, there is a strong emphasis on training on the regions and culture of the country each reporter is covering. B7 explains,

“We do not work on Indian companies here. The majority of our work, like I told you, are North American companies and UK companies […]. People are mostly unaware of the reporting standards, the companies, about the culture of that particular region, so we teach them that as well”.

As reporters in Bangalore work in collaboration with teams in the UK or the US, they have to constantly be in contact with their counterparts in these markets. Bangalore reporters also have to create and cultivate sources in the countries they cover. This means not only learning the telephone etiquette of that particular country — much like the training all call centre employees in India undergo when catering to foreign customers (e.g., Mirchandani, 2004; Poster, 2007; D'Cruz & Noronha, 2006) — but the local staff is also trained in various aspects of culture and language (cf., Cowie, 2007).

Apart from being able to access a website called “cultural wizard”, which details the specifics of the culture of each country or place with which the local staff engages, new employees also undergo cultural training programs when they join Reuters’ Bangalore editorial team. The goal of cultural training is to create a sense of the professional mannerisms that prevail in the country that the local staff covers. Attempts are made to anticipate responses that local staff may receive, especially when dealing with sources and agents such as public relations staff. This attempt to contextualize represents as much prevention of inappropriate responses as it is a way to help local staff understand cultural nuances, all of which is to improve interactions for successful outcomes (Cowie, 2007). This is based on the premise that training in ancillary activities such as the culture, language and accent of the country that the staff will serve can facilitate smoother interaction with news sources there. More importantly, however, it is undertaken for the convenience of sources so that they can more easily understand Indian journalists speaking to them over the phone, thereby — presumably — being more forthcoming with news leads and other information. B10, a team leader working with the US, explains the aim of cultural training to staff covering the US markets:

“The training is to make them aware that we are going to call a lot of people based in the US. We tell them what sorts of mannerism are common in these countries, which might not be in India, so that sort of thing is imparted mostly on the training course”.

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This emphasis on American and British mannerisms does not represent general education on these cultures, but rather on the modes of interaction specific to the work of journalists. This primarily involves language training, like in many call centres (cf., Mirchandani, 2004; Cowie, 2007; Boussebaa et al., 2014), with particular importance attached to phonetics, accent neutrality and correct emphasis but also fillers, among other topics. B10 comments,

“We teach them things like phonetics, if they have to spell out and explain the name, so that they can spell out the name right. Everything like that is taught during the induction training”.

For instance, if it is difficult for the local staff to pronounce American names correctly (or as Americans do), instructions are provided on correct pronunciation. B10 elaborates,

“We ask people if you are not exactly sure how you pronounce the name, to run it by a couple of people in the bureau first and make sure you have the exact pronunciation before you call that person”.

Language training thus includes telephonic manners suited to the respective countries that the Bangalore staff is serving. Local staff members do not only have to work on their accents — they also have to learn how to interact with their sources and other information providers. B10 highlights some of the language training objectives:

“We have a full training on how do you deal with, how do you talk to your sources in the US over the phone, the policy is if you call someone in the US, you should address them by first names, not surnames, that’s what they are more comfortable with, right”.

There is an implicit warning not to offend the foreign caller, and B10 notes local employees are trained in this, i.e.,

“what sort of short names, pen names they [the Americans] use. So, for Robert, they would probably say Bob. […] So, we try and run on for a couple of nicknames which are very commonly used. You won’t say to that person ‘Oh, Bob? Sorry, I want to speak to Robert.’ In order to avoid instances like that, you know, we teach them things like that”.

The training even involves local staff adopting an alias (cf., Poster, 2007). Describing the details of such training, B10 adds, “If they [local staff members] have a name that might be difficult for them [Americans] to pronounce, use an alias like Sarah, Jane, Phil, David”.

In addition to adopting an alias to facilitate conversations, there are other considerations that local staff must make to facilitate interaction with (foreign) sources and avoid offending them due to lack of cultural understanding. For
example, apart from pleasing sources over the phone, electronic communication may follow. B10 explains one such issue:

“How do you address people in emails? Probably you don’t want to be very formal in an email to somebody in the US because they themselves by nature are not that formal in their communication, even if it may be for the first time [you communicate].”

The main opportunity offered to local staff to actually meet their sources (and other contacts with whom they interact on a daily basis) face to face is through an initiative undertaken by the bureau chief called the “convent”. The convent allows employees to go for a period of about one month to the country they are covering. Senior editorial team member B3 explains, “You know, during that point of time, if they have any sources and contacts that they want to build or meet face to face, that’s the time they do it”. For example, if local employees cover US equities, they spend one month at the New York bureau. However, because this initiative involves a great deal of expense related to overseas travel and accommodation, the convent is not available to all employees working for foreign markets. The employee has to earn this opportunity. B3 elaborates,

“Once established that they have a reached a certain level of work that they can do, it’s worth sending them over there to probably build more sources, a little more face to face contact obviously is much more helpful than talking over the phone. So, we send them over there. […] The aim of the convent is largely to visit the country you are covering, see the bureau and their working style and most importantly to meet with your sources face to face”.

She continues,

“They are doing essentially the same work that they were doing from here, but they get the chance to be in the market of which they are working. By virtue of being here, you are not part of that market and you are not part of that buzz. You know that sort of thing. Once they go there, they get a feel for the work by virtue of being in the country they are reporting about, meeting probably some of the people. They organize their own source contacts and meetings and stuff like that”.

Insisting on the importance of meeting contacts face-to-face, B6 explains,

“We encourage them to go out for a drink or have a dinner or even a coffee, but go meet your sources because otherwise you don’t get a chance to meet them because they are sitting thousands of miles away”.

B11, a reporter working for US teams, explains her expectations from the convent initiative:

“Basically to know people there better and, you know, kind of work with them closely and understand how they work and how they deal, because we take care of small and
medium companies here, and they are the ones who take care of the large ones. So, work on some stories with them to see how they work and gain experience from them and come back and use the good practices from there”.

As we see in some earlier narratives, by virtue of being trained as Reuters employees, the journalists I spoke to apparently raise themselves above journalists working for other local news producers. By advocating the superiority of Reuters’ practices, local journalists perceive themselves as being in a superior position in their local context by “othering” their local colleagues. Considering that training largely uses a language in which practices of the West are placed in a superior position to those in India, it is also not surprising that local staff members eagerly await their turn to go abroad and bring back “good practices”. By availing themselves of the opportunity of spending time at headquarters through convent initiatives, the local staff also seems to realize the difference in their work output and the output produced by their counterparts at the headquarters. By referring to and apparently recognizing their own inability to sometimes apply the practices mandated by Reuters or observed while travelling, they also seem to accept subordination in the MNC hierarchy.

There are also aspects of training that interrupt the dominant narrative, however. For instance, when B2 spent a month at the New York bureau, she could see the difficulties that Bangalore staff experiences, to which her counterparts in the USA are not subjected.

“The difference that I saw was they were more familiar with the companies than we were, which I think is a given thing because, you know, we sit so far away from them. So […] until the first time I went there, I could not identify the companies. Like, if you just tell me, SBI [a company], I will have a picture in my mind, which was not happening for those companies till such time I went there”.

From B2’s account, it appears that she tries to find justification for why the output at Bangalore may not match the output of their US counterpart, thereby demonstrating agency within a structure that seeks to interpellate her.

From the above accounts we can see that Bangalore training is similar to practices common in the growing call centre industry in India. In interaction with Westerners – be they customers or news sources as in the case of Reuters – local Indian employees must conceal their names and backgrounds, change their accents and feint belonging to another culture, all to avoid revealing their location. The assumption underpinning these endeavours is that being from another culture and having another accent than the people with which one communicates represents a significant hurdle to personal interaction and, therefore, also to work efficiency. It is quite clear that there is also a political dimension at play here (Phillipson, 1992; Cowie, 2007; Boussebaa et al., 2014). Attempts by training programs to favour American and British habits and
language in effect reproduce the power relations that subordinate indigenous practices by privileging those of the West (cf., Mirchandani, 2012). The orientalist discourse thus operates prominently and claims of “accent neutrality” are anything but neutral in nature, recalling the age-old orientalist assumption that there exists one norm against which all others are juxtaposed and subsequently found inferior (Mirchandani, 2012; Boussebaa et al., 2014), even deviant, peculiar or exotic. In many ways, training is thus a political endeavour whose efforts at normalizing one particular mode of expression is cloaked by claims of business efficiency (cf., Sonntag, 2005; Morgan & Ramanathan, 2009).

5.3.3 The Civilizing Mission of Training

My aim in the above section is to show how contemporary discourse surrounding training in MNCs share continuities with colonial and neo-colonial discourse. In this section, I will draw parallels between Said’s orientalist lens and training at Reuters with support of my empirical findings. With the orientalist lens, I discuss the “essentialist/universalist” tendency, which makes the transfer of practices from the headquarters to its subsidiaries desirable and necessary. Specifically, I consider Reuters’ quest to promote its newsgathering practices and related ancillary activities, such as “language and accent training”, as the only legitimate form of journalism, to be reeking of “essentialism”. In other words, in its drive to promote its practice as the only credible form of journalism, Reuters also often resorts to “othering” existing local practices.

Discussions on multinationals often present training as a necessary undertaking, something needed to transfer routines and practices to local subsidiaries. Such training is partly based on the assumption that institutional and linguistic barriers pose a hindrance to the seamless transfer of work from headquarters to subsidiaries and that these barriers can be smoothed over by training. I have attempted to show through the above narratives that training programs and their ambitions to overcome institutional duality are informed by orientalizing tendencies (Mirchandani, 2004, 2012). The international business parlance of “transfer” implies the replacement of existing practices with those introduced by the MNC, practices that are generally developed at the MNCs’ headquarters located in its home country. The very desirability of the replacement is based on the premise that the transferred practice is superior to the existing practice and that subsidiaries should make every attempt to adopt the imported practice. Thus, the transfer implies, on the one hand, adopting the imported practice and, on the other, forgoing already learned/existing practices. For the replacement to take place MNCs spend a great deal of resources to train their subsidiaries to apply the new knowledge. As seen in case of Reuters, training programs are not just designed to inform local employees about Reuters’ newsgathering practices; training programs are actively using the orientalist
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discourse as they not only teach local staff the process of newsgathering but emphasize its importance in relation to existing local practices. For instance, differences in newsgathering practices (between Reuters and those prevalent in India) that have distinct historical and cultural genealogies are presented as aspirational goals for the local staff. Particular values that reappear in training relate to news sourcing. As mentioned in its handbook, Reuters’ rules on news sourcing are designed to ensure that the principles of accuracy, objectivity and balance are followed. However, as extant research on the principles of objectivity has shown, although objectivity is one of the core values in the journalistic profession, its meaning and adaptation vary from country to country. Brian MacNair (1998:12) argues that “there is no universal, objective journalism …, only journalism, with different styles and hierarchies of news values, shaped by and specific to particular societies at particular times”. Media scholars (and practitioners) thus contend that objectivity can be derived through different means. This is why the notion of objectivity tends to differ, not only from region to region but also from one news organization to another (Merrill, 1984; Donsbach & Klett, 1993; Hanitzsch et al., 2011).

The link between Reuters’ practices, the development of advertisement-supported media in Europe and the USA, and the growth of capitalism is rarely discussed as trainers present these values and practices as ethically superior. Thus, trainers make distinctions between the cultural codes and the practices that local staff members already possess and those they are supposed to learn. Simplistic discussions about values are intended to create an oppositional distinction between the existing worldview of employees and what they will encounter in interaction with non-Indians during their work at Reuters. Generalizations about Reuters’ journalism values (accuracy and freedom from bias) are juxtaposed against similar generalizations about India, implying that the values are fundamentally different and that India lacks Reuters’ (Western) values; otherwise, they would not need to be taught them. In many ways, this distinction reifies existing global structures of power by making certain cultural and institutional norms normative and aspirational. (While discussions on news objectivity are worthy of a much more detailed analysis within the orientalist lenses, I will discuss this in more detail later in section 5.5 when I attempt to show the situatedness of Reuters’ practices while discussing the origins and influence of “objectivity” derivatives in Indian journalism).

Not only are binarizing distinctions made in regard to core activities of newsgathering and news sourcing, but in a bureau such as Bangalore, which is established to service the UK and US markets, activities supporting newsgathering, such as English accent and telephonic mannerism training, are given preference in a similarly binarizing manner. Linguistics training is, however, complicated by the colonial past of India, which has produced a generation of Indians with a perception that English is not actually a foreign
language; they may even have received their entire education in English. Under such conditions, training on a particular form of English accent and grammar can be seen as an example of “linguistic imperialism” acting in concert with global capitalist forces (Morgan & Ramanathan, 2009). To describe such phenomena, Phillipson (1992:47) introduces the term linguicism, or the

“ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language.”

Competition between languages and their various dialects can be identified in many contexts, although perhaps English linguistic colonization is the most obvious instance in current times. Phillipson (1992) argues that whether a language achieves the status of “language” rather than just being considered as a “dialect” depends primarily on geopolitical power relations. The supremacy of English – and not just any form of English – is directly related to global capitalist structures where English is the dominant transaction language (Boussebaa et al., 2014). With language as a bearer of cultural and social codes, linguicism has material consequences not only for commercial contexts; rather, it operates just as prominently across social and cultural arenas.

As the accounts of local employees from Bangalore show, Morgan and Ramanathan’s (2009) argument that call centres in general are privileging a certain type of English (over the variety of dialects and accents that exist) finds support in my study. The analysis may be further complicated by the fact that Indian elites favor a particular form of – Westernized – English to preserve its power in the local context. The politics of English in India should therefore not only be understood as global linguistic imperialism, but can also be viewed through a national lens where the privileged position of the educated elite is directly reflected in its use of English (Sonntag, 2005; Faust & Nagar, 2001; Rajagopal, 1997).

We may take the analysis of language and power one step further by drawing on Sonntag’s (2005) concept linguistic hegemony. Notions of linguistic imperialism and linguicism may seem to rob the underprivileged of a means to answer back, indicating that she is a silent object with no scope for resistance (cf., Basi, 2009; Mirchandani, 2008). By drawing on the metaphor linguistic hegemony we may instead conceive of a situation where some linguistic codes enjoy a privileged position, but where there is room for agency and consent, although within the – often blurry and negotiable – confines of existing power relations. Such an understanding perhaps better reflects the nature of power and resistance in the current global realm, where MNC training represents the exercise of “soft power”. By instilling inspirational values and shaping imagination, such exercise of power may be more controlling that forcible, corporeal power (Foucault, 1977; 1978; Deleuze, 1992; Nandy & Frank, 1994).
These notions find support in my own research which shows many instances of journalists identifying with, claiming and attempting to exercise the hegemonic norm, while it simultaneously provides examples of – perhaps primarily symbolic – resistance against the forces of homogenization. The very existence of such instances of subversion, however, lets us introduce the notion of agency into the analysis. In the next section on knowledge internalization, I delve more deeply into this as I look at aspects of global domination and the response of postcolonial societies.

5.4 Knowledge Internalization: Identifying with Reuters’ Principles

According to the literature on knowledge transfer, knowledge internalization most likely takes place where cognitive and normative institutional profiles are similar (Kostova & Roth, 2002). When institutional profiles are very different, negative attitudes towards the knowledge (or practices relating to the knowledge) in question may form and internalization may be low. Attitudes towards the knowledge in question can thus (to a great extent) be a proxy for the degree of internalization. However, when I look at issues surrounding knowledge internalization under conditions of “unfavorable” institutional differences in this section, I will deviate from that assumption; my aim is not to look at the degree of knowledge internalization by local employees; instead, I will address the knowledge recipients’ attitudes towards the knowledge they are supposed to internalize and argue that positive attitudes towards knowledge introduced by the MNC (or knowledge flowing from the West, to use more postcolonial parlance) may not be a sufficient indication of knowledge internalization. In doing so, I will introduce historical factors, such as past and ongoing colonization and its influence on present perceptions of knowledge and practices that flow from the West, to the discussion. This feature of postcolonial societies, i.e., their willingness to develop based on Western models, has important implications for how recipients in these nations look at knowledge that flows from the West through channels of multinationals (as in the present case study). I will also discuss the implication of these predetermined attitudes towards new knowledge and their potential effects.

In the upcoming sections on Mumbai and Bangalore, I will consequently look at how local staff relates to the knowledge transferred by Reuters, how they identify themselves with the principles of accuracy and objectivity, and their attitudes towards Reuters’ practices.
5.4.1 Knowledge Internalization at the Mumbai Site

The local staff members I spoke to at the Mumbai site mostly have previous work experience as reporters for local media firms. Therefore, these reporters also have a good idea about prevalent practices within the Indian news media, particularly practices related to news sourcing. As they have been in this profession for some time, these reporters also uphold certain journalistic values or at least identify with some principles. What does working for Reuters mean to them? Has their identity as a reporter undergone change? Joining Reuters perhaps means giving up some of the practices learned and performed at previous work places. How is this reflected in the reporters’ attitudes? How do they articulate their professional identity?

M5 explains her view on Reuters’ mandated practices:

“There is a very clearly defined way of journalism that Reuters tells you, that this is how we do it and this is what you are expected to follow, so that is the huge plus, because if you look at journalism in other newspapers or, you know, in most Indian organizations, there is not a very clearly defined kind of journalism that they would propagate”.

To M5, it is important to have specifically laid-out rules on newsgathering, whereas the lack of such clearly defined rules gives local journalism a bad reputation. She further specifies that simple rules like,

“If you have a spouse working for UTV, you cannot be having sources from UTV. These dos and don’ts are clearly laid out at Reuters, whereas journalists from local media often fall into such trap as these rules are not clearly defined for them”.

Like M5, reporter M3 expresses positive sentiments towards Reuters’ practices due to their clearly designed rules:

“Here, it’s a lot more structured. In the sense, you know, you are told that this is what we want and this is what our clients want, so whatever you do has to be in line with the Reuters style and the Reuters way of functioning. That was not there in my previous organization. There, people kind of formulate their own ways of working”.

Reuters holds a distinct position in Indian journalism, as expressed in an account by M2:

“The thing is when I worked in [Indian newspaper] and [Indian newspaper], we used to subscribe to Reuters news, so as a journalist, even when I was not working in Reuters […] we will wait for Reuters to file the story sometimes. There will be breaking news, channels will show something, some other news agency will say something, but we will wait for Reuters sometimes to file the story”.
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While M2’s account definitely reflects his faith in and positive attitude towards Reuters, it also (although unintentionally) reflects some of the attempts by Indian news organization towards objectivity. “I will wait that extra second to confirm it with Reuters, so that authenticity has been built over the years. I think so, that is the trust that people have in Reuters’ stories”, M2 clarifies. M1 echoes these statements, noting,

“I find Reuters journalism practices really very nice because if our readers are paying such a lot of money for reading intelligent information, as a reporter you will also have to do justice with your report. And your readers are not just Indian, they are global”.

To M1, joining Reuters also meant a change in her professional identity as a journalist. She asserts,

“I think I am a different person now after entering Reuters. I have started looking at things in a different manner in Reuters. As I told you that, earlier we used to report one-source thing or even unnamed sources, but now I know I am a part of Reuters, I cannot do that”.

Several other journalists presented similar narratives. M10 says,

“I see how many of my old colleagues work. That’s the easy way. At Reuters it’s not so easy [interviewee laughs]. But I can tell you that I think differently now, since working here. I am a different journalist [interviewee laughs]”.

These quotes represent but a few of the voices of Indian staff members working for Reuters, but it seems quite clear that Reuters has been able to assert the value of its mode of journalism and, at least to some extent, change attitudes that may have been formed in previous places of work, and employees clearly express a difference between Reuters’ way of performing journalism compared to existing practices in their previous workplaces.

5.4.2 Knowledge Internalization at the Bangalore Site

Unlike Reuters Mumbai, the Bangalore site has a large share of recruits with no previous work experience, premised on the belief that “unlearning” local practices would be too much of a challenge for established journalists and that remaining “Indian” practices would be detrimental when working with foreign contacts. As one might expect, though, Bangalore staff members express attitudes towards Reuters’ practices that are no less positive than those of Mumbai employees.

B1, leader of the UK team, explains her view:
“Indian press reports anything, any rumor, they don’t verify with sources, but again Reuters’ ethics don’t let us, […] Reuters don’t follow that rumor policy. We do not report rumors.”

In her view, the pressure to follow Reuters’ regulations thus makes news sourcing practices more ethical. B4, who works with the US teams, expresses similar sentiments. “Reuters has a distinctive style of journalism, which you don’t get in the Indian media”. She has no experience working with Indian media but bases her judgments on the news she reads in Indian newspapers and watches on the local television channels. Her comments are reflected in the views of another Bangalore reporter, B12:

“Working for Reuters is clearly very different. More professional, I would say. We are trained to do ‘this’ in ‘that’ way. In Indian media, you do it any which way. […] I don’t think they [Indian media] are necessarily always so concerned with objectivity”.

B10, team leader for the US, expresses a similar view:

“I have worked in Indian media, and there, we never thought about the client, whereas in Reuters, you are always thinking about the customer and the client. You always want to keep it simple, you are not trying to show off your knowledge, rather make it as simple as possible for the client to understand, that’s the big, big difference”.

B6, a senior-editor with significant previous work experience, summarizes his position on Indian media practices in relation to Reuters: “[t]hey have yet to reach that global standard”. More quotes could be presented, but these are representative of statements made by other research participants regardless of prior work experience before joining Reuters, and a fairly clear image emerges: interviewees express a near-consensus on the supposed superiority of Reuters’ practices and the importance of the values of objectivity and accuracy underlying these practices.

5.4.3 Attitudes and Knowledge Internalization: Colonial Continuation

Above, I discuss the “othering” process of Reuters’ training program. In this section on knowledge internalization, I consider how local staff responds to the “othering”, accepting subjugation and yet simultaneously escaping it. I complicate the ambivalent response of the local staff with India’s colonial history and its historic relationship with Britain and the United States.

My conversations with local staff at Reuters’ sites in Mumbai and Bangalore reveal some interesting patterns. In particular, without being prompted,
reporters and other employees consistently talk about Reuters’ practices in relation to news sourcing in India. Their accounts reveal not only the attitude that Reuters’ practices are generally superior but also a perception that Indian practices are equally generally inferior. The ethics behind newsgathering practices as well as the regulatory pressure that comes with more structured and monitored processes are hailed in comparison to Indian practices. This binarizing tendency to disparage Indian journalism as something inferior seems almost like a natural, legitimate and given habit, quite possibly enforced by Reuters’ training sessions and on-the-job training where employees are constantly reminded that Reuters’ ways of doing journalism is different from the practices followed in India. The fact that the Indian news media serves Indians seems to be an undercurrent in the conversations. Employees seem to not only considered what is produced by Indian media as wanting in terms of standards and ethics; they also seem to believe that the Indian newspapers cater to Indian readers, who are not as knowledgeable as the global audience that Reuters serves. Thus, binarization not only operates at the level of differences in practice between Reuters and Indian media but also relates to the type of audience to which they cater by putting Indian media and Indian readers at a lower rank. This binarizing tendency can be noted among the “freshers” who work at the Bangalore site, and such testaments to Reuters’ superiority are expressed with equal conviction by staff with work experience from Indian news producers. Can these attitudes and binarizing currents expressed by Reuters’ local employees just find their origin in Reuters’ training programs, or can a postcolonial lens help unearth complementary explanations? Do such positive attitudes really reflect knowledge internalization (and subsequent application of internalized knowledge)?

Local staff often applies orientalist vocabulary to understand the process of knowledge that flows from the West. This depicts the close relationship between knowledge and power. The knowledge of the Orient is available to the colonizer and was used to justify the domination of the West. As a result of this subjugation, postcolonial societies have come to understand themselves as under-developed, with a conviction that for them to develop they will have to follow the path of the West and attempt to internalize its values, knowledge and practices. This is a perpetual condition of postcolonial societies since the very inception of colonial rule (Nandy, 1998). Therefore, practices introduced by multinationals are often uncritically espoused as superior. In fact, one of the driving reasons for welcoming MNCs is the assumed arrival of “best practices” to postcolonial countries, practices that are meant to replace indigenous practices which, by definition, are regarded as inferior. There is thus a strong impetus to re-tool oneself and one’s society to fit the models of the West (Nandy & Frank, 1994) as postcolonial societies stabilize their modern self by continuously internalizing the colonial ideology they confronted in the nineteenth century. In the words of Nandy and Frank (1994), such
“orientalism” is frequently a joint “dream work” where the defences and cultural “armor” of the West is matched by a self-representation and self-engineering of the modernizing non-West.

As an institution intimately linked with the colonizer, Reuters carries high-level status and prestige in India. Working for Reuters allows the employee to enjoy elements of that status. Positive attitudes towards Reuters’ discourse on the superiority of its newsgathering practices may therefore not just be a consequence of similarity in cognitive and normative profile as highlighted in the knowledge transfer literature but may be a function of the prestige that Reuters has built for itself as a “colonizer’s organization”. When local employees evaluate indigenous practices in relation to Reuters, this represents orientalizing of their own traditions and reflects an urge to disown these native practices, thereby slipping away from the (inferior) categories in which they are placed by being Indian journalists. When they do so, they also often express an essentialized understanding of Indian journalism culture without considering the situatedness of its particular practices. By subscribing to Reuters’ “culture of superiority” regarding its newsgathering practices, local journalists may therefore buy more deeply into the orientalist discourse. Indeed, the orientalist discourse is a fundamental prerequisite for the status they attempt to create for themselves. We should therefore not automatically regard the subsidiary journalists’ many positive accounts as illustrations of successful knowledge transfer but rather as illustrations of the prestige that Reuters represents. Whether knowledge has actually transferred successfully may be a different matter.

The concept of interpellation offers another perspective, referring to the ways in which ideology thrusts individuals into subject positions of prevailing narratives. At the heart of interpellation lies an ideological battle, in which competing points of view engage in a hegemonic struggle. However, this struggle is by no means equal, and in the current postcolonial world, the multinational corporation is one of the most dominant apparatuses that serve to construct and perpetuate ideologies and epistemologies as the standard, thereby maintaining the traditionally privileged language of the colonial world. Interpellation may seem inevitable when local staff — overtly via training and covertly by “being” members of a particular socioeconomic, political, historical etc. setting — appropriate a discourse that is historically entrenched in the colonizing mission. Interpellation politicizes discourse appropriation and turns training programs into ideological training camps, thrusting local employees into the discourse of the status quo. Interpellation can then be seen as one form of internalization, in which the subject paradoxically counters the ascription by claiming it. Interpellation may thus seem to remove all agency from the local employee, rendering them powerless to resist the enduring force of colonization by placing them in a subordinate and fixed subject position.
However, interpellation may actually provide the local employee with a platform from which to respond, often in unexpected ways, and enact their reality in a new fashion. I will explore this further in the coming section.

5.5 Knowledge Implementation

I now turn to the implementation of newsgathering practices at Reuters in Mumbai and Bangalore. Successful implementation is an important measure of successful knowledge transfer. The reason cited for the low level of implementation at the recipient unit is primarily its lack of ability. In some cases, subsidiaries may also deliberately not co-operate with headquarters by not implementing new practices to demonstrate their power (Kostova & Roth, 2002). Few studies have explored the dynamics of knowledge implementation and the challenges faced by recipient units while implementing new practices, though. Should we really understand deviations from mandated practices as being the result of limited capabilities and power struggles? Can there be other explanations?

By looking at the experiences of some of Reuters’ employees in India, I attempt to highlight some of the complexities that recipients face while attempting to implement new practices. By taking recipient experiences into account, I will not only offer a closer look at the complexities and contradictions that surround implementation at the recipient’s unit but also show that the transfer of practices and their implementation are not processes that occur in a politically neutral space but are rather processes embedded in global power politics (Frenkel, 2008; Mir & Mir, 2009). Complicating knowledge transfer with the lived experiences of knowledge recipients in subsidiaries located in Third World countries thus allows me to challenge some of the simplistic assumptions on which the research on knowledge transfer is based and show how these assumptions hinder deeper understanding of the complex phenomenon of international knowledge transfer.

5.5.1 Knowledge Implementation at the Mumbai Site

While the accounts of employees in previous sections indicate acceptance of Reuters’ policies and their associated values, the process of implementation discussed in this section reveals a different story. When I interviewed an expatriate employee and senior editorial team member (M11), he especially stressed local employees’ lack of responsibility in relation to Reuters’ news sourcing policies. He argued that the local staff often falls prey to locally prevalent practices. To him, this is an important cause of concern because the news produced is questionable in terms of its credibility. Particularly common
mistakes by local staff involve filing news stories with unnamed or single sources, a practice that is against Reuters’ sourcing policies. M8, an expatriate employee working at the Mumbai bureau, explains that having multiple named sources is particularly important to clients making investment decisions based on Reuters’ stories. “Clients/investors need to know the source of news; they make investment decisions based on our news”, he explains. In the same vein, M2 argues that “We can’t get it wrong — there is huge money [...] involved”, which makes it important for Reuters “to tell the readers who their sources are”.

While it might seem tempting to conclude that, due to institutional differences, local employees do not understand the value of the news sourcing practices propounded by Reuters and thus slip towards existing local practice, this is a simplistic conclusion. Seeing the process of knowledge implementation from recipients’ perspectives, I aim to show some of the complexities that recipients face below.

5.5.1.1 Coping with Institutional Duality in Third Space

While some staff members I spoke to were reluctant to offer examples of tensions they face while gathering news and talk about how they confront conflicting institutional pulls in their daily work, others were very forthcoming in narrating the challenges of working as Reuters reporters. Below, I have selected two particularly illustrative accounts provided by M9 and M1.

Covering a Doping Story

Sports reporter M9 had been with Reuters for four years at the time of the interview. His job entails covering sports stories from India. Prior to working for Reuters, he had worked with two national English dailies. While stating that he is in complete agreement with Reuters’ principles on objectivity and freedom from bias, M9 often finds himself at odds with the news sourcing policies in place at Reuters. “It’s not always possible to follow the news sourcing rules; here [India], things work differently”, he argues. By giving an example of a recent experience, M9 explains the institutional pulls he often feels as a Reuters reporter.

During one of his daily calls to his contacts, M9 received a news lead from “The Agency” (fictive name) about a doping story. “Three athletes were caught taking drugs to enhance their performance”, he said. The first urine test was positive and a second test was sent for confirmation. Officials at “The Agency” are only allowed to go public with the information after the second test is confirmed positive, M9 recounts, and when he contacted his source at “The Agency”, they were waiting for the results of the second test. However, due to the close relationship M9 had built with his source over a period of time, the source gave him the news lead, but only under condition of anonymity. M9 continues,
“But the problem is that he [the source] will tell me who the person [the athlete] is. […] He has even sent [faxed] me a statement saying ‘okay, this is an official statement, this is the thing. Three athletes were caught, and I am giving you the drug names and all what they are caught for’, everything like that. Then, he said ‘You can’t source me to the names because I am not supposed to tell you who the athletes are as right now we are still waiting the confirmation of the second test sample’.”

As a Reuters’ employee, however, M9 is restricted by its news sourcing policies and cannot publish news based on anonymous sources.

“If I can’t source it, I can’t use the story. That’s the problem. I can’t say that, [“The Agency”] source told Reuters. I can’t say that because unnamed source is a strict no, no, single unnamed source is strict no in Reuters, so in that case I will be wondering, ‘Oh! This is the story. I know the names, I know this person is caught.’ But I can’t write. This is what the problem is.”

While the rules laid out by Reuters may seem more ethical and even desirable in cases like the one faced by M9, his journalistic instincts tells him otherwise. Why does he want to go ahead with a doping story based on information from a source who is not ready to go on record? Is he not taking a significant risk if his source turns out to be wrong? Why should M9 place so much trust in a source that he is ready to go ahead with a story that does not comply with corporate policy? M9 explains, “You see, second sample never tests otherwise, everybody knows that”. To him, the outcome is obvious because his source has already prepared the report, but due to restrictions laid out by “The Agency”, he cannot officially announce it until the second test results are in. Thus, the reluctance of the source to be named is not due to questionable news content but a matter of formality as M9 explains it; second blood tests are performed to be doubly sure before charging athletes with doping.

M9 also explains that his source acted against “The Agency’s” rules and provided information to M9 before the news was publicly announced due to the personal relationship that they had developed and that the source would not be as liberal with his other contacts in the news industry. “We build contacts, sources over years, talk with them regularly so that if any such things happen, we should be the first they should come to”. Over time, journalists learn to trust their sources and sources sometimes “go out of their way to provide you with information”. According to M9, his main job is to correctly report the news, but when “you are the first to break that news”, it is a very “satisfying feeling”.

Trust in a source seems to be the guiding factor in determining the reliability of information in the present case. Even if his source refused to be named, M9 argued that he had complete faith in the authenticity of his news and explained that the basis of his trust in his sources comes from working with them over a period of time “The thing is, I have worked with this source before. I have a number of
stories with him on a personal level, and the thing is you get that confidence from your source”, M9 clarifies. He has known this source since his early days as a junior sports reporter for a national daily. When doing stories the first few times with this source, M9 was more sceptical. “All sorts of doubts popped up in my head: can I trust him? Is he giving me the correct information or just making a fool of me?” M9 explains that a journalist often relies on industry wisdom with regard to establishing source reliability in India. When in doubt, journalists consult each other to check the trustworthiness of a news source. A junior journalist with relatively little experience and knowledge of the industry tends to receive guidance from the senior journalists in relation to industry practices.

“In the journalism world, everybody has mentors in India, especially because you go out in the field, you see lots of senior journalist, and there will be people who would be happy to guide you. So, for a youngster — like, I was 24 or 25 when I started working as a journalist — I had to ask seniors to know what is happening. So, you tend to find somebody, so I will probably double check with him if I can trust this source. So they will say, ‘yeah, yeah, we have done lots of stories with him’, so that’s how we do it.”

Based on M9’s account, it is clear why he was so adamant to file the news story. While he was deviating from the news sourcing norms of Reuters, according to M9, his news was not lacking in accuracy; his source had not only provided him with the names of the athletes but also the name of the drugs. As M9 notes, “As a journalist, I think you have to answer the questions, how the person [source] is privy to this information which he is giving. This source is telling me the names of the athletes. When I asked him to give me the names of the drugs, ‘could you please give me the name of the drugs?’, so he will actually take a couple of minutes to find out the name of the drugs. That means he is going through a document to find out what drugs [were used]. You know, he then spells it out. I think, if you question the authenticity of your source, you will find out if your source is offering you genuine news or just planting a story”.

M9 thus feels that he took every reasonable measure to confirm the accuracy and authenticity of the news. According to Reuters, the credibility of such news is still questionable, however.

Having a news lead and not being able to write about it is clearly frustrating for M9:

“You know, we ask the desk. The desk will say we can't get wrong with the names if it is not from an named source for if we get the name wrong, it can have a lot of repercussions. So they are also right from their standpoint. But from my standpoint, I think it’s news. You know, it is very difficult when you have news and you can't write.”
Thus, while M9 does not disagree with Reuters’ journalism standards, he still finds it hard to implement their rules when performing journalism in an Indian context. For him, it is the job of a reporter to verify the authenticity of the source; once satisfied, the reporter can go ahead with the story even under circumstances where sources do not want to be named. As M9 explains it, news readers trust reporters to give them accurate facts, and it is the responsibility of the journalist to make sure that the news is accurate. Even if the source is unnamed, the very fact that the reporter has trust in that source should translate into the credibility of the news story.

M9’s account reflects some of the news-sourcing practices prevalent in India. His narrative reveals that source reliability is seen as a function of a relationship that develops over a period of time between a journalist and news source. His account also shows the informal and collectivist approaches to determining trustworthiness of news sources within the industry. In other words, informal trust building is an important aspect of news sourcing practices in India. His account also reveals how local journalists rule out unauthentic sources based on collective signalling. In the above example, M9 is in favour of publishing the doping news story despite the fact that he cannot name the source or find a supporting source. He is convinced that his source is not wrong and has counter-checked the authenticity of the source through a procedure he learned when working for local media organizations. According to his journalistic sense, this is therefore news that should be published despite not meeting the sourcing criteria laid down by Reuters for his story to satisfy the conditions of accuracy and authenticity on which Reuters’ principles of objectivity and accuracy are based.

**News from Government Officials**

Correspondent M1 has faced similar predicaments as M9 in relation to news sourcing. She narrates a recent incident when she was told that she could not go ahead with a news story because her sourcing was not in line with Reuters’ mandates. As she is a commodity correspondent covering news on crops, a major part of her job involves covering news issued by the government on crop imports and exports. In the story she related to me, she had received an export figure for that month from her source a couple of days earlier than the official announcement to the public and media. “I got a fax saying that these are the export figures for this month, so you can just report it”. However, the source told M1 not to identify him in the news. As she could not publish the exports figures without naming the source, she checked with the official government spokesperson to see if she could use him as the source. However, the spokesperson informed M1 that he was not in a position to authenticate the news “as there might be some changes in the final figures”. Because the government spokesperson was reluctant to confirm the numbers to M1, she cross-checked the data with other sources working on the report. “I crosschecked it with three of my sources, and my sources were
like, this is the final data, you can go ahead with it”, she explains. However, having
the news confirmed by three sources not ready to be identified still meant that
the story had low credibility according to Reuters’ guidelines, which are
intended to protect investors who make decisions based on the reports that
Reuters published.

Like M9 in the previous story, M1 was upset and consulted her “senior
correspondent”. “I told her, that ‘see, this is the case, the data is final and I want to
report it, but […] I have not received any official mail from the government’, but the orders
were not to go with the data. ‘Wait till the official data comes’.” While M1 was able to
publish her story when the official confirmation from the government arrived,
she explains that such incidents leave her with a bad feeling because she had
“gone that extra mile” to authenticate the news. She was particularly frustrated by
the fact that although she had received the news before any domestic media,
due to Reuters’ policies, she was unable to publish until after the local media —
with their less-stringent sourcing policies — had already published the
numbers. “The domestic media, they reported it before me, so I lost only because I did not
have any official confirmation”, she complained.

Although M1 agrees that following Reuters’ policy ensures accuracy of news
content, her sentiments are similar to those of M9 in the previous story. “I was
confident in my sources. I was like, if my source has informed me something, then it is right”.
She has also built her contact with sources over a period of time, even prior to
joining Reuters. She argues that she developed a great deal of faith in many of
them. “I could definitely go with those figures because that source is very close to the
development of the report and I have been knowing that source for many years. I mean, he is
loyal and he won’t lie to me”, M1 argues. Like M9, M1’s account reflects the
relationship between her and her source and the trust she has built with her
sources over the years. Both M1’s and M9’s narratives indicate that sourcing in
the Indian news industry is largely trust based, trust that journalists build over a
period of time with their sources.

The frustration expressed by M1 and M9 is shared by several other
interviewees. For example, M10 summarizes her experiences:

“It is always there, that there are conflicts on sourcing. The guidelines […] seem like
they are clear, but it’s not always that easy. Sometimes you have to use your judgement
or take it to the editor. Following them [the guidelines] to the letter does not always
make most sense; that’s what I have learnt”.

Her colleague, M4, echoes these sentiments. “This idea of objectivity and accuracy, we
aspire to that. Maybe that’s not true in all Indian press or news, but I think it is here [at
Reuters]. […] At the same time, I am not a fresher; I know them [the guidelines] but I
understand what works here [in India].” She continues, “Of course, Reuters might not
From the narratives above, we may conclude that the knowledge transfer process has not been entirely successful in “over-writing” local knowledge and that local journalists make attempts to merge Reuters’ practices with local practices. This might, on the one hand, be interpreted as institutional duality — the way local employees straddle this dichotomy. However, does the dual framework operate as neatly as it is conceptualized, or do practices crisscross, bleeding into each other and resulting in a liminal framework that has traces of both but cannot neatly be characterized as one or the other?

5.5.1.2 Race to Be Number One

Why does the local staff at Reuters feel the compulsion to file news stories when they do not fulfil the sourcing criteria? Why do they still argue that their news is as accurate and that their news should be published despite the fact that it has unnamed sources? Why do they feel frustrated by waiting until the official statement is released from the official sources (and approved by Reuters)? The answer lies partly in the race to be first to break the news.

Because all media organizations participate in the same race to be the first to publish news, all journalists feel the pressure not just to be right but also to be the first. At many large media organizations like Reuters, the importance of “being first” is also reflected in the assessment of reporters whose individual performance is evaluated based on the number of other news providers publishing the same story ahead of them. Although both M9 and M1 seemed to agree that Reuters’ policies on news sourcing were largely appropriate, they were simultaneously frustrated by the restrictions placed on them by these policies and the fact that local media do not work under many of the limitations they face. It is also reflected in their bi-annual performance assessment. M1 reiterates,

“I know my report is right and I have checked with three important sources [although unnamed] who are close to the event, but I still can’t go ahead and publish it and wait for the final official verdict. But then I am losing the story to local media”.

Thus, the narratives of the above two reporters break open some important aspects that need to be taken into consideration while assessing the success of knowledge transfer. While it might seem from the sender’s perspective that the knowledge transfer has failed and that the staff has a low capacity to absorb new knowledge due to cognitive and normative institutional differences, in actuality, both reporters demonstrate a keen understanding of Reuters’ newsgathering principles, and underlying their pursuit of newsgathering is that
they do partly follow those principles (by confirming with more than one source), albeit in a different way. However, the outcome is different. Although there is a news report, no official sources are backing that report, even if the news story was accurate and there was — according to both reporters — an unnecessarily long wait to get that news published.

5.5.1.3 Working under Institutional Duality? Living Strategies

According to the hybridity theory proposed by Bhabha (1994), one of the most important factors that made the process of complete conversion to Western models nearly impossible was the problem of translation (and misunderstanding). The problem of translation means that the symbols and meanings of a given culture cannot be translated in a transparent way into the terms and concepts of another culture. Something in the original is always lost and something new is created. For instance, in the narratives of M1, M4, M9 and M10, their attempts to understand Reuters’ news sourcing principles represent a process of translation and “misreading”, which alter and also challenge the meanings of new knowledge and its symbols and narratives. Thus, while the reporters agree with Reuters’ accuracy and objectivity principles, with regard to applying the principles, they use their own cultural symbols to translate these values. Although neither of these reporters, according to their own narratives, exactly follow Reuters’ rules on news sourcing, they still do not feel that they have violated them, in the case of M1 and M9 because they were confident about their news sources based on the relationship they had built over the years. According to them they are very much following the essence of Reuters’ objectivity principles in their newsgathering practices — for them, the news is authentic and accurate, and they have attained that legitimacy from their unnamed sources who have never failed them on previous occasions. Thus, they classify their news as accurate in their view, matching Reuters’ requirements.

Adopting the perspective of the knowledge recipient thus reveals some of the reasons why local staff might sway from implementing the specific practice mandated by Reuters. The above accounts also reveal that not implementing these practices need not always be due to poor capabilities at the subsidiaries. The reporters show a high level of journalistic understanding but argue that strict implementation may lead to them losing out to the competition. The above accounts also reveal that the local staff does not pursue unsubstantiated news stories but employ their own methods of authenticating news. From this, we may conclude that if MNC practices are not implemented wholesale, this may have very different explanations than low levels of knowledge internalization. However, as seen from an outcome-based knowledge transfer
perspective employed in most research, this may be exemplified as an instance of unsuccessful knowledge transfer, and we may fail to recognize the hybridization of practices that emerge as multinational subsidiaries operate in a third space (cf., Frenkel, 2008).

We can also complicate the ambivalent responses of knowledge recipients with the historical relationship between the countries, as the recipients may be predisposed to consider some values as superior without necessarily understanding them or understanding the relationship between work practices and the underlying values. It may thus be useful to distinguish between, on the one hand, internalization of more “operational” newsgathering knowledge, and on the other hand, the values relating to objectivity that guide this knowledge. This is, for example, indicated by M4’s account above. While by her statements she appears to accept the ideals of objectivity, she simultaneously argues that they may be upheld by different means and even indicates that she adapts Reuters’ instructions to fit her existing knowledge of how to perform journalism in an Indian context. The underlying principles (objectivity) and associated newsgathering practices are decoupled, and the – by the knowledge sender intended – link between value and knowledge is lost in a context very dissimilar to that where the knowledge was originally developed. Here, we thus see an example of a hybrid connection between values and knowledge, a connection that draws both on the knowledge sender’s logic and local knowledge of newsgathering but does not fully represent one or the other.

The concept of mimicry as presented by Bhabha (1994) may also have conscious as well as semi-conscious elements. The stories of M10 and M4 above are examples of what may be understood as largely conscious “adaptation” or hybridization of knowledge. While it is difficult to demonstrate unequivocally from study participants’ individual statements that they semi-consciously hybridizing knowledge, the frustration expressed earlier by the senior editorial team member and expatriate employee M11 (see 5.2) regarding the frequency of local journalists’ failure to unlearn “Indian” practices may be indicative of such a process, particularly when seen in light of the positive attitudes that so many interviewed reporters express with regard to Reuters’ principles. That is, while journalists may extol Reuters’ mandates, they may not be aware that they sometimes act against them, and the mimicry process and its resulting hybridization of the link between the values and knowledge discussed above may not always be an entirely conscious process.

The stories of M9 and M1 above also reveal another important element in understanding hybridity in knowledge implementation, namely, the distinction between hybrid practices and hybrid outcomes. M9 and M1 describe how they sometimes work in ways that represent a hybrid of Reuters’ values and Indian practices. However, because the output from their work was blocked by the
editor, we see no actual hybrid output. To understand hybridization in knowledge implementation, we may therefore have to look beyond the results of the subject’s work and investigate her work processes.

5.5.1.4 Knowledge Situatedness: Provincializing Reuters’ Newsgathering Practices

Both M1’s and M9’s stories depict how they, as employees of Reuters, feel pressure from different institutions. On the one hand, the local staff operates within an institutional set-up dictated by Indian journalism practices that have separate rules on sourcing reliability and the way people come to trust their sources by building on personal relationships over a period of time through collective recognition of the trustworthiness of the sources. On the other hand, Reuters’ local staff must abide by Reuters’ rules of news sourcing, which often conflict with the practices of sourcing commonly performed in India. M4 summarizes the frustration expressed by several journalists. “As I said before, sourcing in India is usually different. You and I know Reuters has strong policies, but our sources are in India, right?” In the interview, M4 goes on to present yet another example of how it is often challenging to apply Reuters’ newsgathering practices. Accounts such as this and the narratives of M9 and M1 above reveal some of the inner workings of Indian media and sourcing practices, allowing us to challenge the simplistic assumptions that place Indian newsgathering practices in an inferior position compared to those of Reuters.

Another important reflection from the account above reveals that in India, it is the duty of reporters — as representations of authority — to verify the authenticity of news rather than base the verification on the naming of sources (who can then, in effect, also share the journalist’s blame if the news turns out to be incorrect). The reason that news organizations command an audience despite having stories with unnamed or single sources also reflects the culture of journalism in India, where reporters produce their authoritative version of reality. This approach is reflected within a culture of journalism that has emerged from India’s historical and other institutional peculiarities. Prior to liberalization, journalism in India was associated with significant prestige and was considered a serious profession; a journalist commanded authority. The tradition was built on the historical beginnings of the Indian press, when freedom fighters (from British rule) resorted to journalism as the means of mass awakening (Sonwalkar, 2002; Rao & Johal, 2006). Thus, journalism as a profession in India has a philosophical rooting within notions of Indian identity where journalists were seen as authoritative and devoted to the cause of national welfare, safety and security. In India, journalism subsequently operates very much along the principles of the “fourth estate”, and the news sourcing culture reflects this trust that readers place in new reporters, who are generally
understood as having a moral obligation to ensure that the news is correct\textsuperscript{10}. Therefore, in the Indian context, stories with unnamed sources are not automatically understood as being less objective or accurate (Rao, 2009). However, the current expansion of media sectors and the mix of globalization and the general eco-political development are changing the state, structure and character of Indian journalism (Jeffery, 2000; Kholi-Khandekar, 2010).

While the reasons that Reuters has rules on its sourcing policy are clear and appear to represent sound journalism, they thus relate to one form of journalism. Reuters’ preference for two named sources is perhaps linked with its clientele profile. A large share of Reuters’ business provides financial news and analyses to its clientele, which makes investment decisions based on Reuters’ news and analyses. The shift of Reuters from being a news agency to what may perhaps be understood as a financial service provider has a lot to do with its stringent sourcing policy. While I do not contend, like many other media scholars (Sainath, 2001; Sonwalkar, 2002), that the commercialization of Indian journalism has led to deteriorating news standards, comparing and understanding the heritage of Indian media practices as inferior to a large financial organization working under the guise of a news agency is somewhat simplistic.

In other media systems, other journalism practices may prevail, and definitions of objectivity and practices relating to named and unnamed sources vary (Donsbach & Klett, 1993; Curran & Park, 2000). In fact, the practices

\textsuperscript{10} Although there is a dearth of scholarly research into journalism traditions of the Indian news industry, the history of the journalism culture in India reveals certain important characteristics that have given shape to its journalism practices. When India gained independence from British rule in 1947, the nationalist press took to supporting the development of the nascent democracy. Thus, the character of the journalist remained much the same — to help India develop as a new nation. The authority commanded by journalists is also reflected in the freedom of press, which India has strived to sustain since. This can be illustrated by the 1975-1977 so-called “emergency”, a period in India’s history when the Indira Gandhi-led government clamped down on political unrest and opposition and, among other means, limited the role and freedom of the press. Once emergency law was lifted and the role of the press was restored, Indira Gandhi’s government lost the subsequent election. Although the last twenty years (after liberalization of the Indian economy) has seen a rapid change in the structure and character of Indian journalism (Sonwalkar, 2002) and it has been condemned by practitioners (e.g., Sainath, 2001) and scholars (e.g., Sonwalkar, 2002; Thussu, 2007) alike on the deteriorating standards in the wake of commercialization, there are still remnants of old practices that were previously revered, and some of the traditional news organizations and senior reporters still cling to those practices. Despite the fact that the media scene in India is changing at a rapid pace — often resulting in questionable journalism standards — there are still reservoirs of old practices that do not wither easily.
surrounding news sources are not confined to India; such practices exist in most media systems but may perhaps vary from organization to organization (Guest & Stanzler, 1969; Roshco 1975; Pavlik, 2004; Awad, 2006; Deuze, 2005; Manning, 2001). Journalists in many media systems have long argued for the need to protect valuable sources, particularly for stories that address sensitive matters that may threaten the well-being of the source (Berkowitz, 2009). Historically, news reporters have often relied on confidential sources when gathering information for public dissemination. Such practices have facilitated journalists' newsgathering in a number of ways, including (1) helping them to obtain information that is otherwise unavailable, (2) cultivating sources, (3) building trust, and (4) giving comfort, confidence, and protection to fearful sources. Thus, while there is a widespread acknowledgement of the importance of named sources in the news, news based on unnamed sources is neither uncommon nor necessarily less trustworthy.

All media systems face this dilemma, and news industries in different regions have different responses, including means and methods that become institutionalized (Reese, 2001). As a result, when a firm from one region attempts to transfer its objectivity principles to a country where different practices are prevalent, the MNC may face considerable challenges. This is clearly true in case of Reuters in India, where the journalism style is distinctly different compared to that promoted by Reuters. However, as seen in the previous two sections of this chapter, Indian practices are often treated as inferior to those of Reuters, rather than just different. Thus, it becomes imperative to look at the conflict that such institutional duality creates for local staff. What incites them to follow local practices, despite the fact that they are in agreement with Reuters’ newsgathering principles? A scrutiny of this tension will generate space for Indian practices to discuss their characteristics rather than just being termed as inferior and wanting in ethics.

In the above discussion, I have attempted to show some of the institutional peculiarities of Indian journalism and the reason current newsgathering practices appear a certain way while also trying to situate Reuters’ newsgathering practices as just one form of journalism practice that is largely derived from a Western capitalist system (Curran et al., 2009; Hanitzsch, 2009). Thus, by “provincializing” the practices of Reuters and showing some of the reasons why certain attitudes towards news sourcing are prevalent in India, I have attempted to reflect on how institutional duality operates and how subsidiaries of MNCs like Reuters inhabit the interstitial space. In doing so, I hope to have instantiated Frenkel’s (2008) theorization.
5.5.2 Knowledge Implementation at the Bangalore Site

Even if the local staff members at the Bangalore bureau are largely engaged in news gathering activities, their tasks have a “back-office nature” in the sense that reporters do not go into the field to cover the news. Because these reporters work within the confines of an office and work with foreign markets, do they face challenges distinct from those of the Mumbai unit? Before interviewing local journalists and asking them about their key challenges as Reuters back-office reporters, I spoke to senior editorial team member and expatriate employee B3 to obtain her view on these challenges, particularly in relation to knowledge implementation.

B3 informs me that she often has to deal with complaints from team leaders in the UK and US in relation to the quality of the news output produced by the Bangalore editorial team. B3 explains,

“It's a judgment on a story, you know, 'why did you guys go so long on the story, why did you include these and why did you exclude these certain facts? We don't think your story was written that well', it is more on that aspect. It could be anything”.

Her complaints reveal that the training offered and the instructions given to local staff are not consistently followed and points to the inability of local staff to deliver news stories they are expected to produce, pointing, in other words, to the failure of the knowledge transfer process. According to B3, the complaints are “quite legitimate” and not “frivolous” as the quality of each news output is evaluated based on client interest. B3 clarifies,

“If they are questioning us, they are questioning us because they did not see something that was done as it should have been and they are keeping the interest of the client in mind. […] they are not just complaining for the sake of complaint”.

While there has been extensive research on the problems related to knowledge transfer, there have been few attempts to take the knowledge recipients’ view point and see their side of the story. Here, I want to look at whether local staff always agrees with the assessments of their work by their counterparts in the UK and the US. What are the challenges they encounter when covering a region from afar? What are their explanations of the complaints they receive on poor news quality? Below, I allow local staff members to reflect on the feedback they receive on their newsgathering. In these accounts, narratives are not only restricted to news sourcing issues (although the staff discusses that too) but also involve discussions on ancillary newsgathering activities, such as the way stories are written and the English language used. Judgments on the story are also included to present a more holistic picture of the challenges faced by journalists performing outsourcing newsgathering activities for a region thousands of miles away, a region that is very distinct from their own context.
Complaints in relation to news judgment are frequent, explains team leader B1. As Reuters’ clients make investment decisions based on the news and analyses produced by Reuters, having a sense of the stories that are important to clients and whether they are timely is considered pivotal for Reuters’ reporters. While the news produced by the Bangalore staff is often noted as being lacking in news judgment or relevance to Reuters’ readers, B1, the team leader for the UK, has a different story to tell. She gives an overview of the situation by providing an example of one such conflict that took place just two days before my conversation with her. As a team leader, she has to intervene in these situations, and it is she who receives feedback on her team’s performance, feedback that she conveys to her team members.

“There was a story, which is a very small company […], so the slot there [the UK] asked us to take a look at it and be said, you know, ‘just take the story’. So we assumed we have to write up the stock and we did. It was a very small company [and] there was not much of investor interest in that company as we track all that by how the shares react, like shares go up or down. Sometimes their shares don’t react to our stories at all, which is when you really know ‘okay you don’t have to take it forward’. The guy said, ‘take a look at it’ and we accepted and we started doing it […].”

However, later that day, B1 received feedback from the UK that the story was unnecessary and that the reporter in question should have applied discretion as to the newsworthiness of that story. She explains,

“I think they were not happy with the fact that the reporter did not go back and check whether it is really worth updating the story because, according to them, it was really not worth it as there was no share movement for the past three months. There was not much of investor interest so their point is, you know, you should be more careful while taking stories forward”.

On the other hand, the reporter who worked on the story, in his defence, argued that, “the story was assigned from the slot there, so why not? here is no harm in putting a story”, B1 says. “If you miss the story, [that] is when there is a problem”, she continues. Although as team leader she feels compelled to protect her team members against unfounded criticism from the team in London, B1 also has to use feedback to improve her team’s performance. Like in so many of her other cases, B1 explains that is was difficult to place blame entirely on her team member. She argues that she could nonetheless see the value of the criticism her team member received:

“Both sides had a point, you know what I mean. According to them, it was like ‘you know, the reporters need to be trained to prioritize news better’. And the reporter’s point of view was that ‘I did it because I was given the task from there and I didn’t have anything else to do that day in terms of reporting, plus it was a well written story’, to which they agreed”.

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While the incident above could be easily read as Bangalore staff members lacking the ability to determine the importance of news, the account also bears testimony to the complexity related to understanding whether the knowledge transfer has been a success or failure. It also highlights some of the unequal power relations within which a subsidiary operates. On one hand, the unit is under pressure to work on news items assigned by its “parent” teams. On the other hand, teams are expected to show initiative in deciding what news to pursue (and which to ignore).

B1 explains another aspect of the parent-subsidiary tension where the teams in the UK take away important news stories from her reporters, arguing that they (the UK teams) do a better job of writing news. According to B1, however, the main reason is not always that her team produces poor quality reports; when news is important, the UK team often writes it themselves rather than letting the Bangalore team do it. B1 gives one such example:

“We often have conflict when we are writing up a story and stock will be very important, it is in our list, it is a ‘hot stock’. [That is] the shares really move and we all know that it will move. That’s a very important piece of news. Say, the company is under some fraud investigation and we know ‘okay this is an important story’ and it’s the reporter here who usually handles that company and the reporter is almost finished writing it. But because it’s a hot stock, they are not very confident in what we do, they would wanna take it back. You know, they would say, ‘can you drop it there, the sector reporter here will handle it’. Which is a little unnerving because, you know, we are also sector reporters. We are also in the business to learn things. But they don’t have that level of confidence to give us such a big story like an investigation or a legal proceeding or whatever. They would […] want to take it there. They would think that they can write it better”.

In B1’s view, this creates a problem because it deprives her teams of the chance to learn to report important stories. While she does not challenge the notion that the UK teams often do a better job compared to the Bangalore reporters, she argues that taking away the opportunity to write such stories hampers their development as good reporters. She explains,

“We are not disputing the fact that they write better or we write better or whatever. Sometimes they do an excellent job of it. But as I said, they are closer to what is happening, so they might get a better idea [of what is happening]. But the whole operation here is for learning these things and for eventually getting things to that standard. You know, we don’t want to do just follow-up stories, just rehashing the statements; we want to do bigger things. Otherwise, there is no growth for reporters here or we are not learning either; that’s our point”.

To B1, the fact that the teams in the UK do not allow her teams to work on important stories can be explained by the low confidence in Bangalore
reporters’ ability to write news. I argue that this can also be seen as an instance of a subsidiary being placed in an unequal power relationship. Although the reporters in Bangalore may have covered and produced reports on a particular company for some time, when it becomes important news, the team in UK takes over the task of covering it. This means that the Bangalore unit does not get to report on important news which, by B1’s account, creates a feeling of injustice among team members that are also eager to develop their. If we look at this from a “traditional” knowledge transfer perspective, however, we may interpret the foreign parent firm taking over some of its subsidiary’s intended tasks as failure of knowledge transfer, either due to lacking capabilities or the lack of motivation and willingness to learn new practices.

5.5.2.1 Writing style

As we see above, superior language skills compared to the Bangalore staff is an important reason that the UK teams claim to produce better news. According to B1,

“Obviously, let’s face it, it’s not our mother tongue whereas it’s theirs. So they always have that kind of superiority, which is okay, I suppose. If a third person is going to come and teach me Hindi, then I would probably say, ‘please bugger off’, you know”.

However, B1 argues that such complaints are not always reasonable in a global organization such as Reuters: “It's acceptable but sometimes it is also important to know that we are working in a global setup, so you will have to give up your attitude, if I can say so”. Thus, while B1 is ready to accept that the writing skills of the UK team might be superior, the nature of the complaint is not legitimate in an environment where everyone is working towards a certain goal and collaboration rather than making differences, which should be the spirit of such an environment. This could also be related to the discussion on language imperialism in the training section, in which a certain form of English is favoured over others (such as the ones spoken and written in ex-colonies such as India). While B1 agrees that the news reports written by reporters in the UK might be of better quality due to the language advantage, geographical proximity may also give the parent companies an edge. As B1 argues,

“See, we are covering companies which we have even not heard of, unless it’s like Burberry; even if it is well known in the UK, it might not be here in Bangalore. So, we are a little handicapped that way, so we really need to bank on them [the UK team] to give us context on what does this company do”.

B1 reiterates her point by giving an example:

“See, if you ask me to cover, say, a company based in India, I can add my colour to the story because I am based in India and I see the holdings. I have seen their products and perhaps used them too, so writing about it will come naturally to me, right. It’s a
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flair that you get because of the proximity. But say a firm in UK, which I have never
heard of — to add that kind of context, to relate it to that, it will be difficult unless
you have seen and you felt it, so that’s one major difficulty that we face here”.

Lack of proximity is thus a challenge, particular to the Bangalore unit as it
covers foreign news. However, when assessing the performance of Bangalore
reporters, this is not often considered and B1 argues for the importance of
acknowledging this fact.

“That’s the complaint that they have always have that, our stories lack colour, our
stories lack context, that flair. But to be fair to us, you know, we are 25,000 to
30,000 miles away and we have no idea of what these things look like. We are so far
away from what we are doing, what we cover! So you don’t get that personal touch to
the stories”.

B1’s account of herself as a team leader who mediates between two groups that
are disjointed not only by geographical distance but also by culture and
language reveals a power play; she presents a case where she and her team
members are subjected to domination but also shows the agency with which
she tries to subvert the power that attempts to pigeonhole her and her team
members. Thus, while B1 often takes the criticism directed towards her team
members in a positive spirit and argues for its legitimacy, she does not just
simply accept their claims or complains; she subverts the gaze by the power of
her agency by bringing into question the unfavourable situation with which she
and her staff are evaluated. B1’s account thus supports the point that subsidiary
employees are not silenced, subservient elements in a production machine.
They represent “empowered individuals” who fight to make space for
themselves, even in the face of an industry that attempts to pigeonhole them.

5.5.2.2 Other News Sourcing Challenges

Lack of proximity to the region for which they work also creates challenges
with regard to the types of relationships staff members can have with their
news sources. Building news sources and interacting with them on a daily basis
is an integral part of journalism, but the staff in Bangalore has to struggle with
this because they can only communicate with sources via telephone or email.
B10, leader for the US team, argues that this limits the levels of trust that can
develop between the reporter and source and, ultimately, the quality of the
news produced. B10 explains,

“The team over there are talking to the sources and meeting outside, they are meeting
for a cup of coffee. Say an event comes up. Even if it is not newsworthy, they will go
for the event just to build contacts, so there is face-to-face connection happening there,
which is where your sources might trust you more and, which is when your sources will
give you stuff, but here it is not there and that’s not the case at all”.

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Teams working for the UK face similar challenges, as B1 reflects.

“Reporters there are constantly in touch with their sources and they are always out with them, either this way or that way. They are talking to analysts, even they are even having analyst lunches, so that’s how you get the feeling that ‘okay, you are a reporter and that’s what a reporter does’. Build contacts and get breaking stories through the sources, so that’s much easier there, I feel. That’s one another handicap area for Bangalore because it is very difficult, but there are people who still build sources within these limited things, but it is not always easy”.

As the performance of the Bangalore teams is evaluated in relation to the performance of their foreign counterparts, it is not surprising that B10 and B1 make these comparisons with the US and the UK. At the same time, by pointing out the privileged positions of the UK and US teams, B10 and B1 challenge the subordination they are subjected to by (unfavourable) evaluations and the pigeonholing labels (of inferiority) in which they result. This also has implications for the evaluation of the success of the transfer of knowledge and practices relating to news sourcing; without understanding the conditions under which the Bangalore subsidiary operates, the power relationships with Reuters’ teams in the UK and the US and their factual advantages (particularly relating to language), output-based conclusions about knowledge transfer success will clearly be skewed.

Local staff not only resists the subordination of their output by challenging the favourable conditions under which the UK and US teams operate; they also find strategies to improve their work. Senior editorial team member B6 reflects on the predicaments of both Bangalore teams and relates how they try to overcome them:

“We just are talking to them over the phone, so the only bit of connection that we have is the voice. But quite often, what I tell my teams here is, you know, ‘Try and get a picture of that person while you are talking to the person. Just put up the picture on your screens’. I know it is difficult, it is not as easy or it is not as effective as when you have face-to-face conversation, but something is better than nothing”.

There is thus a constant battle for teams to prove their worth, and there is constant discussion of who does stories better. Although faced with a locational disadvantage, the Bangalore unit seems to have developed strategies to face such challenges.

While reporters in the UK and the US are sometimes willing to share their sources with their counterparts in Bangalore, this is not always the case. According to B1, some reporters are very “possessive” about their sources and are reluctant to give Bangalore reporters access. B1 see this as “natural”, though, and argues that “you don’t want to give up various sources to another person, and you don’t
want to jeopardize your relationship with that source”. She further explains when there is a fear that reporters might damage relationships with sources, they apply caution, particularly when sources know little of the outsourcing unit of Bangalore. Receiving a phone call from India may come as a surprise, and these sources are often reluctant to speak, let alone give a Bangalore reporter a news lead. B11, who works for the UK team, narrates some of the reactions of sources she encounters on a regular basis.

“They just ask us, ‘Where are you calling from?’ and we have to say ‘Bangalore’. We can't obviously lie and then they have 10 questions after that, you know: ‘You are from Bangalore? So you are covering a UK company from Bangalore? Why are you covering from Bangalore? Why are you calling me from Bangalore?’ You know, things like that”.

Thus, staff members at Bangalore often find themselves justifying their existences as an outsourcing office to these sources. Bangalore journalists have, however, developed strategies to subvert the gaze directed towards them, thus not passively accepting their subordinate position. For instance, B5, an energy correspondent working for the US team, explains how he and his other team members negotiated with their sources.

“We made them understand over the period of time either you let us cover your companies or you are never going to get covered because we are the ones who are going to deal with small and midcap. So, they are really fine and they are willing to talk over the years. They have seen the kind of output, also, that we have generated, so they are happy with the kind of news we do”.

By indicating to sources that their leads will not turn into news if they do not cooperate, Bangalore employees again show how they subvert the disadvantaged power relation into which they are initially placed.

Bangalore employees face similar issues of source anonymity that Mumbai staff members have to deal with while covering stories in India. Like the Mumbai reporters, Bangalore journalists express frustration when they are certain of the authenticity of a news piece but are, due to Reuters’ news sourcing principles, unable to publish their stories. B1 echoes sentiments similar to those of several Mumbai reporters:

“That is another problem for the reporters here; so we know that A company is going to buy B from one of our sources, and it is very difficult to get these sources to speak, to open their mouths. But we manage to get one source to say that, yes A is buying B, but the source says, ‘please don’t quote me’, and the reporter will be so frustrated; he or she has gone so far to dig in the story, but still you can’t use the information”.
B1 also emphasizes that it is very frustrating for her co-workers to hold a news story back when “you know it is going to be true, but you can't write it in your story”. Losing to competitors is another common frustration. “Yes, we do face problems with unnamed sources, which is why I feel that newspapers, like, even FT in the UK, can survive with a lot of things like that. FT, Guardian, Independent, they all have stories, one-source stories”, B1 reveals, reflecting the fact that that single-source stories are not only a peculiarity of India but are commonly produced by well-known news organizations in the UK. This does not mitigate the frustration that a reporter feels when “[t]he reporter knows the fact that the story is true because the source is so close to the matter, we check and double check but still as we have no named source, the story is useless”. In the words of reporter B12, “It happens all the time that sources will not go on record with their names. Maybe I know the source and I have had several stories from him before. I know the information is true and I write a good story, but it isn't published. Or maybe it is published later, after someone else has broken the news”.

Like their Mumbai counterparts, in addition to all the challenges of reporting for a distant region, Bangalore journalists thus have to overcome particular challenges in relation to news sourcing. They not only have to cultivate source contacts in a context that is new to them; they also relate challenges of sources often not wanting to go on record.

Of course, the frustration reporters feel when a story is rejected is common to all systems of journalism. When seen only in light of Reuters’ knowledge transfer principles, this frustration may seem to originate in reporters’ lack of capacity to absorb and implement Reuters’ stipulated practices; i.e., there is an unfavourable normative and cognitive profile match. Clearly, though, the issue is more complex, as revealed by the interviews.

### 5.5.2.3 Team Relationships

Local staff in Bangalore faces other complexities relating to working in an outsourcing unit. While relationships between the Bangalore teams and their Western counterpart might not intuitively seem to contribute to the success of knowledge implementation, the below narratives reveal that the nature of these relationships can have telling effects on the complexities of knowledge implementation. This also relates to how teams in Bangalore have to justify their existence to their Western counterparts.

In the course of their daily work local staff members have to struggle to legitimize their existence. B10 explains that when the Bangalore set-up was new, hostility was high. There was a constant pressure on the staff in Bangalore to justify their existence. According to B10, the hostility of the teams in US arose from a fear of losing their jobs.
“We had issues, mainly because they thought they were going to lose their jobs too, which is then only natural for them to react the way they did, but eventually when they realized none of them are going to lose their jobs and this is to cut costs for the overall organization, they were more forthcoming. You know, they were more willing to help and all that”.

Similar observations are made by B13, company correspondent working for the UK team:

“You have people who will understand you. You have people who will not understand you because they don’t understand this whole business of outsourcing in the first place, but as time goes, these troubles ease but some always persists”.

Some hostility towards the Bangalore team remains, though, as B10 notes:

“There still are people who think that the operation in Bangalore is unnecessary. Unfortunately, those kind of people are everywhere, not just in the US or UK. There are many people in India also, who are very rigid and who have got that old school mentally, who should not think of any other way of doing things, you know. Those people are always there”.

Thus, in daily interaction with their counterparts in the US and UK, staff members at Bangalore also have to overcome the doubts and hostility that their counterparts display. As the staff members in Bangalore have to work in collaboration with teams in the UK or US, they often have to be cautious and patiently work on the relationship with their counterparts to win their confidence so that they will be considered fit for being assigned important stories. B13 explains,

“[The] relationship is always a work in progress. Because we can’t forget ever that we are working remotely and you know when you are normally on an internal messaging system, you are not seeing each other face-to-face. I have never seen my counterpart, except, you know, on the Facebook pages”.

Even if the Bangalore employees over a period of time have resolved some hostility issues and gained trust of their counterparts in the UK and US, they are still cautious when interacting, because there is ample ground for misunderstandings. B13 argues,

“There is always this danger of getting into misunderstanding and that misunderstanding can always creep in, so that’s the dangerous zone and that’s why you always have to work on the relationship”.

As the Bangalore operation is established to facilitate round-the-clock updates on news for the US and UK markets, the unit is often seen as subordinate or peripheral, existing just to support the main work performed by the staff in the
UK and US. This puts Bangalore staff in a subordinate position from which to perform their tasks and, as indicated by several interviewees, negative sentiments towards outsourcing to Bangalore are often expressed as criticism towards the quality of the work done by the Bangalore staff. By extension, this will also reflect on the perceived success of knowledge transfer.

Accounts of journalists’ daily work also reveal measures to subvert the inferior position in which they are placed. In their attempts to mimic headquarters’ mandated work processes, Bangalore reporters struggle with an inferior level of English, partially unfamiliar social conventions, sources that may be less inclined to have their names disclosed by journalists whom they will never meet, and foreign counterparts that may be predisposed to hold their work to a very high standard. Simultaneously, they are exposed to UK and US news output that often employs less stringent sourcing policies than Reuters. This makes them question Reuters’ policies because such newspapers also adhere to the same underlying values of objectivity and accuracy. In this process, subjects attempt to subvert their category of “inferior” or “dominated” by navigating between practices without violating underlying values. Reporter B8 gives an example of such behaviour:

“You have to be first with the story and you have to do that from here [Bangalore]. Otherwise the story can get taken away, and other stories then get taken away from you because they [the UK counterpart] are not happy. [...] But my source might not want to be named or not named yet. So maybe I write the story anyway”.

B8 thus wishes to prove that she can produce high-quality stories, and takes the chance that later they can perhaps not be published. B12 similarly argues,

“I know the story is true, and I write it without a named source, and maybe the source will go on record later or I find a second source. But the story is the same; does that make it less objective?”

My findings from Bangalore thus show that reporters have to more directly address “institutional duality” (of language, culture and journalism), that their position in a headquarters-subsidiary hierarchy is more tightly controlled and that they mostly lack local work experience. In other words, the “third space” of the Bangalore site is quite different from that of Mumbai. These differences notwithstanding, I make some of the same observations regarding the nature of hybridity, here represented by B8 and B12 above. Also in Bangalore journalists reflect insightfully on their own situation and low absorptive capacity can hardly be an explanation for failure or hybridization. I also find that it is equally relevant to distinguish hybrid work processes from their outcome. Indeed, in the Bangalore case hybrid outcomes may be rarer since MNC home-country sites exercise more direct control.
The stories above also indicate that internalization and implementation should perhaps not be understood as a linear process. Rather, internalization and implementation relate to each other in more complex patterns. It appears, for example, that attempts to implement hybrid practices and the rejection of subsequent work outcomes leads subjects to develop new hybrid knowledge — knowledge of how to work in an Indian context and still generate acceptable outcomes. From the subjects’ statements, it appears as though the greatest efforts are made to protect Reuters’ underlying values of objectivity and accuracy in this hybridization process. The implementation of work processes seems to be secondary to many journalists. This is interesting to note as, from Reuters’ perspective, the internalization of values appears to be secondary to the implementation of knowledge of policies and the subsequent adherence to these.

5.6 Concluding Discussion

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that international knowledge transfer from the developed country MNC to the developing country subsidiary does not take place in a neutral space (Frenkel, 2008; Mir & Mir, 2009). By focusing on identities of reporters working for Reuters, I have attempted to highlight some of the contextual complexities and contradictions of postcolonial/developing societies which still have to be accounted for in research and discussions on knowledge transfer. I also challenge the influential assumption that the failure to implement knowledge in institutionally “unfavourable” environments is a result of low absorptive capacity at the recipient’s end or a consequence of conscious resistance, hinting at micro-politic and power struggle at the recipient unit. Instead, I complicate my analysis by adding the binary of power and resistance in an interactional perspective to gain depth and explanatory power as I take a closer look at factors influencing knowledge transfer.

In this study, I have sought to explore how local Reuters employees deal with new knowledge. I argue that any attempt to understand current international business phenomenon in postcolonial societies such as India should place these within the colonial experience and its postcolonial continuation. The narratives of Reuters’ Indian employees provide indications that history resides in cultural and language frameworks in both conscious and unconscious ways (cf., Gandhi, 1998). When working for an MNC such as Reuters, local employees carry with them these residues and add to these new cultural and language elements. Through an analysis of their self-conceptions as reporters and their affective relationship with newsgathering values promoted by Reuters, I have thus sought to show the complex web within which their experience is located. Exploring the contradiction in their experience allows me to incorporate a
historical dimension within existing IBM theories. While theories in these fields attempt to explain contemporary challenges of doing business in developing nations, adding the colonial experience gives partly new content to these challenges. Given the intensity with which my study subjects eulogize Reuters’ practices, one can hardly question their attitude regarding the superiority of Reuters’ values over those existing locally. However, in attempting to employ those values, reporters have to negotiate with existing local frameworks. The process of negotiation, as I have shown, is a complicated one, as it is characterized by a culture of in-betweenness (Bhabha, 1994) — a form of acculturation that is neither a complete absorption (by the dominant culture of the subordinate) nor an adoption or integration of elements (of the dominant culture by the subordinate), but instead a transculturation process; the creation of a new mixed cultural order.

Understanding knowledge transfer in postcolonial developing countries from this perspective allows me to present what is a unique manifestation of postcolonial ambivalence — a dialectic of embracing yet simultaneously releasing slipping any grip. It is also important to note that in presenting colonial history and its ongoing legacy as an important qualifier in understanding contemporary IBM phenomena, I do not consider it to be the only determining factor but one of many to be considered if we are to gain a more nuanced understanding of how phenomena such as knowledge transfer unfold in postcolonial developing countries.

My analysis of postcolonial ambivalence within the realm of international knowledge transfer allows me to infer certain perpetuating orientalist tendencies at various levels, which, if pried apart, may be a way of exposing and addressing them. My analysis also offers insights into the potential of hybridity — a characteristic condition of third space and mimicry. Below, I first engage with the dynamics of power within the processes of knowledge transfer from the developed to developing world through the lenses of orientalism. In this area, I discuss the way deep-seated orientalist ideologies determine routines, practices and identity of people involved. I then navigate to the more murky ground of the third space, which the subjects of my studies inhabit. I discuss how locals resist power and structure that seems to pigeonhole and police them and argue that in their resistance strategies lies the potential for hybridization.

5.6.1 Elements of Orientalism

It is clear from my research that the orientalist discourse operates prominently among all my research subjects. The discourse represents not only an individual-level phenomenon, though, but appears as a central feature at the organizational level.
5.6.1.1 Orientalism at the Individual Level

From the sender’s perspective, as may be expected, orientalism plays an important role in expatriates’ understanding of their own role in the organizational hierarchy. They are, for example, trainers whose mission is to educate the local — the “other” — and they are managers whose purpose is to “rule” local subjects for their own good. I find that orientalism operates equally prominently among those who are to be “trained” and “ruled” — i.e., the local employees of MNC subsidiaries — and constitutes a fundamental part of postcolonial ambivalence as suggested in chapter 2. The orientalist discourse may play a particularly important role as individuals engineer their professional role within the MNC. By its very nature, the MNC rests on a foundation of universalism, i.e., the superiority of some processes justifies the becoming of the MNC (Hymer, 1960; Buckley & Casson, 1976; Caves, 1971, 1974, 1996). When subscribing to this view, the local employee may perceive the adoption of the MNC’s “world standard” as their responsibility and shed the local practices that lead to inferior work output. Such suppression of indigenous value systems by confirming their inferiority is arguably founded on an orientalist ideology, one that consistently “others” local knowledge and practices. As we can see in the case, attempts by Reuters to transfer not only specific practices but also a particular understanding of objectivity lead subsidiary employees to define other practices as less objective. This is a good illustration of universalism where the practices and principles other than those mandated by the MNC are treated with disdain, and their cultural roots and institutional context are largely ignored. In other words, Reuters’ subsidiary journalists make sense of a corporate culture by defining what it is not (Indian) and attempt to understand their roles (as working for Reuters) by orientalizing Indian journalism. Such binarizing tendencies may similarly be found when local employees create an understanding of what it means to serve foreign markets and customers; these may be seen as “different” and “more discerning”. Therefore, serving them requires higher quality output than what is needed for the local market and justifies (or necessitates) a more structured and regulated work process. In a sense, subsidiary employees adopting MNC practices and shedding local practices may understand themselves as more “professional” in their work. To understand what they are doing differently in order to be more professional, local employees thus place indigenous practices in contrast to MNC practices, creating a dichotomous relationship between a corporate culture and a local industry culture. Indeed, such tendencies would appear to extend beyond mere work processes to include mannerisms, accents and even the assumption of a new name.

At the individual level, orientalism is also prominently expressed in attempts to create status. By identifying with the discourse that defines local practices as inferior to MNC practices, host-country employees raise their status above
other locals — that is, by “othering” employees of local firms, they create a new identity for themselves as superior to and separate from their local colleagues and, quite possibly, from their own pasts; they become more “Western” by no longer being what they were. Simultaneously, they fix their position in a hierarchy where they are inferior to MNC home-country site employees whose expertise they may never quite match. In a sense, locals “other” themselves by using the MNC home-country employee as the yardstick against which they, as well as all others, are measured. When locals in this way use the orientalist discourse to show what they no longer perceive themselves to be or what they want to distance themselves from, they may also perpetuate an essentialized image where a few perceived inferior local practices are allowed to define an entire local industry.

5.6.1.2 Orientalism at the Organizational Level

If we turn to the organizational level, orientalism appears to be imbued in the very processes and routines that MNCs employ to extend their business to new markets. Training programs are a key organizational mode of perpetuating orientalist tendencies when they create a binary understanding of desired practices by placing them in direct opposition to local, “inferior” practices (cf., Prasad & Prasad, 2002). Indeed, the very language used to describe MNC and host-country practices rests on assumptions of superiority of the former in relation to the latter. Training programs may also create impressions of incompatibility of different cultures and their expressions, e.g., by emphasizing the “unlearning” of existing knowledge. In addition, training programs may generate impressions that unless subsidiary employees learn particular modes of communication, they will find it difficult to interact with members of the MNC’s other sites, and these members may even be offended unless subsidiary employees learn and practice the customs of other cultures. Training may thus be responsible for creating idealized and simplified stereotypical representations of foreign cultures to which subsidiary employees must relate. Training programs may also generate idealized and simplified stereotypical representations of subsidiary employees’ own cultures, representations to which they must, at least, give lip-service if they are to be accepted in the MNC hierarchy. All this may justify, in the minds of home-country employees, expatriates and subsidiary employees alike, the close monitoring of subsidiary performance and control systems that prevent substandard output.

At the organizational level, orientalism may also find expression in the relationship between headquarters/home-country sites and subsidiary sites. In particular, assessments of subsidiary performance relative to MNC home-country site performance may be influenced by stereotypical representations of the subsidiary host country. Fears of outsourcing may also lead home-country employees to draw on the orientalist discourse to negatively stereotype subsidiary employees. In other words, a critique of the (capitalist) logic that
underlies the expansion of MNCs finds misdirected expressions in a critique of the MNC subsidiary’s employees. Subsidiary employees, on the other hand, may strive to legitimize their own operations by emphasizing adherence to corporate policy and, in particular, by distancing themselves from the practices of other local firms.

To conclude, the orientalist discourse is not only used to legitimize the supremacy of the global capital flow to developing countries such as India — it is also buttressed by the residues of a colonial consciousness that underpins the condition of postcoloniality to telling effect. Orientalism as an ideology within the organizational setting thrives because it typifies postcolonial ambivalence. However, while the role of power that global capitalism entails can be clearly discerned through the pervasiveness of the discourse within the organizational realm, it is also important to juxtapose these narratives with subversion strategies that subjects employ to resist the very grip of power and thus create space for hybridity.

5.6.2 Elements of Hybridity

Most studies on knowledge transfer hasten to categorize it as success or failure with little or no recognition of hybrid practices that could emerge when two practices meet. In Bhabha’s (1994) work, assimilation, adaptation and cross-fertilization of practices/cultures/ideas is a prominent element, one that is largely seen as positive, enriching and dynamic. The above accounts from Mumbai and Bangalore demonstrate that knowledge implementation is indeed far from a straightforward process. They also indicate that implementation of knowledge cannot be simply assessed as a failure or success. Rather, implementation may perhaps be better understood as an “in-between” process where new knowledge is changed in translation and interpretation, giving rise to conditions akin to Bhabha’s (1994) celebrated concept of “third space”. Drawing on this view, I have looked for elements of hybridity and hybridization, and it appears in my study that this is a prominent feature of knowledge transfer.

Following on the arguments of Kostova and Roth (2002), my study implies that knowledge hybridization may take place both in relation to knowledge internationalization and implementation. I argue that to understand hybridization, it may, however, be fruitful to consider four facets. First, there are two sides to internalization: (1) the adoption of values underlying the knowledge in question as well as (2) learning/understanding the particular elements of knowledge. For example, when knowledge does not match the institutional idiosyncrasies of a particular context, knowledge may be adapted to protect the underlying values, generating a hybridized link between knowledge and underlying values. One may conversely conceive of a situation where a
different set of values than those intended are associated with particular knowledge for the knowledge to fit in a given context, even if I did not encounter this particular situation in my study.

Also implementation has two sides: (3) application of knowledge in work processes and (4) the output that results from knowledge application. For example, work processes may be hybridized to generate a particular output, or mandated work processes may generate hybrid outcomes due to the institutional idiosyncrasies in the particular context. In other words, hybridization may occur in complex patterns as knowledge recipients adopt, reject, and modify knowledge in relation to their values and aspirations, their understanding of the context within which they act, and the output that they perceive is expected of them.

My study also indicates that knowledge may be consciously or semi-consciously subverted as subjects strive to reconcile the values underlying knowledge with their own socio-historically situated understanding of the knowledge and the realities in which knowledge is to be implemented. Although I argue that knowledge recipients have significant agency in knowledge hybridization, this agency may thus be exercised semi-consciously when, for example, a recipient makes sense of knowledge from different vantage point than those intended by the sender, resulting in knowledge hybridization. To capture such complexities, we must complement the sender’s perspective with that of the knowledge recipient. To use Kostova and Roth’s (2002) terms, if looking only at the “successful” output from the sender’s perspective, it may be concluded that knowledge adoption is active or at least ceremonial, whereas from the recipient’s view, it might best represent “assent”. Conversely, knowledge adoption, which may be considered “minimal” from the sender’s perspective, can constitute “active” adoption when seen from the vantage point of the recipient.

I also find some interesting differences regarding hybridity between the two sites I have studied. Remoteness to sources means that the trust-based approach to sourcing and its associated control mechanisms, which represent integral parts of Indian journalism — and which Mumbai employees sometimes attempt to practice — are more difficult for the Bangalore teams to pursue. This apparently does not mean that similar hybrid practices do not occur, but the process of mimicry is premised on a partly different set of conditions. In particular, work at the Bangalore office is conditioned by mutually enforcing geopolitical and organizational-political hierarchies, and in the course of their daily work, local staff members have to struggle to legitimize their existence to their foreign counterparts, which gives rise to hybridity.
Through local employees’ own accounts of knowledge implementation in Mumbai and Bangalore, I have attempted to show the role of agency in knowledge implementation. The above accounts reflect how local employees subvert the categories in which they — and Indian journalism in general — are placed. Through the power of agency — or more prominently, resistance — staff members circumvent the rules they are expected to follow, resist homogenization and instead generate hybrid practices. Although the instances of hybridity in the above accounts are primarily what may be described as “symbolic” due to the pressures to comply with MNC rules, the narratives bear witness to how the imitation of practices is never a complete process — it is ambivalent and slippery, pointing to the potential of hybridization.

5.6.3 Future Research

I conclude my study on knowledge transfer by suggesting some directions for future research.

5.6.3.1 Countering Orientalist Tendencies

Said (1993:328) ends his study of Orientalism by saying “Orientalism failed to identify with human experience, failed also to see it as human experience”. Sardar (1999:4) similarly argues that orientalism prevents genuine attempts to know “the other”: “Orientalism is thus a constructed ignorance, a deliberate self deception, which is eventually projected on the Orient”. Therefore, when orientalist ideology informs the international business discourse and related practices, binaries and resultant “othering” of other cultures and practices typically generate a misrepresentation of these (Westwood, 2006; Westwood & Jack, 2007; Özkazanç-Pan, 2008). This otherness is defined by the cultural categories and academic vocabulary available to the West. To avoid these tendencies and thereby better understand international knowledge transfer, researchers should strive to capture the actual experience of the knowledge recipients, understand their challenges and study their relationship with the sender rather than rely on the simplistic quantifications typical of the field. As I have attempted to follow these suggestions, I have generated findings concerning orientalism at the level of the individual and the organization that have a number of consequences for future research.

I find that also local actors subscribe to and draw on the orientalist discourse as a means of constructing their professional identity, not least to give themselves a particular status. Thus, while scholars are justifiably encouraged to investigate the experiences of “local” (non-Western) participants in IBM processes and let their voices act as a means of puncturing the orientalist tendencies informing international management discourse and practices (Westwood, 2006; Westwood & Jack, 2007; Özkazanç-Pan, 2008), actually doing so will require a great deal of
sensitivity and reflexivity on the side of the researcher. As Said (1978) argues, the orientalist discourse is so all-permeating and pervasive that we often fail to recognize its existence. To look beyond this veil, researchers should critically analyse how binarizing, universalizing, essentializing and othering narratives by “locals” fit with an orientalist discourse and how such narratives support the construction of individual and collective identities. To highlight an example from my own research, a superficial analysis may falsely conclude that knowledge transfer partly fails due to lacking capabilities. Such an analysis may find support in the readily available orientalist discourse that places Indian journalists in an inferior position, particularly if local study participants themselves describe a situation where they deviate from MNC training. A more profound critical analysis may conclude that MNC representatives, in their normative conviction of the universal superiority of MNC knowledge, failed to understand its situatedness and therefore did not adapt training programs to local practices and pre-existing knowledge among subsidiary employees. The questioning of MNC practices by locals, on the other hand, may be (consciously or unconsciously) suppressed by themselves so as not to clash with their aspirations of being associated with a high-status MNC. Therefore, overly rosy pictures of knowledge transfer processes and outcomes may also be presented.

Researchers also need to be sensitive to the narratives that use inherently hierarchical terminology such as “MNC-subsidiary” and “training” (where there is a trainer and a trainee). The stories surrounding training provided by trainers as well as those who are trained are filled with notions that local knowledge systems and other institutions are inherently inferior to those represented by the MNC, not least when there are clashes between local practices and those mandated by the MNC. Drawing on such narratives may lead researchers to perpetuate stereotypical and misrepresenting images of industries and cultures. To be mindful of such tendencies, researchers may fruitfully consider the origins of MNC knowledge and the institutional system within which such knowledge was created rather than just focusing on supposed mismatches between MNC knowledge and local institutions.

The orientalist tendencies that guide the international knowledge transfer process also have consequences for the ways in which we study the phenomenon scientifically. Most prominently, by virtue of being placed in the upper category of a binary distinction, the critique of Western knowledge is suppressed, and knowledge flows from the multinational located in the West are not questioned until they reach the developing country recipient. Consequently, although the literature has extensively pondered the philosophical aspect of characteristics of knowledge and types of knowledge, there are still few attempts to empirically study the situatedness of the practices that MNCs wish to transfer to their subsidiaries (Mir et al., 2008, 2009). In what
institutional context did such a practice emerge? What are the historical, economic, social and legal factors that pave the way for such knowledge to emerge and be successful in one particular context? So far, the knowledge transfer field has not delved into these important aspects of knowledge transfer. From my research, it appears clear that uncritically assuming that a knowledge model that is successful in one region will have similar success elsewhere is, at best, naïve. Understanding the situatedness of the knowledge can further our understanding of why certain types of knowledge may fail or succeed to transfer. Thus, “provincializing” knowledge that flows from the West is an important step to take if we want to free ourselves from perpetuating orientalist pitfalls. In other words, scholars should pay more attention to understanding how and in what institutional contexts Western knowledge is generated, not only where it is transferred. In the implementation section in the above empirical case study, there is also clear evidence that news sourcing practices in India are culturally rooted, and although unnamed news sourcing might be more common and accepted compared to Reuters’ news sourcing policies, we cannot assume that this compromises the underlying principle of objectivity; rather, reporters follow a different pattern and logic based on the Indian context to ensure. Suppressing existing local practices as inferior silences the expression of the legacy of these practices and how and why such practices came into force. Future research may therefore wish to take a more in-depth look at the actual practices, their underlying practices and the context in which these have evolved before making pronouncements about the supposed success or failure of knowledge transfer. To summarize, future research on international knowledge transfer should consider both the situatedness of foreign knowledge, indigenous knowledge and how they relate to each other to better understand the knowledge transfer phenomenon.

5.6.3.2 Pursuing Hybridity

The four facets of hybridization discussed above have several implications for future research on international knowledge transfer. For example, my research gave examples of control systems preventing the output of material produced with hybridized work processes. Unless the distinction is made between work process and outcomes, researchers may fail to capture the hybridization that actually takes place and therefore present overly negative (or positive) images of the knowledge transfer process. More specifically, if knowledge transfer success is measured as the relationship between successful and rejected outputs, studies may entirely miss hybridization in the knowledge adoption process. As we have seen, the successful transfer of values may also generate knowledge internalization characterized by hybridization. If observing only the elements of knowledge (such as policies) that the recipients have internalized, it may be concluded that knowledge transfer has failed entirely, even when it has been successful in transferring (or at least in instilling enthusiasm for) the values in question, however they may be understood in the local context. Conversely, it
may falsely be concluded that knowledge transfer is successful when looking at the adoption of knowledge without regard to hybridization that may have occurred with regard to underlying values. The four facets of hybridization also have analogous practical implications. Unless human resource departments make attempts to understand where hybridization takes place in the process, feedback to knowledge transfer process participants — trainers as well as knowledge recipients — may be quite ineffective.

When understanding knowledge transfer in terms of knowledge internalization and implementation, I also find that it may be fruitful to consider this an iterative rather than a linear process. For example, as subjects’ attempts to implement internalized knowledge and its underlying values fail, they may change their attitudes to the knowledge or values in question. This, in turn, may lead to modified implementation attempts to generate hybrid knowledge that increasingly deviates from or conforms to knowledge mandated by the headquarters. Consequently, when attempting to understand knowledge transfer outcomes, researchers must be sensitive to their emergent nature rather than just considering the knowledge transfer to involve sequential phases of teaching, implementation and outcome. In practice, this applies in equal measure to MNC’s control systems, which should be designed to capture the contextual nature of the knowledge transfer process. Otherwise, local employees may be alienated by seemingly impossible or contradictory demands and expectations.

I have specifically looked at knowledge hybridization premised on geopolitically determined hierarchies. Hybridization may, of course, also result from the organizational hierarchy that exists between headquarters and its branches, regardless whether these sites are located in different nations or region. In my study, I found an interesting example of how organizational and geopolitical hierarchies enforce each other; fears at the home country site that work would be outsourced led some employees to resort to stereotypical assessments of the host country site’s performance, assessments that echo the geopolitical hierarchy characterizing historical relationships between the countries. Interestingly, host country subsidiary subjects, to a large extent, parroted these views, and in their attempts to prevent having work taken from them, developed hybrid knowledge and practices. This, however, may only have enforced home country subjects’ assessments of the quality of the subsidiary’s output. The interrelatedness of the geopolitical and organizational-political processes would seem to offer fertile grounds for future research.

### 5.6.3.3 Pursuing Alternative Methods

As noted above, one observation emerges quite clearly in my work; although the nature of the work at both the Mumbai and Bangalore sites involves
newsgathering, their challenges in relation to knowledge implementation differ quite markedly. The institutional pressures they face are distinct on account of their coverage of different markets. Thus, looking at two units of the same multinational reveals how knowledge transfer implementation challenges might differ, despite being part of the same organization. When attempting to study aspects of knowledge transfer, most studies tend to cluster subsidiaries of MNCs, not only from different cities of the same country but also subsidiaries of different countries with considerable institutional differences. There is every reason to believe that this quantification of knowledge implementation often hides intra-subsidiary differences, such as those shown in my case study. Subsidiaries in different countries will clearly face different institutional challenges, and subsidiaries located in same country may be subjected to various institutional differences depending on the nature of their work. A quantitative study may struggle to uncover many of these facets and may therefore generate very peculiar conclusions regarding knowledge transfer success. I consequently suggest that future research on knowledge transfer should employ qualitative approaches that can help deepen our understanding of the role that subsidiary context plays. Such studies should go beyond simplistic discussions of absorptive capacity and investigate the role of geopolitical and organizational hierarchies in knowledge transfer processes and outcomes in detail.
PART III

KNOWLEDGE SPILLOVER
6  Knowledge Spillover through FDI: Literature Review and Postcolonial Critique

In this chapter, I focus on knowledge spillover that takes place as a result of FDI, and I attempt to depict how the spillover phenomenon is understood in what may be termed the “mainstream literature”, i.e., the spillover literature rooted in the economic development paradigm. Conceptualizations within postcolonial theory have not yet left any noticeable imprint on this literature, and I address this gap by critically examining it from a postcolonial perspective. In the first sections, I review the literature by looking at its theoretical foundations (6.1) and discuss its contradictory empirical findings (6.2). Subsequently, I critique conceptualizations of the spillover phenomenon through a postcolonial lens (6.3). I conclude the chapter by proposing an alternative conceptualization of knowledge spillover (6.4). My review and conceptualization do not represent attempts to refute all current spillover scholarship, however, nor are they an attempt to place postcolonial theory as a backdrop for all subsequent interpretations and investigations. Rather, I aim to show how discussions of spillover can be deepened by some of the ideas generated by postcolonial theorists.

6.1  Theoretical Foundations of the Spillover Phenomenon

Recent decades have witnessed a very favourable attitude towards foreign direct investments in most countries around the world. The popularity of FDI among governments is partly founded on the theoretically assumed positive externalities, or spillover, it generates in the host economy (Blomström, 1991). Spillover is generally understood as an informal means of technology and management diffusion occurring when MNCs are unable to tap all of the productivity or efficiency benefits that follow in the host country’s local firms as a result of the entry or presence of MNC affiliates (Caves, 1971). Such spillover takes the forms of technology diffusion and improvements in managerial and marketing practices in the host industry and local firms. Spillover thus supposedly raises the level of human capital in the host market, and spurs competition by making local firms more efficient and competent to compete with the foreign subsidiaries (Meyer, 2002; Markusen & Trofimenko, 2009; Markusen & Venables, 1999; Blomström et al., 1999; Fosfuri et al., 2001). Thus, it is theoretically deduced that in addition to their active and intended participation, MNCs will generate technological development in the less
developed regions of the world through spillover channels, offering new impetus for economic expansion. In this “endogenous growth model”, MNCs are often seen as principal agents of economic development (De Mello, 1997; Borensztein et al., 1998); in short, as firms from technologically more advanced regions enter less developed areas, the conditions of the latter are improved (Romer, 1986, 1990, 1994; Lucas, 1988; Grossman & Helpman 1991; Aghion & Howitt, 1992).

In anticipation of such spillover, recent decades have seen the deregulation of markets around the world, and many nations that were traditionally against the free market ideology now embrace the new endogenous growth model. There is, therefore, strong competition between governments to attract foreign investments, with many countries offering investment incentives, such as tax rebates, grants and preferential loans, monopoly rights, and market preferences, to attract MNC investments to their respective economies (Brewer & Young, 1997; UNCTAD, 2000).

6.1.1 Theoretical Assumptions

Systematic, theoretical speculation on possible spillover effects occurring through the medium of foreign firms began after Stephen Hymer’s (1960) seminal work, which placed MNC activities at the centre of FDI analyses (Dunning & Rugman, 1985). Hymer introduced the now-popular notion that FDI generates not only the transfer of capital but also the transfer of know-how and new technologies. He argued that the MNC has certain monopolistic advantages compared to the local firms, which it also desires to exploit in foreign markets. These intrinsic advantages possessed by MNCs mostly relate to technological superiority, often broadly interpreted to include innovative management and organizational processes, as well as new production or marketing methods and technologies (Lall & Streeten, 1977). Such firm-specific advantages provide MNCs with an edge over local firms, even if these local firms possess superior knowledge of local markets, consumer preferences and local laws. Hymer (1960) further theorized that although MNCs strive to protect their propriety knowledge from potential leakages, some forms of knowledge cannot be prevented from spilling over to the local economies that MNCs enter (Caves, 1974).

There are two central theoretical assumptions on which the spillover literature rests. First, it is assumed that MNCs possess firm-specific advantages in terms of superior technological, managerial or marketing assets. Second, the literature assumes that the advantages possessed by MNCs have public-good characteristics that can relatively easily be emulated by other firms, despite the fact that MNCs will take measures to safeguard against such leakages. Based on these two important assumptions, it is believed that MNCs can be an important
driver in the process of economic development; therefore, MNCs have come to be seen as a key tool in the “project” of economic development.

6.1.2 Types of Spillover

Spillover may take several different forms and occur at industry and firm levels, as well as the individual level. Here, I present the four most prominently discussed forms.

*Horizontal spillover:* At the industry level, productivity spillover happens by inducing competition in the local market with the coming of the MNC. It is, for example, argued that MNCs can break a monopoly in industries where entry barriers are high, thus giving rise to competition (Caves, 1971; Kokko, 1994, 1996). It is also speculated that MNCs can induce local firms to update or more efficiently use their existing technology to better compete with the MNC in the same market (Glass & Saggi, 1998; Spencer, 2008; Markusen, 1999).

*Vertical spillover:* It is suggested in the literature that with the coming of MNCs, local suppliers and customers will gain new impetus for growth through their interaction with MNCs (Harris & Robinson, 2004; Javorick, 2004; Kugler, 2006; Blalock & Gertler, 2008). These so-called vertical linkages between organizations are another important vehicle of the spillover of technical and managerial knowledge.

*Wage spillover:* Another important form of spillover frequently discussed in the literature relates to changes in living conditions with the coming of MNCs (Girma et al., 2001; Lipsey & Sjöholm, 2004a, 2004b; Fosfuri et al., 2001; Markusen & Trofimenko, 2009). It has been verified in spillover studies that MNCs offer a wage premium compared with domestic firms. This leads to an increase in the average wage level in the industry and often domestic firms follow suit to match the MNCs’ wage standards (Lipsey & Sjöholm, 2004a, 2004b). Thus, it is argued that MNCs can push the wages in the host industry.

*Human Capital spillover:* The fact that MNCs undertake substantial efforts to educate local workers has been documented in many instances (e.g., ILO, 1981; Lindsey, 1986), and empirical research seems to indicate that MNCs offer more training to technical workers and managers than do local firms (Gerschenberg, 1987; Chen, 1983). In their early stages, foreign subsidiaries also tend to rely to a greater extent on expatriates but subsequently replace them with (cheaper) local workers who have to be trained (UNLTC, 1993; Fosfuri et al., 2001). It is further theorized that through the mobility of this labour from MNC affiliates to local firms, spillover takes place. This means that the managerial and technical training that local employees receive while working at the MNC spills over as employees change places of employment. Furthermore, the trained
employee can set up his own firm. Training thus generates an entrepreneurial impetus in the local economy (Poole, 2007).

### 6.1.3 Channels of Spillover

There are three important spillover channels identified in the literature (Caves, 1974), namely, 1) the demonstration effect (also described as “learning by doing” or “learning by watching”) possibly taking the form of reverse engineering (e.g., copying technology by reading manuals), 2) labour mobility from the MNC subsidiary to local firms, and 3) ties between multinationals and local suppliers, customers and other stakeholders. The act of imitation by local employees is consequently an important tool for spillover, and all three channels involve locals’ study and assimilation of new forms of knowledge. A closer look at the spillover literature shows that spillover channels have not been subjected to significantly deeper theoretical inquiry. The concept of “the channel” is largely mentioned in passing, and it is often unclear which channels lead to which types of spillover. As one literature review (Smeet, 2008:116) states, “None of these studies hypothesizes or specifies how demonstration effects take place”.

### 6.1.4 The Process of Spillover

In early studies, spillover was understood as, more or less, an automatic and exogenous process in which neither the multinationals or local firms were given an active role. The most popularly cited model on technological diffusion (Findlay, 1978) is a case in point. Findlay’s model argued that the greater the technological gap between MNCs and local firms, the faster the rate of technological diffusion. In this model, the process of spillover required no decisive action by MNC subsidiaries or local firms. Findley (1978) does, however, argue that technology spreads most easily when there is contact between those who already use a particular technology and those who adopt it, perceiving this as analogous to the spread of a disease. This “contagion effect” implies that diffusion is faster the higher the MNCs’ share of the “backward” country’s capital stock.

Based on earlier models that saw spillover as exogenous, a new generation of studies deepen our understanding of the spillover phenomenon by adding the insights that spillover effects can represent a deliberate process in which both the MNC and the local firm are active participants and that the process of spillover takes place in successive rounds; only after the initial round are spillovers endogenously determined (Kokko, 1994, 1996; Kokko & Tansini, 1996; Blomström & Kokko, 1998). For instance, Das (1987) demonstrated that spillovers are often determined by MNCs’ decision to import technology, which in turn is a function of the level of technological advancement of local
Knowledge Spillover through FDI: Literature Review and Postcolonial Critique

firms. If the technological gap between local industry and MNCs is narrow, the foreign firm will import cutting-edge technology to stay abreast of competition. Wang and Blomström (1992) demonstrated that along with the MNCs, local firms are also cognizant of possible spillovers and based on the level of technical expertise, local firms make strategic decisions to benefit from these. The most important premise of this model is that, unlike Findlay’s (1978) understanding, spillover is not exogenously processed but endogenously determined. The extent of spillover is determined by the level of technology that the MNC subsidiary imports to the host market and the decision of local firms to invest in learning to take advantage of the coming of foreign MNCs. The more the MNC invests in new technology, the higher the spillover effect because it relates to the size of the technology gap; the more that local firms invest in learning, the more MNC technology they are able to absorb through spillover. In addition, there is a multiplicative second order effect as an improvement in local technology (e.g., as a result of spillover) will reduce the technology gap, cut into the MNC subsidiary’s quasi-rent and force it to import new technology (part of which may also spill over) to restore its profitability and market share (e.g., Kokko, 1996). Analogously, an increase in the technology gap may force local firms to spend more resources on learning (e.g., Blomström & Kokko, 1997). Thus, the new generation of spillover models differentiates between automatic spillover that happens by means of “demonstration-imitation-contagion” and spillover that take place after the “automatic” spillover through the competition induced by the MNC subsidiary in the local industry.

Once it was established that a certain type of readiness, awareness or capability is imperative within local firms to absorb spillovers, scholars placed their focus on the absorptive capacity of local firms in the process of spillovers. Thus, a new stream of scholarship emerged that demonstrated the importance of local firms being able to actually take advantage of spillovers. As opposed to earlier models, the absorptive capacity model demonstrated that the lower the technology gap between local firms and MNCs, the higher the rate of spillover (Girma, 2005). Various studies followed this lead. For example, Girma et al. (2008) found that a certain level of absorptive capacity is necessary for local exporting firms. Barrios and Strobl (2002) also found absorptive capacity important because, in their Spanish case, they found productivity spillover to domestic exporters but not to non-exporting domestic firms. Similarly, Kinoshita (2001) found productivity spillover to domestic firms that were R&D intensive and interpreted this as the presence of absorptive capacity.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is clear that a great deal of theorizing and empirical inquiry has been directed towards understanding the effects of spillover, its channels and, to some extent, the process. In Figure 6.1, I present
a somewhat simplified model that summarizes the key arguments in the conceptualization of knowledge spillover.

A somewhat simplified model that summarizes the key arguments in the conceptualization of knowledge spillover.

**Figure 6.1: Key elements in spillover conceptualization**

The assumption is that superior foreign (Western) knowledge enters the developing country with MNCs and has subsequent effects on local productivity through the various channels by which knowledge is disseminated in the local industry. When productivity gains fail to materialize, institutional differences and “backwardness” mean that local actors are unable to absorb the knowledge. This binary cause-effect model – which would seem to rob the local actor of any agency – has in empirical tests generated quite inconclusive results, however. In the next section, I discuss some contradictory empirical findings and key debates within the spillover field.

### 6.2 Contradictory Empirical Findings and Within-Field Debates

With the surge in FDI from the early 1990s onwards, sustained attention has been devoted to empirically verifying the projections of conceptual research on spillover effects. The majority of work in this area has attempted to substantiate that positive spillovers do occur with the coming of MNCs to local host markets. This has largely involved examining the causality between FDI and growth, determinants of FDI (Kholdy, 1995; De Mello, 1997; Blomström & Kokko, 1998) and the complementarity between FDI and the absorptive capacity of the economy (Borensztein et al., 1998). However, findings are decidedly mixed (Javorcik, 2004, 2008; Crespo & Fontoura, 2007; Smeets, 2008; Lipsey & Sjöholm, 2005). Whereas some studies demonstrate positive spillovers in the host country, others record ambiguous or even negative results (Görg & Greenaway, 2004; Aitken & Harrison, 1996, 1999; Haddad & Harrison, 1993;
Djankov & Hoekman, 1998). These mixed findings have posed a challenge to the conventional wisdom regarding the role of spillover as a driver of economic development. As Rodrik (1999:37) notes, “Today’s policy literature is filled with extravagant claims about positive spillovers from FDI [but] the evidence is sobering.”

Several potential causes are cited for the negative results. (a) Appropriability threat. It is argued that MNCs transfer lower-cost technology to host countries rather than cutting-edge technology out of fear of appropriation and even expropriation by the host country government (Saggi, 2002). Some authors have also argued that MNCs guard their firm-specific advantages to prevent leakages (e.g., Hymer, 1960). (b) Competition effects. It has also been proposed that MNCs could, in practice, suppress the productivity of local firms (Aitken & Harrison, 1999; Konings, 2001) as MNCs have lower marginal costs due to firm-specific advantages, forcing local firms to reduce production, thereby raising their average cost curve. Additionally, MNCs may crowd out the local firms (e.g., Kinoshita, 2001; Konings, 2001). (c) Lack of absorptive capacity. The most common reason cited refers to the lack of absorptive capacity in domestic firms (Kokko, 1994; Borensztein et al., 1998; Kinoshita, 2001); not all local firms may have the necessary capacity to absorb MNCs’ advantages into their operations. Other determinants of spillover include host country conditions (Javorcik, 2008), language, culture and geographic distances (Crespo & Fontoura, 2007).

Recently, efforts have been devoted to challenging some of the methodological assumptions and conceptual limitations on which spillover studies are based. Some scholars have questioned the very definition of spillover. For instance, in his literature review, Saggi (2002:8) argues in favour of distinguishing between pecuniary spillover that occurs as a result of the impact of FDI on local market structure and pure externalities that include the facilitation of technology adoption by local firms. Thus, to Saggi (2002), the changes in industrial structure do not qualify as spillover. In this vein, Smeets (2008) notes that spillover scholars often do not differentiate between knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover. He argues that transfer of knowledge as the purposeful or intended diffusion of knowledge from one firm to another creates no externalities and therefore does not represent any actual spillover.

Most spillover studies rely on econometric and quantitative methods and cross-sectional data. Görg and Greenaway (2004) argue that this approach is responsible for much of the ambiguity regarding the actual effects of spillover. They argue that panel data with the firm as the unit of analysis may be one way of overcoming this. However, Lipsey and Sjöholm (2005) found that results for different countries tend to diverge even when similar estimation techniques are used with similar data over similar time periods. According to them, heterogeneity in host countries is the most likely source of the inconclusiveness
of empirical research. Similarly, in her literature survey on spillover, Javorcik (2008) argues that instead of focusing on whether spillover takes place, the emphasis should be directed to the conditions under which spillover occurs. She focuses on absorptive capacity arguments; certain levels of technological and human capital capabilities are essential for spillover to be recognized, understood and absorbed. In her empirical work, she does indeed find that host country conditions have a profound influence on spillover and further contends that the methodologies employed in most econometric studies are unable to distinguish between the various spillover channels.

We may thus see a gap between the conceptual work and empirical studies on spillover. Smeets (2008:131) makes some observations in this vein, arguing that “Theory and empirics have developed more or less independently” in spillover research. For example, the lack of proper definition or understanding of demonstration effects has led to the multiplicity of definitions of demonstration effects, making empirical assessment difficult. “It is not clear ex ante through which mechanisms such demonstration effects should take place”, he argues (Smeets, 2008:117). The definition and dynamics of demonstration effects, the spatial dimension of knowledge spillovers from FDI in interaction with different spillover channels, and the relationship between various motives for FDI and knowledge spillover are just a few of the areas in which theory to guide future empirical work has been lacking, Smeets (2008) contends. He (2008:132) concludes his review by stating that,

“Sacrificing some generalizability in order to obtain more detailed and conclusive results is preferable, however, to losing sight of important nuances in order to obtain more general results—an approach that has not, to date, yielded consistent results”.

Thus, from this brief survey, it is evident that there are plentiful suggestions for future research, and many scholars argue that a more profound understanding of the phenomenon is needed, i.e., that the “spillover black box” must be opened up (Javorcik, 2008; Smeets, 2008). Opening the black box means focusing on spillover processes rather than just looking at outcomes, the emphasis of virtually all extant research. Studies also need to distinguish between types of spillover. Most research focuses on technological spillover with little attention devoted to, for example, management and marketing knowledge or organizing principles. These may involve different patterns of spillover, and the outcomes may be different. Although spillovers are largely the study of economic development at work in developing countries, very little effort has been devoted to understanding the historical, institutional, cultural, and geographical idiosyncrasies that come into play in the process of spillover, and country differences are often labelled under the all-encompassing category of “lack of absorptive capacity”. Very little effort has also been devoted to studying how, in what way and what types of country differences impede or promote spillovers. Although it is well beyond the scope of my research to
address all of these issues, I argue that the application of a postcolonial lens to the spillover phenomenon may be one way of opening the black box.

Below, I discuss the spillover literature in light of postcolonial theory. By highlighting some of the complexities in the spillover phenomenon that have so far been neglected in mainstream studies, this discussion will help me develop an agenda for my empirical work.

6.3 Postcolonial Critique of the Knowledge Spillover Literature

The phenomenon of knowledge spillover has largely been explored within the theoretical confines set by neo-classical economics. Thus, the assumptions that guide the field are rooted within the meta-economic premise of economic rationality along with a belief in the universality of the modernity project. As a result, the subject matter of spillover is distinctly understood to be a purely economic phenomenon that is neatly separated from cultural and social aspects. Thus, the issue of context, history and identities are starkly absent from our understanding of the spillover phenomenon (Kaul, 2003; Zein-Elabdin 2009).

The empirical and conceptual studies on spillover are positivist in nature and draw on econometric modelling of human behaviour as an aggregate phenomenon. The trust in the usefulness of quantification is singularly related to a desire for objective, general, and “pure” universal knowledge in abstract model-like forms, which can then be stretched to any context. This attention to quantification as the core of spillover studies leaves unchallenged the underlying issues of rationality, universalism and the modernist framework that form the operational basis of its methodology (Kanth, 1997; Menon, 2002).

Despite the current impasse in the theorization of the phenomenon with spillover scholars urging the opening of the black box, there has been little interest in the field in engaging with more hermeneutically inspired perspectives and interpretation, such as feminism and postcolonial theory. In particular, by uncovering the limits of the modernist agenda and complicating the spillover phenomenon with issues of identity, postcolonial theory can offer a useful lens to critique the ways in which the modernist spillover framework is imposed on third-world subjects (cf., Charusheela & Zein-Elabdin, 2003; Zein-Elabdin, & Charusheela, 2004).
6.3.1 Challenging the Orientalist Assumptions of Spillover Studies

Spillover studies provide an obvious indication of the continuities between colonial cultural frameworks and the new framework of development economics. For example neo-colonial tendencies within the spillover literature can be understood by looking at the much cited concept of “catching up”. In 1952, Gerschenkron argued that the cost of industrialization could be lower and the speed faster in “under-developed” countries compared with the industrialization process of “developed” nations because the former could take advantage of the technological advances of the latter. Spillover was seen as a process that could bring the “lagging societies” to the forefront of what had already been achieved by those in the technological lead. Many economic models (e.g., Findlay, 1978), suggestions for “capacity building” and “leapfrogging”, and subsequent recommendations to host governments (Kokko & Blomström, 1993) have been put forward in the last five decades to enable speedier spillover for the less technologically developed regions. Clearly, this discourse assumes that the “developing world’s” conditions should converge with those of the developed world through the process of “catching-up”, regardless of whether their pasts followed radically different trajectories. This drive towards imitating “industrial societies” and their conditions and institutions comes from the universalistic assumptions that all regions should follow a common path towards development. As Nandy (1988:13) succinctly puts it in his critique of development,

“It follows from these ideologies that development is the fate of all societies. [...] The best that an under-developed society can do is to prepare itself to pay the cost of development in as short a time as possible”.

Such tendencies are based on a binary mode of understanding differences between societies, and the spillover literature is rife with binarizing terminology such as “developed-developing/under-developed”, “First World-Third World”, “leaders-laggards” (etc.) and understands differences between societies from anything but a pluralistic perspective. The literature also assumes that there is nothing beyond developed or between developed and under-developed (except development); i.e., it employs a dualistic framework that erases pluralistic distinctions, creating a dichotomous world with upper and lower categories; either one is developed or not. In the discourse, regions with highly diverse characteristics within Latin America, Africa and Asia are homogenized and represented through this hierarchal ordering, losing their own distinctiveness.
6.3.2 Applying Bhabha’s Framework to Knowledge Spillover

6.3.2.1 The Silent Imitator?

The primary mechanism by which knowledge spillover takes place is arguably local workers. If one considers spillover terminology such as “imitation”, “learning by watching” and “labour mobility”, it is fairly obvious that the local worker is a crucial carrier of spillover. Regardless of the context and site of spillover studies, the individuals involved in the process remain rather abstract and neutral in essence, though. The individual is, in principle, a “universal” figure, unembodied and unembedded in any specific context, someone whose identity is not a function of their situatedness. This is represented by the “(i)”, denoting the generic individual within the econometric equations in most spillover studies (Kaul, 2004, 2007). Spillover research thus offers little recognition of the complexities of the human aspect. In fact, I have not unearthed a single study on spillover that engages with the human side of spillover mechanisms, let alone complicating spillover with issues of history and identities.

6.3.2.2 Imitation or Mimicry?

The word imitation is used extensively throughout the spillover discourse to show how productivity gains accrue via the mechanisms of copying practices from MNCs. However, what imitation involves, at what level it occurs and to what extent it takes place has not yet been theorized. Thus, although the spillover literature emphasizes the importance of local actors imitating MNC subsidiaries’ technological, management, marketing and organizational strategies and practices, the literature is silent on the nature and process of imitation. Bhabha’s (1994) concept of mimicry, translation and hybridity can potentially offer useful lenses for understanding how the mechanism of “imitation” operates (and how it does not).

6.3.2.3 Translation/Local Interpretation

In the spillover literature, the dispersion of knowledge is largely presented as a process whereby a giver or sender conveys knowledge to a recipient (or imitator). The latter’s process of assimilation or absorption of knowledge is given a very minor role, and the recipient’s agency is largely ignored. The entire mechanism of spillover is also treated as a very linear process, with little space for interpretation – not to mention feedback – to the sender.

Similarly, the notion of hybridization is completely neglected, despite existing studies that have explored the influence of US management knowledge and its transfer to other countries (Üsdiken, 1997; Kipping & Bjarnar, 1998; Srinivas, 2008). These studies reveal that transmission of US management knowledge is
not a *passive one-way process*; instead, what takes place is selective assimilation of imported knowledge. As a result, hybridization occurs when new management ideas and theories interact with prevailing institutions. In other words, this research suggests the interplay between existing social institutions and the knowledge transfer processes as a way of overcoming institutional distances (Kippling et al., 2004; Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006). Interestingly, such insights appear to be largely ignored in spillover scholarship, which assumes that either are knowledge and practices from developed countries accepted without local adaptations in “developing” nations, or spillover is defined as unsuccessful. As discussed earlier, the explanation offered for failure typically relates to low absorptive capacity of locals, which in turn is explained by the large institutional distance between the practices of the MNC and those of the local market. This lack of understanding of knowledge interpretation and adaptation process in “developing” countries not only leads to suppression of local interpretations specifically and local agency generally but also ignores how local institutions adjust to the spillover process.

Any institutionalized practice (and associated knowledge) followed by a firm or industry more or less by definition develops over a period of time and is grounded in the history and economic and socio-political establishment of that firm/industry. In other words, existing knowledge and practices have historical, economic, political and social logics that have contributed to their development. Spillover implies replacement of such knowledge and practices with those originating in another institutional set-up. The literature presents this as a more or less spontaneous process without much resistance on the part of local actors. That is, such a process relies on people recognizing the superiority of the new knowledge and practices and that they will readily adopt these, giving up their old practices and knowledge regardless of their institutional situatedness.

Although the spillover literature does not explicitly engage with the concept of institutional duality, the closely related notion of institutional distance underlies its conceptual models and empirical studies. There appears to be a broad consensus among the scholarly community that institutional distance between MNC and the host region can impede spillover; the greater the distance, the lower the capacity of the host region to internalize and implement (i.e., absorb) the new knowledge. However, in spillover research, little attention has been paid to the types of institutional tensions that arise in the spillover process, and the complementarity of existing and new knowledge is not really addressed. Institutional duality or differences may in fact represent even more of an impediment to knowledge spillover compared with knowledge transfer because spillover, unlike transfer which is intended and monitored, works outside such an organizational framework.
6.4 Conclusion and Alternative Conceptualization

By looking at spillover from a postcolonial perspective, we can see that linguistically and conceptually, current conceptualizations of spillover mechanisms are largely based on modernist assumptions rooted within the metanarratives of civilizing objectives of the colonial discourse. There are several problems that arise from this, problems that I wish to address in my research.

Extant research silences the knowledge recipient. I wish to address this by privileging the experience, perspectives and viewpoints of local actors who are the main mechanisms of knowledge spillover through a focus on their identity. In doing so, I seek to foreground spillover within its contextual complexities and historical particularities. I specifically seek to explore the influence of “postcolonial ambivalence” on the nature and contour of spillover phenomena. Thus, the aim of my empirical work on spillover is not to study success or failure; my aim is to highlight some of the significant facets of knowledge spillover that are absent from spillover conceptualizations due to their methodological and theoretical proclivities. I also hope to unearth the hybrid nature of spillover as local actors struggle within a framework of multiple institutions, and thereby lend support to my argument that knowledge diffusion cannot just be understood in terms of full or no adoption. I will also adopt an interpretative approach focusing on the experiences of the intended knowledge recipient. Such an approach can be an important means for the much-needed “opening up of the spillover black box” and for revealing concealed and taken-for-granted assumptions regarding human agency in econometric models and quantifications. Perhaps this approach can give texture and diversity to a phenomenon that is rendered flat and undifferentiated by decision-making models that focus on ends and outcomes (as consequences of dual institutions) rather than means and processes (by which dual institutions are navigated). I will specifically try to understand how the institutional complementarity of new knowledge influences the daily reality of local actors. In my case, this means focusing on a particular industry and the institutions within which that industry is embedded rather than clumping together diverse sectors. It also involves an attempt to understand the process whereby local knowledge recipients imitate, resist, internalize and implement new knowledge and practices, issues that perhaps cannot be well addressed by the positivist and ahistorical traditions of dominant spillover research streams.

I thus argue that theories of spillover need to be written in a non-universal, contextualized way that does not silence the Third World subjects’ situatedness, history and idiosyncrasies. As Kaul (2003) states, theories within the economic
domain need to be written “an Other way”. A framework drawing on postcolonial theory enables me to offer new, empirically-derived explanations as an alternative to simplistic assumptions in the spillover literature and provide a counterpoint to its tendency to reduce social inequities to technological backwardness and lack of absorptive capacity.

To this end, and to fulfill my research agenda presented above, I offer an alternative conceptualization of the spillover phenomenon. Before I present this model (and I hesitate to use such a positivist term), I wish to clarify that my research does not represent a study of knowledge spillover in the vein of traditional, economics-based conceptualizations. In particular, I do not seek to establish the extent to which foreign knowledge coming with MNCs influences performance of local industries. Rather, my conceptualization represents an attempt to incorporate the condition of postcolonial ambivalence into the spillover phenomenon. In many ways, I thus propose an alternative unit of analysis for understanding knowledge spillover. Whereas the mainstream literature understands spillover as an economic function and, in principle, views it as a macro-economic phenomenon, I wish to bring to the forefront the micro-dynamics of spillover processes by focusing on the humans involved.

Considering postcolonial ambivalence in the context of knowledge spillover has three main consequences. First, hybridity may arise as a result of postcolonial ambivalence. By emphasizing hybridity as a spillover outcome (and therefore hybridization as a central feature of the spillover process), I move past the dichotomous framework, which understands spillover only as success or failure and which has so far guided and determined the conceptual landscape of the knowledge spillover phenomenon and its research endeavors. In particular, postcolonial theory helps me place the hybrid nature of spillover processes in the foreground by arguing that the local actors involved in such processes inhabit a third space that eludes any neat categorization. It also supports my argument that availability of new knowledge is no guarantee that it will be replicated; rather, new knowledge is continuously negotiated in various forms within the new context, resulting in hybridity that has traces of both existing local knowledge and new knowledge.

Second, I propose that any genuine attempt to understand the spillover phenomenon must take into consideration the process whereby it is enacted, i.e., open the spillover “black box”. This means considering how foreign knowledge (and associated values) enters a space where there may already be institutionally embedded knowledge, practices and values; it is within this space and in this meeting that human agency is exercised and where hybrid knowledge emerges. I suggest that this may be studied by pursuing the performative nature of identity whereby self-conceptualizations are enacted in a process in which individuals draw on the orientalist discourse to understand
their own practices in relation to knowledge coming from the West while simultaneously drawing on both knowledge systems to create new hybrid practices. In other words, postcolonial ambivalence plays a central role in the process of spillover, and postcolonial theory offers the tools necessary to understand this process. A study in this vein thus helps me fundamentally question both the “empty vessel” and “sponge” theories that guide spillover research and allows me to critique them as Western constructions that pay little attention to how knowledge is interpreted and enacted.

Third, I propose that foreign knowledge entering developing postcolonial nations does not enter a politically neutral space; rather, it meets a context where the very desirability of FDI and MNCs is often contested in a manner that expresses postcolonial ambivalence. Such debates may, of course, take different forms in different industries and national contexts. Nonetheless, I argue that debates regarding FDI and MNCs impact the supposed knowledge recipients’ attitudes towards foreign knowledge, not necessarily to make them more or less positive, but by contributing to an ambivalent state. Mainstream conceptualizations of spillover, however, pay little attention to the spillover context beyond superficial discussions of technological development (or relative “backwardness”).

I summarize these notions in Figure 6.2, which contrasts to mainstream conceptualizations of the spillover phenomenon in obvious ways (see Figure 6.1).

![Figure 6.2: Alternative conceptualization of knowledge spillover](image)

In the following chapter, I present an empirical study that seeks to instantiate this conceptualization and show its usefulness for opening the spillover black box.
7 Knowledge Spillover: Empirical Study

Drawing on my alternative conceptualization of the spillover phenomenon (see 6.4), in this chapter I present an empirical study of knowledge spillover. First, I argue and illustrate empirically that the context into which foreign knowledge arrives is reflected in the debate on FDI (7.1). Subsequently, I argue and illustrate how foreign knowledge enters a space where institutionally embedded knowledge, practices and values already exist (7.2). I then argue that this may result in hybrid forms of knowledge, and I provide some illustrations (7.3). Finally, I discuss my findings and how they may relate to other contexts of study (7.4).

7.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, studies on knowledge spillover are almost exclusively rooted within positivist methodology that employs predictions and mathematical calculations of spillover outcomes. Such conceptualizations encourage simplistic and often negative stereotypes of host country characteristics, their institutions and culture, and many bear an uncanny resemblance to colonial stereotypes. Based on the implicit understanding of local knowledge recipients as lacking in relevant knowledge and waiting with rapt attention to absorb knowledge from the West, the mainstream literature commonly argues that when knowledge from MNCs fails to spill over and influence locals’ behaviours, this can be attributed to the latter’s low absorptive capacity. Such discussions recall the colonial discourse on natives’ inability to develop on their own and often stop short at this juncture. The agency of local actors therefore remains under-theorized despite the fact that they are usually held as the most important factor in knowledge spillover, both as carriers of knowledge from MNCs to local firms and as imitators of MNC practices. Current theorization of knowledge spillover thus leaves much to be desired. The central question, “How do local actors perceive new knowledge and its applicability to their context?” remains largely unanswered with little understanding of knowledge “internalization” and “implementation” processes, to borrow concepts from the theoretically better developed international knowledge transfer field (cf., Kostova, 1999).

By making a case for postcolonial ambivalence as a valid qualifier when attempting to understand economic phenomena related to globalization in a postcolonial nation space such as India, my work breaks cleanly with the
mainstream understanding of knowledge spillover and seeks to contribute to a
growing body of critical (economics) literature that argues that we need to
accommodate issues of culture, identity, agency and contextual embeddedness
of economic phenomena and challenges neo-classical assumptions of rationality
and universalism inherent in the modernity project (Menon, 2002; Kaul, 2003;
Zein-Elabdin & Charusheela, 2004; Zein-Elabdin, 2009). Responding to such
insights, in this chapter, I more specifically engage with issues surrounding the
spillover of journalism practices.

In the rest of this chapter, I elaborate on my proposed conceptualization of
knowledge spillover (see Figure 6.2) and illustrate what it may entail in the
context of Indian news media. By means of interviews conducted with local
reporters (working for local organizations or acting as freelance reporters, all
with experience from international media firms; see Chapter 3), I explore their
self-conception as (Indian) journalists within the globalizing media space they
inhabit and with which they continuously juggle. Questions of identity – who
they think they are as journalists, their views on journalism ethics and its role in
Indian polity, and the type of journalism they seek to practice – are central to
these journalists’ lives and appear significantly in my interviews. In section 7.2, I
explore the discursive tussle over the desirability of FDI in the Indian news
media. I argue that this discursive struggle, which had a prominent place in the
columns of Indian newspapers for eight years (also the controversy that
sparked my project; see Chapter 1) and resulted in policy posturing of allowing
only 26 percent of FDI in the news segment, effectively captures the
ambivalence characteristic of the postcolonial nationalist identity. This debate
touches on the very idea of what Indian media is and should be; which values
and practices that (should) give it its uniquely Indian character; what changes
(good or bad) foreign participation may bring; and how these may pose a threat
to Indian media values. In section 7.3, I navigate through narratives regarding
reporters’ self-conceptions as journalists, as Indians and as Indian journalists.
By focusing on the identity of local recipients – theorized as a key channel for
spillover – I delve into their perceptions of Indian media practices of
newsgathering, their underlying values relating to sourcing and accuracy, and
perceptions of the limitations of local practices. Engaging with narratives on
the state of the Indian media helps me probe into aspects of existing local
practices and knowledge, which I argue is crucial to any understanding of
spillover as this is what new knowledge (coming with MNCs) faces. In section
7.4, I delve into instances of hybridization and discuss what I term “selective
spillover”, hybrid knowledge that takes shape through local actors’ agency as
they face, make sense of and attempt to adopt new knowledge. In this section, I
thus instantiate the idea of third space and its resultant hybridity.
7.2 FDI in News Media

7.2.1 The FDI Debate: Discursive Struggles and Postcolonial Ambivalence

Debates about FDI are invariably contentious, especially so in postcolonial societies such as India (Wallerstein, 2004; Hardt & Negri, 2000), where the fear that MNCs, with their financial clout, will crowd out local firms is a commonly cited reason for resistance to multinationals, along with the fears of a surreptitious return to colonialism. Conversely, the desirability of FDI in these societies is also often vociferously expressed and centres on the influx of capital, better technology and the supposedly superior management practices needed for economic development (Friedman, 1999; Bhagwati, 2005). Thus, the coming of MNCs is, on the one hand, seen as a threat to local values and practices, whereas on the other hand, it is perceived as an opportunity for economic, social and political development (Jameson, 1998; Kellner, 2002). In the context of Indian media, this polarity in the FDI debate ran high for eight long years within the columns of Indian newspapers before the government of India decided to partially open the door (to 26 percent of ownership) of Indian print media to foreign investment. Along with insights into the “discursive dimensions” of globalization and meaning-making (Fairclough, 2006; Kumar, 2014), I argue that the tussle over FDI also tapped into the postcolonial ambivalence wherein the dialectic of resisting and embracing the global forces of capitalism can be discerned. Thus, the debate over FDI and the general disposition of the industry (especially editors and reporters) over the issue provides useful grounds to explore the context and backdrop into which knowledge spillover is expected to take place. Below, I discuss the two sides of the FDI debate that took place within newspaper columns mostly before the FDI legislation was passed.

When India gained freedom from British rule in 1947, a key question confronting the government was whether foreign ownership of the press was desirable for the nascent democracy. In 1952, the First Press Commission advocated national ownership of the press, which was deemed imperative to national interests (Ram, 1994). Therefore, in 1955, the Nehru government prohibited foreign ownership of newspapers and periodicals. This protectionist stance was in line with the government’s overall socialist-inspired economic policies. However, in response to an economic crisis and pressure from foreign institutional lenders, in the early 1990s, the then-Congress government initiated a major reform program by ending public sector monopolies and liberalizing economic regulations (McDowell, 1997). The liberalization process caught the attention of foreign media firms, who petitioned the Foreign Investment Promotion Board for permission to operate in India (Sonwalkar, 2001). The
ruling government, in line with its newly adopted market-oriented approach that extended to most sectors of consumer goods and services, seemed inclined to side with the foreign companies. The lobbying efforts by leading print players against foreign ownership of the press, however, compelled the government to defer its decision.

Some of the most prominent opponents to FDI were leading newspaper organizations, such as The Times of India, The Hindu, Malayalam Manorama, and The Hindustan Times. Others, such as Indian Express, Pioneer, India Today, Bombay Samachar, Business Standard, and Anand Bazaar, took the other side of the debate and argued in favour of foreign investment (Sonwalkar, 2001; Kumar, 2014). The opponents alleged that foreign ownership of the press would have serious implications for national security and sovereignty. “With the injection of foreign capital, various influences which will be inimical to India’s sovereignty and democratic system can be apprehended”, noted one critic (www.peoplesdemocracy.in). The managing editor of the newspaper Hindu wrote, “Those who argue ‘yes’ either do not know, or do not care for, our history, our politics and our constitutional-legal situation”, arguing against FDI (Ram, 1994).

Those in favour of FDI in the print media argued that FDI would level the playing field for small and medium newspaper firms that were withering away due to the aggressive marketing strategies of larger newspaper organizations. Emphasizing the point, Chief Editor of Pioneer Chandan Mitra, in a panel discussion organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry titled “Living with FDI in Print Media”, said, “The FDI in print media would avoid monopolistic situations and smaller newspapers would be able to survive. This, in turn, would ensure transparency and freedom of press with greater financial comforts” (www.Indiantelevision.com). Another prominent speaker at the seminar, T. N. Ninan, editor of Business Standard, said that FDI “would also increase the professionalism in journalists and initiate a healthy competition in the profession”, emphasizing the benefits of foreign investments in print (www.Indiantelevision.com).

In the face of stiff opposition from important sections of the media and polity, however, the government kept the ban in place and appointed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology to look into the issue. The committee submitted a report in March 2002 that opposed the entry of FDI in print media, rejecting the proposal by a 16-10 vote (www.thehindu.com).

However, the issue resurfaced when Narendra Mohan, the owner of the largest selling Hindi daily, Dainik Jagran, renewed the case for foreign capital. It was Mohan’s own failed attempt to raise capital for his newspaper operations through the Unit Trust of India bank that led him to join the battle for foreign capital (www.rediff.com). He “proved to be an indomitable foe in the battle for FDI in
print. At one level, he has close links with all the top politicians of the Hindi belt and held endless confabulations with top leaders from all parties”.

The ruling government subsequently disregarded the views of the Standing Committee and announced that it would allow 26 percent FDI in the news and current affair sections of the press. To reassure the opposition, the new regime implemented two safeguards. First, the Indian shareholding could not be dispersed, and the single largest Indian shareholder must hold at least 26 percent. Second, to ensure that editorial control remains in Indian hands, the guidelines stipulate that at least three-quarters of the board of directors must be resident Indians.

The tussle over FDI in print media brings to the forefront several interesting points. First, the underlying motivation for both the sides of the divide was pecuniary; the leading newspapers opposed FDI as it posed threat to their market position. As Sonwalkar (2001:758) remarks in his analysis, “Their agenda could hardly be missed: to perpetuate the existing market domination”. The medium and smaller newspapers supported FDI in the hope of new channels of capital. Second, the government’s decision in relation to FDI and the reluctance on the part of previous governments to come to a concrete decision bears witness to the influence of lobbying by special interest groups and their ability to impact major policy decision making in India (Kumar, 2014). Third, it offers insight into the discursive aspect of globalization and the power modalities within it. Equally importantly, though, these debates reflect the anxiety that comes with past subordination under colonial rule (cf., Nandy, 1989) and the way media elites made use of that very historical residue to promote their own interests. For instance, both sides made elaborate use of the existing “emotive potency” of the national interest in promoting their respective positions, although using national interest in a completely different way (Kumar, 2014). The newspapers opposing FDI projected themselves as guardians of the Indian “Fourth Estate” and Indian sovereignty, which needed to be protected from the vile influence of the West. Similarly, the side favouring FDI latched onto the argument of the benefits of integrating with the global economy and for Indian media to have the opportunity to exploit its potential on the global front.

The tug of war within the discursive realm dictated material reality by determining the government’s posturing on FDI. Its stance to allow only partial FDI, while exposing the lobbying aspect of Indian polity, also hints at latent postcolonial ambivalence, where resisting and embracing the West operate simultaneously. The move of the government to allow only partial participation, I argue, is also due to the simultaneously impulse where they hope to make use of all the benefits of modernization but keep a check on them by permitting only joint ventures.
These entangled peculiarities hint that spillover processes unfolding through channels of FDI do not take place under neutral conditions but rather in a context where knowledge flows may be influenced by the contours of contentious FDI debates. In this section, my focus was on exploring postcolonial ambivalence at a more collective/industrial level. In the subsequent section, I move on to explore this ambivalence among the subjects of my study – the journalists who are affected by changes in FDI policy.

### 7.2.2 Post-FDI Narratives

After more than a decade of FDI in the news segment of Indian media, the interest from foreign investors has not been overwhelming. The reason is simple; the limit equity granted is no incentive for foreign investors (Kohli-Khandekar, 2010). Many potential foreign investors are therefore lobbying to raise the FDI cap or instead invest in other media sectors such as entertainment and other non-news publications. Ironically, the few and far-between instances of FDI in the news media have involved the leading newspapers that opposed FDI in the first place. The two most contradictory examples are the Times of India and Hindustan Times. Both firms vehemently opposed FDI but were among the first to strike deals with foreign investors. From the perspective of the MNC, the reasons are obvious: initiating ventures with established organizations involves less risk and allows them to gain a foothold in the Indian market. As IJ10, a media analyst, remarks:

> “Big, profitable newspaper firms are more attractive to foreign investors as they have the resources to market themselves well internationally. They have the money to get valuation of their turnover, property, brand value. Also, they have the credentials to get themselves listed on Indian and international stock exchange. Newspaper companies operating on marginal profits or struggling to survive will not appeal to the foreign investors”.

The negative sentiments towards FDI in the media sector underlying the decision to restrict foreign ownership can be traced in many of my interviews. In light of the emphasis of foreign investment in large newspapers, some of my interviewees argue that FDI will be particularly harmful to small and medium-sized newspapers. In the words of IJ05, an editor at a Gujarati language daily newspaper:

> “You see, when the two bulls fight, the tree in between is crushed. […] So when the two big newspapers, the foreign and the Indian, they fight, where do we go? They will

11 In 2006, the Times of India launched a news channel, Times, in collaboration with Reuters. However, the partnership was dissolved in 2009. The Hindustan Times has foreign investment from Henderson Pacific and also runs a financial daily called Mint and an online edition, Live Mint, in partnership with the Wall Street Journal.
compete and they will further reduce the advertisement rate, and they will give more discounts. And so the small and medium papers will suffer most. How are we going to benefit? That is the issue”.

IJ09, a former BBC employee in the Hindi language service, further explains,

“My fear is more that FDI will aggravate the problems which Indian media is already in grip of - rising monopolies, commercialization of news, more consumer rather than citizenry focus, and other such malpractices. […] Foreign media is coming here to make profits and the logic of profit-maximization is not going to be any different than the ones followed by big national media businesses”.

Other interviewees share negative sentiments to FDI based on the belief that foreign investments offer few benefits to Indian newspapers. In the words of award-winning journalist and editor IJ23,

“[J]ournalism in India deserves all the criticism it gets and more, probably. But is the answer really to take in international news firms and let them dictate our terms? […] We have a long tradition in the past, and we need to get straight back on track with better education, editorial policies, hiring policies. […] the media sector has expanded violently and the fast growth is also responsible [for low standards]. But it won’t expand forever; in fact, it is not. And then we can start thinking about quality, but not from Western or international firms.”

This sentiment is echoed by IJ02 who argues that it is,

“[…] just too simple to think that firms come from abroad to India with money and then they can then tell us what’s wrong with how we do things and teach us the right way, as a country. Because we already know what’s wrong […], everyone in print and all other media [knows] that we produce lots of garbage news. But we also know what to do about it, how to raise the level. But we don’t do it [i.e., raise the level] because where’s the incentive? So it’s not knowledge and foreign capital that we need”.

In the same vein, IJ03 argues,

“Foreign firms can invest here and bring all their money and technology, and you can have all sorts of opinions about that, but even with all the money and technology [that MNCs bring], it does not mean that Indian journalists become like Americans and Europeans. Then you haven’t understood how it works here. You can’t just change the setup like that.”

Similarly, when asked about his view on FDI and the potential benefits of foreign ownership on newsgathering practices, IJ16 comments “[h]ave we seen any changes in Indian journalism with foreign ownership? Well, at least I haven’t - if anything, it’s gone from bad to worse!”
Whereas many of my interviewees were critical towards FDI, others held more positive views and shared with me how foreign investments could benefit the Indian media. For instance IJ07, an editor at a language newspaper, explains her stance: “I believe investigation practices are superior in Western countries and more developed than in India. Also they have got better resources in terms of technology, so it [FDI] can bring about good change”, she argues. IJ15, a freelance reporter with extensive experience working with leading news media organizations, argues,

“Theoretically speaking, [if] Reuters decides to invest a certain amount of money in Hindustan Times, automatically, all these practices might be transferred to the Hindustan Times, isn’t it? You might have [...] clear guidance on ethics, clear appraisal rules and, you know, things like that. So that can only benefit you. Right now, it is all ad hoc in here”.

IJ22, who received training from Reuters when a partnership existed between the Times of India Group and Reuters in 2006, states,

“They invest more in their newsgathering staff, training them; they have much more resources at hand to do background research on stories, better pay package. We don’t have those facilities in India yet - I mean not to that level”.

Several other pro-FDI reporters also argued that foreign investments may bring so-called best practices to India, both related to newsgathering and other stages in the news-production process. IJ14 summarizes his view “[...] the edge is technology”.

Freelance journalist IJ04, who has worked with the New York Times for six years and was educated at the Colombia School of Journalism, explains to me that the FDI in the news media may also benefit the political system of India.

“I think, in fact, if anything, we need media outlets that are not so friendly with the establishment, that is not so friendly with the political class and are able to kind of write things that are not so popular with the government”, IJ04 argues, continuing “The Indian Express is the only anti-establishment paper, antigovernment paper, you know, and every single other one is very friendly paper to government, so maybe having foreign ownership would help kind of reduce that a little bit”.

Other interviewees are less fearful that FDI will crowd out smaller newspapers. “It [FDI] can benefit the whole market. [...] When the big papers become too commercial, there can be room for new, more quality publications. The audience will be more demanding”, argues IJ25. Another senior reporter, IJ13, speaks positively of FDI: “It’s only good to have more capital, better technology and establish new processes, which organizations in India so much lack”. Similarly, IJ17, who previously worked for BBC India, stated that,
“Journalism in India was never a profession like you see in countries like America; people did journalism work out of passion. ‘Things have changed now dude, wake up’. If we need to be like them, we also need to learn things from them.”

Many of my study participants thus shared opinions on the FDI issues that largely echo the two main sides of the FDI debate. Others, however, offered more ambivalent or nuanced responses. For example, long-time reporter IJ27 states,

“Yes, there is an issue of control, but then, that’s why we have it limited to 26 percent, right? They operate here more in partnership so that Indians are always in control. We defo [definitely] need their capital and technology, I am not arguing that, but not how we perform business.”

IJ25 reiterates similar views:

“It’s probably good with FDI, to raise the level, get capital and learn processes, we can learn their things faster, and then we can compete with them because this is our home market and we know it better. […] So, what’s the point keeping them away?”

The subjects of my study were thus divided in their views on FDI; some were more hesitant but most were clearly in favour. This ambivalence can be seen as a symptom of postcolonial identity, expressed as a dialectic of simultaneously looking inwards and outwards. In these narratives, one can trace a need to be like the West but at the same time a desire to retain the distinctly Indian space. For instance, in our conversations – echoing the broader FDI-in-media debate – many journalists emphasize access to capital and technology as key motivations for FDI. In the case of journalism practices, however, they have more ambivalent and often negative opinions regarding the impact and potential benefits of FDI. For example, IJ01, with 30 years of experience, argues,

“No, I don’t fear them. Just think about it: any foreign company coming here, they will depend on us to understand this country and how it works in this industry; they will never have the upper hand on us. So they are quite welcome.”

Another reporter, IJ14, who has ventured into online newspapers, explains that FDI may not have significantly negative consequences:

“Our journalism is so unique […] it will take years for an outsider to understand that, but what we need from FDI is investment so we can improve our processes, technology.”

Narratives thus indicate that the desire for FDI may relate primarily to capital and technology rather than any actual practices brought by MNCs. It is hardly surprising that with advancements in, for example, digital technology comes a
desire to partake in these advancements. Such developments may, in turn, require capital. Such attitudes may conceivably be traced among journalists in most countries. What may be different in a postcolonial nation such as India, however, is the concomitant fear of foreign control and neo-colonialism, which acts as a constant reminder of India’s past in any discussion of foreign participation in the Indian economy. We need not look any further than to the constant comparison with the West that accompanies FDI narratives. Although India is considered to have one of the most developed media systems in the world (Jeffery, 2002), what is peculiar in these narratives is the tendency among the journalists to position themselves and Indian journalism in relation to what they perceive to be Western standards. Whereas such comparisons often portray a negative image of Indian journalism (as in some of the above quotes), others present a more positive image of the future. As IJ13 argues, “We are not there, but with more capital, you see we can be better than them, I have no doubts”. Similarly, IJ24 argues, “The time will come when people will look at our media system as a model, like the IT sector, you know; we just need a chance and that comes with more funds”.

In this section, I have explored some of the issues related to FDI in the Indian media. I have found an intense debate taking place in newspaper columns and editorials, a debate that is echoed in the accounts of my study participants. Narratives reflect layers of mimicry – ambitions to copy some elements of Western practices – but also a desire to maintain what is Indian. By engaging with this discourse, I have attempted to bring to the forefront the postcolonial ambivalence that can be traced in many socio-political moments in postcolonial India. The debate is not merely ideological; it represents a social struggle within the discursive realm with significant material effects, such as consequences for FDI policy (e.g., the 26 percent cap on foreign investment) and media practices (e.g., adoption of new technology but resistance to non-Indian practices). Postcolonial ambivalence can thus be seen as a fundamental element of this debate in several ways. First, postcolonial ambivalence fuels the debate by giving impetus and ammunition to its participants. Second, postcolonial ambivalence is enacted in the debate and its material outcomes. Third, postcolonial ambivalence may be further reproduced as individuals are exposed to the debate.

The purpose of this section is not primarily to relate elements of the FDI-media debate, however. Rather, this debate is used to exemplify and illustrate the broader context where foreign knowledge of media practices is supposed to spill over. The very existence of such a debate – notwithstanding its intensity – shows that foreign knowledge does not enter an “empty” or neutral space. To the contrary, it encounters a highly political arena, where the very desirability of MNCs is hotly debated and where, consequently, the value of the knowledge MNCs are supposed to provide is contested.
Knowledge spillover studies are conceptualized based on an implicit hierarchy in which the culture of Western modernity is deemed superior and all other cultures (and their institutions) are relegated to a subaltern status. As a consequence, there have been few attempts to examine how host country practices and their institutional peculiarities may influence the process of spillover. Relatedly, local knowledge recipients – the central carriers or channels of knowledge – are discussed in passing if they are mentioned at all. They are certainly not humanized, instead being treated as static channels without agency in the spillover processes. My starting point is to propose the idea of hybridity when understanding knowledge spillover. I therefore argue that to understand the spillover of knowledge in a new setting, it is important to see it as an interaction and intersection with existing knowledge and practices, with particular emphasis on the potential of human agency in this process. Only insight into local industry conditions and practices may help us understand the situatedness of these practices within the given institutional and contextual milieu, however.

In seeking to introduce human agency in the spillover process, I therefore need to attend to the ideas and perceptions of local practitioners and how they locate themselves as working journalists within the landscape of Indian media. In the coming section, I explore issues of reporters’ conceptions of what they do, how they perform their work and what they think of what they do. Only by engaging with the multiple ascriptions with which these journalist juggle can I create space for exploring the potential of their agency in spillover processes.

7.3.1 State of Indian Journalism: Concerns and Consideration

In India, journalism has traditionally been understood as a distinctly ideological profession, a public service and a political institution (Sonwalkar, 2002; Ram, 1994). In this, Indian journalism is perhaps no different from journalism in many other countries, and the commitment to truth and transparency (or public accountability) are two central normative aspects of professional journalism in the Indian as well as in other national media systems (Dueze, 2005). Having one of the best established news industries in the world (Jeffery, 2000) and as a country with one of the largest numbers of newspapers published, India’s news media is a well-rooted and long-established institution. Indian journalism began as an anti-colonial enterprise and was a central means through which the struggle for India’s independence was enacted. Since India attained
independence from British rule, the press has largely worked to support the functioning of the Indian democracy and has been frequently applauded for its role as a fourth estate (Sonwalkar, 2002). As a profession, however, journalism remained ideological, and although there has been massive growth in the Indian news media (both in print and broadcasting) in the last three decades, the industry still lacks systematic procedures, much of the legislation and regulations that surrounds journalism work in other countries and has often been criticized for its lack of professionalism (Kohli-Khandekar, 2010). For instance, although there exist many well-established, large news organizations that are more than a hundred years old, most of these have no written guidelines of journalism rules or the ethics that they practice, which places them apart from many of their counterparts in Europe and America. In the post-globalization era, the mammoth media sector has also earned severe criticism on account of deteriorating standards in journalism quality, including its news creditability (Sainath, 1996; Sonwalkar, 2002; Katju, 2011). It has, for example, been observed that many news organizations carry lead stories with unnamed sources (Kohli-Khandekar, 2010; www.atimes.com).

Discussions on principles of journalism are often coupled with debates on journalism epistemology (i.e., how journalistic output is produced), and the debate on objectivity is invariably rooted within discussions surrounding media ethics (Herrsch, 2002). Such discussions focus on media technology and its effects on objectivity, the increasing commercialization of the media, the crossover of news and advertisement space and the blurring line between the two, the increasing inaccuracy of the news, a decline in the profession’s credibility (e.g., heavy reliance on unnamed sources) and prestige, and Indian media education (Deuze 2005; Bandhu, 2001). These are themes that also emerge as prominent in my interviews with Indian journalists, many of whom express strong views on the state of ethics and objectivity in present-day journalism. By presenting some of these views, I will address the complicated relationship between the practices, values and current political and economic change, which acts as the backdrop to any potential knowledge spillover.

A key trend in Indian media is strong growth, including growth in the news sector, which has occurred since the early 1990s. This has not only changed the scope of the news industry but has also impacted the very character of

12 Some of the leading examples are Reuters’ book of journalism, the New York Times journalism guide, and the BBC journalism guide, which are circulated among their reporters. In India, this is a rare occurrence. Other than national daily Hindu (published from South India), I have been unable to identify any media organization with a formalized, published set of journalism rules, although the Hindustan Times now uses the guidelines from the Wall Street Journal due to their strategic partnership (based on 26 percent ownership of Hindustan Times).
journalism in India (Jeffery, 2000). With the logic of capitalism taking a stronghold in the Indian news industry, Indian journalism as a profession and news production as an industry is changing, as indicated by some of my study participants. “The scene is very different now - I mean, there is no quality journalism anymore”, laments award-winning journalist and editor IJ23. IJ08 similarly reflects that “[The] recent development stole the soul of Indian journalism; it has destroyed its core values which for ages journalist so carefully nurtured.” To IJ23, IJ08 and several other of my interviewees, the expansion of the news sector has meant compromises regarding journalism quality. IJ03, the editor-in-chief of an English language daily, reflects,

“I have been through like three or four eras in journalism and eras within the country also. As a country adapts to various economic styles, its journalism changes. In post-liberalized era, ethics have dropped, standards have dropped, language has dropped, [...] standards in language. [...] Meticulous research has dropped. You just name it and everything has dropped”.

IJ03 also comments on the lack of news sourcing ethics in present journalism. “You are not worried about naming or not naming your sources [...]. [T]hese things don’t matter any longer, so long as you have a story”. IJ04 similarly comments,

“News sourcing is very weak, and in fact, I am very sorry to say, they don’t even do their research well [...], so ethics are pretty much at zero. Research is zero; they don’t do any homework at all; they [journalists and editors] don’t feel the need to check and crosscheck [...]”.

IJ04 further explains,

“Nowadays, each newspaper is as thick as a booklet, practically, and to fill those many pages, you can imagine, hundreds of journalists must be working day in and day out, to churn out all that kind of info. So, I think they lose out on checking, crosschecking and the publication heads are just not bothered”.

IJ06, a reporter for a leading national daily, states similar concerns. “Things are moving so fast in this space that there isn’t time to reflect; good journalism requires quality time, dedication and commitment”, she argues. IJ15 comments along the same lines:

“At least part of the problem is that [...] we are just growing so fast and the demands on the media person are so high that, you know, there is just no time for this sort of thing [i.e., traditional journalism practices]. Maybe that’s one reason that our news is getting to be of questionable quality”.

Several interviewees also comment on what they perceive to be lacking standards in media training. According to IJ02, “Indian media houses no more invest in what I call newsgathering training. It is really affecting our quality of journalism”. She further adds,
“What affects me most is journalists writing hard news stories about issues they have no knowledge about or they have half knowledge about it. And these are people covering serious news, you know”.

Like IJ02, IJ01 feels that the current generations of journalists have limited understanding of the news they produce. “People are not trained for that kind of thing”, he argues. IJ17 reiterates similar concerns.

“The education isn’t there. Journalists at the end of the day need to be educated; they need to have broad-based knowledge on a variety of different subjects in order to write informed pieces”.

IJ96 summarizes these views.

“You don’t need much or any journalism education, for that matter, to be a journalist nowadays, right? And before, there was apprenticeship, you had to prove your worth. […] Now, anyone who can spell and who has a laptop and a cell phone is a journalist”.

Deteriorating media standards, especially in relation to newsgathering, is thus a running theme in my interviews. Many interviewees indicate that values relating to objectivity and accuracy, traditionally of greater importance in Indian news production, are increasingly compromised. At the same time, in the narratives, blame is frequently placed with commercialization and the need to mass produce news rather than with journalists and editors, who are presented as victims rather than perpetrators in this process by some of my interviewees.

Another recurring theme is the increasing reliance on technology, such as the Internet and cell phones, which is replacing traditional journalism field work. Many of the interviewees comment that journalism work performed “at the desk” involves compromising accuracy. IJ17 explains,

‘[Journalists] are lazy all over the world, but I think they are especially lazy here […] [There] are lot of people who don’t even want to leave their desks […] and I think that’s the other big drawback in Indian media. You know, they are just not taught, proper journalism”.

IJ02 has similar complaints.

“Technology has created a big problem in news gathering. Everybody wants an email interview, everybody wants a telephonic interview. […] Technology has made it easy to stay within the confines of office and do your report. I mean, India is suffering because of this”.

IJ03 similarly argues,


"Mostly, the attitudes towards news sourcing […]; we don't go out and meet people any longer; we have telephone journalism. You ring someone, you get somebody on the phone, you get a quote, […] you make no effort to contextualize anything. […] Context does not matter any longer so long as you have that story at that minute".

Paid news is another practice that has become increasingly common, a practice that the Times of India, the leading national daily, was instrumental in initiating, but which has now spread rapidly (Bansal, 2003; Dalal, 2003). This has led to shrinking space for “real” news. As Sainath (2002) writes, “Beauty pageants make headlines but farmer suicides don’t”. Paid journalism has not only affected what gets published but has also changed the very nature of journalism. IJ15 argues against this practice.

‘[R]eally, I mean, should newspapers take money to cover people? Then where is the objectivity […] and where do you draw the line? For instance, newspapers take money from companies to cover them and to write about them. […] Suppose a director is coming out with a new movie. If he wants coverage, you know, as a part of the promotional buildup, he can pay money […] and have himself and the film covered in Bombay Times. […] Then, why shouldn’t you take money from politicians to portray them in a good light […], where do you draw the line?”, IJ15 questions.

For IJ19, a senior reporter at a leading financial daily, paid news is “destroying the journalism culture of India. […] Whatever you want to say is news”, he argues. Continuing, “You pay six lakh [INR 600,000] if you are diamond merchant, you want to talk about your company, they will talk about your company, they will write about your company”.

IJ20 also argues that objectivity in print media is increasingly compromised by the growth of broadcast and electronic media. In her view, “sensationalism” in broadcast media generates pressure on newspapers to follow suit.

“Newspapers also follow the agenda of television channels because now they are so rampant that it is very difficult for newspapers to take their own decisions on stories […] because your agenda is driven by what is happening in 24-7 news”, IJ20 argues.

In the same vein, IJ05 argues that Indian journalism is increasingly prone to herd mentality. “[O]ne fellow will go after something and he gets some news out of that, then all other fellows will go and chase that story. But you won’t add anything new, just do a similar coverage”, he argues, continuing “[Journalists] don’t bother verifying if the news is really news, or if someone is just planting a story”. IJ23, an award-winning reporter with 35 years of experience as a journalist and editor, argues that objectivity is also compromised by newspapers’ ties to politics. He comments,
“Things have changed – and I have to say for the worse. Just some 15 years ago, newspapers were not wedded to any political party, all political opinions were restricted to the editorial page. But in current times, newspapers blatantly reveal their political stance; political news is more like opinion. This is journalism going the very wrong way”.

Several of my interviewees assign blame for the wanting standards on media leadership. With the post-globalization expansion of the media, many journalists with little experience have been promoted to editorial positions, and such positions are often combined with marketing and advertising positions (Bansal, 2003). In the words of IJ15, “I can tell you, one of the big problems is that the newsroom leadership in India has suffered a huge decline. The quality of editors and editors-in-chief is not as high as, say, it was 20 years ago”. IJ02 similarly observes, “Sometime, I see people who have nothing to do with journalism, or would never ever have been to a press conference suddenly become editors, you know”.

As many of my interviewees reveal a critical stance towards the ways in which ideals, such as objectivity and accuracy, are treated by the Indian news media, they simultaneously comment with a great deal of nostalgia on the values maintained in the pre-globalization era. As IJ15 argues,

“Earlier, you had a very strong breed of editors who could not be managed at all, Vinod Mehta [award-winning Indian journalist], for instance. He has been sacked from every job he had simply because he refused to bend on ethics. But those kind of people don’t exist in newsrooms anymore […]. You are too involved in taking care of your job or taking care of the owner’s priorities rather than enforcing strict editorial code of conduct”.

IJ07, senior editor of a Hindi daily, reminisces,

“Nowadays journalism is a company; it is big business, not a mission like it used to be before. It was a very prestigious profession. […] There is a devaluation in the standard; there is no responsible journalism as such.”

Similarly, IJ05 comments,

“I have been around a long time, [since] when a journalist was someone to respect, someone who had a mission, you know. Today it’s just story after story, with no checking facts, no different views, nothing.”

From the narratives of my study participants, it is apparent that Indian journalists face challenges brought on by the sweeping changes of globalization and advancement in media technology. Although these narratives can be understood as self-reflection on the part of Indian journalists on the current state of Indian journalism, they also hint at instances of mimicry, where there is a desire on the part of journalists to evaluate their own systems and compare
them with those of the West, primarily the US and the UK, the two hegemonic centres with which India has strong relationships. For instance, IJ07, senior editor of a Hindi daily, argues,

“When I started as a journalist 40 years ago, we were as good as the West in style, quality, technique, despite limited resources. But presently things look too bad; we can’t boast of that anymore.”

Likewise IJ03, editor of a small English daily, emphasizes,

“You don’t have to go that far, just a quick glance at the way things are done in places like US or Britain, it will easily bring home the point: we are in a mess.”

It has also become commonplace, particularly for journalists working for English news sector publications in metropolitan areas, to avail to the many opportunities for media internships offered by world-leading media organizations, such as Reuters, the New York Times and the BBC. During such internships, generally young journalists are exposed to non-Indian newsgathering systems. It is therefore not surprising that such journalist are often highly critical of Indian media practices and tend towards a comparative mode during the course of our conversations. For example, IJ09, who was given a journalism scholarship sponsored by the New York Times, explains, “It’s sad but that is how things go here, […] it will take a millennium to get to the standards of journalism that Reuters or BBC aspires”. Another reporter, IJ27, who received a one-year scholarship to intern at Reuters, explains, “We are a massive media system. We have quantity, but they have quality, and one can’t deny that, and that’s fact.” Another young freelance reporter, IJ12, who had a paid internship at the New York Times, critically remarks, “I feel embarrassed to be a part of this corrupt media space. There is no growth here for good journalism. I so want to leave this country and move abroad.”

These narratives can be interpreted as a continuation of postcolonial mimicry, in which the postcolonial subject is perpetually tempted to gauge itself and its performance by the standards set by the dominant power (in the present case, the US and the UK). Mimicry, however, is also a site of resistance and hints at the subversion of the dominant power. In the coming section, I explore how reporters push back against categories and criticisms that pigeonhole them as less developed.

7.3.2 Reflections on Indigenous Newsgathering Practices: Local Aspirations

Protecting sources of news is a common dilemma among most of the acclaimed free press around the world as it directly clashes with news
credibility. Therefore, many countries have in place laws that give journalists the right to protect source anonymity. Such legal protection is, however, absent in India. One report discussing the matter states,

“Where both the United States and Europe have recognized the importance of source-protection, and the simple fact that some degree of source protection is essential if the press is to perform its checking – or watchdog – function effectively, Indian jurisprudence on the issue is negligible” (www.lawinfowire.com).

In the pre-globalization period, Indian journalism occupied a prestigious position, and while unnamed sources may have been common during this period, the profession was less commercialized, and journalists were less pressured to sensationalize news. However, with the fast growth in the Indian media in general and the news sector in particular, the demands on journalists have changed considerably. They are now expected to produce more stories per day as the content space, both in print and broadcast media, has increased enormously\(^2\), with deteriorating news quality as a result. Such criticism notwithstanding, it would be simplistic to declare the Indian media system as being infantile or underdeveloped compared with the standards of journalism in other countries, thereby ignoring the ongoing efforts of reporters to bring credible news to their readers. In their daily struggle to provide such news, journalists show the unique character of Indian journalism, which has sustained not only a huge media system but also the largest democracy in the world.

How do editors ensure that news reports are accurate under (frequent) circumstances when news stories are filed without named sources? My conversations with local reporters reveal the journalism epistemology prevalent in India and how journalists perform newsgathering tasks, particularly how they justify their versions of authenticity and objectivity. IJ18, an ex-employee of Reuters, explains how they approach the issue of accuracy in their newsgathering practices in his current organization.

“See, we are in the business of being first on the news, but that is not at the cost of the integrity of the news. [...] All sourcing has to be primary in nature, and we are very clear on that. So we always ensure that all our reporters speak to their primary source. So, no information that is put out on our wire is without speaking to the generator of that news”, IJ18 argues.

\(^2\) This is evident from the size of newspapers. Whereas before the globalization era, they were typically 24 pages, current newspapers are as thick as 48 pages, with more space for advertisements, advertorials and city news. Similarly, 24-hour news channels have a constant demand for new news.
However, if the source does not want to be identified, how does the editor ensure that the source is not trying to plant a false story? IJ01, editor-in-chief, explains,

“If my reporter writes the story and the source does not want to be revealed, then she or he has to tell me who the source is. In similar manner, if the [editorial] desk asks me, I have to tell the desk, okay, this is the source and it is reliable.”

In the same vein, IJ18 reiterates some of the arguments about trust that I heard from Reuters’ local staff in Mumbai:

“[…] we put our reputation on the line there, but we are extremely careful about who the source is. It is worth that I trust my source, the source will also equally trust me; it is a kind of symbiotic relationship which is there between the source and the reporter; all right, and that develops over a period of time”.

In the absence of the legal protection of sources, it is up to the journalist and the news organization to protect the source from harm that may come from revealing sensitive news. According to IJ04, an ex-New York Times trainee now working as a freelancer in Mumbai, sources are therefore often reluctant to be named. “A lot of people don’t want to speak […] on the record about controversial things, […] people are very afraid of getting sued, the libel laws, even [of getting] harmed”, she says. Another reporter, IJ06, working for a leading newspaper in Mumbai, states the same dilemma:

“It is very difficult for us to quote the person because it could cost him his job because he is your source, so it really depends on, you know, what kind of problem that you are looking at. So it’s better you talk to the bureau chief or the editor, and […] you will get [support] from them.”

Protecting sources and not losing them are thus priorities that have shaped some of the newsgathering practices in India, as in many democratic media systems worldwide. IJ01, a former economist currently working as editor-in-chief for a leading news portal, tells me that he has given strict instructions to all of his reporters to identify the source in news only if the source permits it, “[…] respect his desire. If he does not want to be quoted, stop it, don’t use it and don’t lose the source, and that is my priority, not losing a source”.

Not every source will be genuine, and not every reporter will be impartial, however, but that is a built-in dilemma of all free press (www.blogs.reuters.com). Sources may have a personal interest in a story, as IJ15, a freelance reporter, explains.

“Sources too have their interest, you know. What happens is, reporters develop sources and they trust them and then anything the source says gets into the paper. For instance in the case of a crime reporter who your source is, that’s the perspective of crime news
that would get into the paper, but [...] you don’t bother to get the right perspective, don’t bother to get the facts right. You just trust your source blindly, and you write it out. That happens a lot”.

IJ15 continues,

‘In politics too, if a reporter is assigned to cover a particular political party [...] we would just trust what our sources say, and two pieces of information might be diametrically opposite, but here, they would get in the paper, so there would not be any cross-pollination, talking to each other and trying to figure out whether this is the right piece of information or a right perspective. Sourcing is a big problem”.

IJ02 explains how she gets past such issues when working as crime editor at a leading newspaper. During her tenure, there were cases of journalists trying to slant stories in favour of their sources, but IJ02 considered it her duty to counter such practices.

‘I became quite infamous for that. [...] I said ‘Listen guys, don’t bullshit with me’, you know, ‘Who is your source? You all must be sitting and having two drinks at the press club and then probably devising a story.’ I have [said] this to many reporters, and they know that they cannot just get past me with any crap [...]’.

Trust in relation to news sourcing is a recurring theme in my interviews. In the words of IJ24,

‘Well, maybe you can never trust any source 100 percent, but you kind of trust your source enough to write the story. You take that risk, right, because that is what trust is. [...] And your source has given you the story, so he trusts that you won’t give his name because you kind of have a history together”.

IJ24 continues, “If you can publish your source’s name, you don’t need this trust in them in the same way. His name’s out there and it’s tied to the story”. Echoing earlier voices on the idiosyncrasies on Indian newsgathering, IJ24 thus argues that in the Indian context, journalist-source trust is a central element.

These narratives are just a few examples that illustrate sourcing practices in India. They reveal how journalism practices in relation to news sourcing occupy both a universal and a unique contextual place as a professional practice. Although the practices related to news sourcing may not align with some Western (Anglo-Saxon) models, such as those applied by Reuters, the accounts of journalists and editors show how they try to ensure accuracy and objectivity. In particular, they indicate that journalism epistemology depends on source anonymity in the absence of legal protection of sources. Although unnamed sources may be the norm, the industry has other institutionalized routines to ensure news credibility on a daily basis. For instance, trust between journalists and source is a key component in ensuring the veracity of news stories, trust
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built through repeated collaborations. At the same time, it is the editor’s responsibility to ensure objectivity and accuracy, and the accounts above indicate that this sometimes requires heavy-handed controls on the part of desk editors. Thus, these narratives also point to some consensus that just because a source cannot be identified, stories should not be cancelled and indicate that although journalism epistemology may not be very structured, there are still unwritten rules that journalists and news organizations follow, providing a response to criticisms of infantilism in Indian newsgathering approaches.

7.3.3 Discussion

In this section, I have attempted to make a case for the significance of local context, particularly existing local practices and the local actors involved in spillover processes. By exploring what may broadly be understood as the self-conceptions of journalist – i.e., what they do, how they perform their work and what they think of what they do – I have attempted to illustrate a space where discourses intersect to form postcolonial narratives indicative of an ambivalent stance to one’s own and foreign practices. In these accounts, Indian journalism is critical of itself and at the same time claims its own distinct identity. As interviewees indulge in self-reflection rather than taking offence at criticism focused on them and their practices, they partly celebrate a segment vital to Indian identity and partly accept the criticism directed at this segment. Thus, as Indian journalism is in a position to critique its own norms and conventions, it is apparently an entity that is aware of its potential and problems. Although such narratives hint that the mimicry of Western norms is as much a postcolonial phenomenon as it was a colonial one, in post-globalizing India, mimicry may also contain significant elements of (self) reflexivity where the postcolonial subject looks at itself through the eyes of the dominant global power, simultaneously claiming it and resisting it by claiming its own distinct identity. It is this context – with its complicatedly ambivalent conception of local and foreign practices – that new knowledge coming with MNCs faces, a context clearly dissimilar to that hinted at by the “empty vessel” and “sponge” theories of knowledge diffusion.

Thus far, I have primarily examined postcolonial ambivalence within the discursive realm. I now move on to examine how postcolonial ambivalence translates into practice, i.e., how mimicry disrupts the dominant discourse and opens space for resistance.
7.4 Spillover (Im)Possibilities

There is an underlying assumption in spillover studies that making knowledge, ideas and practices from developed nations available to the under-developed world is the most effective and efficient means of promoting its development. In particular, one channel emphasized in this development project is labour mobility; when local labour learns new practices at MNCs and move on to work for local firms, such learning disseminates, leading to improvements within local industries. The literature also informs us that this process is often unsuccessful in countries where institutions are very dissimilar to those of the MNC (i.e., underdeveloped), as local actors then lack the capacity to absorb new knowledge. To this unidirectional conceptualization of spillover mechanisms, I add the element of human agency to propose that imitation by local actors of foreign practices is not a question of neatly copying or completely failing to absorb foreign knowledge; rather, imitation may be unattainable without the production of difference, opening the space for hybridity. The involvement of human beings thus invariably complicates spillover processes, and I challenge the fallacy of the essentialist (subaltern) cultural framework of postcolonial developing countries, such as India, by complicating it with the residues of its colonial experience and address how this can influence processes such as knowledge spillover, where subjects simultaneously co-opt and resist new forms of knowledge and practices, leading to hybrid outcomes.

In the two previous sections, I have argued that foreign knowledge that is supposed to spill over enters a context where the very desirability of FDI is hotly contested (7.2) and where significant knowledge may already exist, even if the value of this knowledge (and associated practices) is characterized by an ambivalent stance (7.3). Although local knowledge (expressed as practices) may be criticized by industry actors, it is clearly institutionally entrenched, and its character is partly determined by historical, as well as current industry, developments. In this section, I engage more directly with the knowledge that is supposed to spill over into this context. In particular, I look at issues of imitation/mimicry, which highlight the process of assimilation with dominant global norms and different forms of resistance to such assimilation, resulting in hybrid knowledge and practices. I approach this in two ways. First, I engage with narratives of reporters where they reflect on the potential scope of spillover to their present organizations of practices learned at foreign firms (7.4.1). I then move on to discuss instances where journalists have actually attempted to apply some of the learned practices and processes from foreign firms to their current local workplace and the hybrid outcomes this has generated (7.4.2).
7.4.1 Mimicry – Subverting the (Dominant) Gaze

Most of my interviewees have worked for international news organizations in the capacity of reporters. With experience from multinational organizations and currently working for local organizations or as freelance journalists (at the time of the interview), these reporters fit into the category of labour mobility as spillover channel. Although many of the interviewees could clearly spell out the differences encountered when working for foreign news organizations compared with local firms, the non-transferability of foreign practices to the Indian context cuts across the conversations as a key theme; problems that foreign firms operating in India may face and the non-desirability of applying foreign practices in local organization were key strands in these reflections.

As seen in the previous section, many interviewees were critical about the state of Indian journalism. However, when asked explicitly how the values and practices they encountered while working for non-Indian news producers translate into their current work, many offered vivid illustrations of what they describe as an impossible task. For example, Reuters-trained journalist IJ27 explains, “The problem is that if we work like that [i.e., like at Reuters] here, we would not have much news to put out; the setup here is different”. IJ12 argues along the same lines, “Oh, there is no such thing. I mean, the demand and journalism culture is different; you can’t apply imported ideas to fix problems [in India]. We have different set of rules; they are more applicable here.”

Although these brief quotes indicate differences in newsgathering practices, I also interpret such statements as moments of resistance, a refusal by Indian journalists to be completely swayed by dominant foreign models. Such accounts also give hints that mere accessibility (in the present case, through previous work experience) to some forms of knowledge is no guarantee of their uptake in a new location. Several interviewees indicate that they have reflected on the situatedness of new (foreign) knowledge, and in doing so, question claims to universality. For example, IJ11 argues, “As a journalist […] working in India I face very different challenges than working for Washington Post; there, system is more organized, you know. If I want to cover a political story […] there are organized bodies, organizations, you know, associations that sort of stuff, you can contact. […] But in here, covering a political event is a very different game. Firstly, no one is so easily ready to go on records; even for non-investigative stories and if some wants to go on record, well, then I am cautious. Kuch agenda boga [there is some agenda].”
Long-time journalist IJ26 is even more emphatic in his reflections on the potential cross-over of practice from his previous work at Reuters to his current position.

“I know what Reuters means with objectivity. This issue of two named sources - it looks like a fine principle on paper, but what does it really mean? To be sure, that what goes on wire is accurate [...] So, I may not follow that exact procedure, but our stories now are not less credible [...] We make sure that facts are right but we don’t only go with named sources; how could that work in India with no supporting system for that kind of thing?”

Whereas many interviewees’ accounts on the transferability of newsgathering practices relate to failed implementation attempts, the issue of transferability also led some study participants to reflect on the difficulties international news firms face when operating in India. In particular, such difficulties are related to the institutional set-up. IJ22, an ex-trainee of Reuters, states,

“[…] I had a big fight with my Global Managing Director [at Reuters] on it. I said, ‘Hey, we cannot bring this whole Reuters news concept into India. India is a completely different market. If you do this, then I can’t do any news here, then I will have to leave’, you know”.

She explains that foreign firms arrive with concepts of news production that are adapted to their context and that transferring such practices to India may generate problems. She argues,

“That is the problem that Bloomberg or Reuters will face and faces; they don’t understand local pulse [...] That’s where we home grown companies like us understand this market [...] We bring it together. We know what is relevant, and we take those [aspects], and we understand what the local pulse is, so we blend it together and we do it well”.

Similarly, reflecting on the differences in newsgathering practices learnt during her stint with the New York Times and how they may be applied, IJ04 argues,

“Can we have an Indian edition of the New York Times? [...] The editorial board of the New York Times will go completely nuts if they have to produce a paper in this country. You can’t by their standards. If you try to do it … you just can’t do it”.

Although these examples indicate difficulties for foreign firms when operating in India, they also point to the fact that forms of knowledge and practices developed in one place may not be easily replicated in a new setting as it has its own embedded systems and supporting institutions which, in turn, have given rise to a different set of practices and knowledge of how to perform a particular task.
Some study participants also questioned the desirability of implementing imported practices. IJ21 asserts,

“Just because it suits a media company in America does not mean I have to ape them; maybe we aren’t as good as them in some ways, but to solve our problem, we need to have desi [local] solutions”.

Another journalist, IJ13, reflects on the difficulties in replicating newsgathering practices learned at Reuters. “We had a list of sources, whom to approach on this particular matter. They have a long list of preferable sources, so after a while, it became easy to perform the task there”, he notes, continuing, “I did make one such list here, […] but then we were just going with the opinions of those [on the list]. That is not good journalism for me, you know”. While using registers of trusted sources is a common means of ensuring news accuracy in many news organizations, it has likewise been argued by critics that this may privilege certain views and restricts plurality in news reporting, which ultimately compromises objectivity (Becker, 1967; Manning, 2001).

Although narratives on the undesirability of foreign practices may, on the surface, be interpreted as assertive nationalism in which host country nationals are fighting foreign knowledge to preserve local practices, they also reveal the potential of mimicry as a subversive strategy. These reflections are, in the first place, a result of failed attempts to replicate the authoritarian culture. In the process of mimicry, the “emulator” sets off to find the universal good of the dominant culture only to face its limits (Bhabha, 1994). Mimicry, in this form, then ceases to be a gullible ambition to achieve a desired identity of the oppressor and rather becomes a reflection of colonial selfhood with the ability to critique and parody that very self (cf., Ferguson, 2002), as mimicry always has the potential “to become excessive and uncontrolled”, leading to the disruption of the neatly contained relationship between the dominant and the subordinate. The narrative of reporter IJ20 illustrates this:

“Do you think companies like Reuters would be interested in doing feature stories on, say, caste system and how our financial sector and business sector are still deeply rooted in this? I can tell you from experience they will not, and why should they as long as profits are made? They pay good salaries, you get many perks like travel facilities, a cell phone, etc. But these are just superficial changes. What about challenging established orders here?”

IJ20 presents a generally negative stance towards FDI, which she traces to the realization during her work at Reuters that the problems of Indian society – of which she describes herself as a victim – cannot be solved by foreign organizations. She further explains,
“I became a journalist as I wanted to expose the vices of caste system and how it is so entrenched in our country. […] I got admission in college based on my merits, but often people thought I got it through quota [so-called positive discrimination where quotas are reserved for particular castes].”

In her fight against the structural injustice done towards her and many other Indians, although she had an opportunity to work for what may be one of the most desired media employers, IJ20 decided to quit.

“I left Reuters as I saw no scope of tackling this issue. There, it was all about straightforward business reporting. They serve the rich business class. These problems don’t concern them.”

As I have argued, many narratives hint at moments of resistance to norms that seek to dominate them, a refusal to be completely swayed despite the awe in which such norms are often held. In the process of mimicry, these reporters exercise their agency to subvert the authority of the dominant text, opening up space for oppositional interpretations in which those caught in-between are forced into self-reflection. Thus, these stories highlight elements of reflexivity, where the subjects push back against the dominant narrative, creating space for oppositional reading (cf., Hall, 1980). In other words, such narratives can be interpreted as a more reflective dimension of mimicry, wherein the (self) reflections on the part of Indian journalists are a consequence of several layers of mimicry. To draw a parallel, just as the nation space moves from colonial to postcolonial and now to global, the manner of mimicry may evolve and move through different phases of signification. In the global era, mimicry may start with the desire to imitate the global/dominant authority. Its failure, however, may not only result in a distorted image but may also result in self-reflection that generates awareness not only of the limitations of one’s own culture and practices but also of the limitations of the authoritarian culture.

In this section, I have engaged with facets of mimicry resulting in self-reflection. If moments of reflexivity can be understood as consequences of frustrations encountered in attempts to replicate the foreign to replace the indigenous, this nature of mimicry allows for hybridity, i.e., hybridity resulting from attempts to imitate. I will explore this further in the coming section.

7.4.2 Hybridity at Work: Selective Spillover

Throughout this study, I have argued for the hybrid nature of the knowledge spillover phenomenon, challenging the central assumption that spillover either leads to a neat copy or to complete failure. I now come to the very core of my argument – hybridity. In this section, I engage with instances of hybridity where the subjects of my studies reflect on ongoing attempts (by them or their
organizations) to implement practices that they have encountered in their work for international media organizations.

**Example 1: Bringing Home Process-oriented Journalism**

One of the key concerns in my interviews was that although there has been exponential growth in the media sector and greater demands for output quantity, the rules of Indian journalism have not adapted to this change. Whereas international news organizations, such as Reuters, have developed a very process-oriented form of journalism, in which every step of newsgathering is clearly documented in particular guidelines, such clear, instructive rules are not the norm at Indian news organizations, despite the size and long history of Indian journalism. Interviewees with experience with international news organizations, such as Reuters, Bloomberg, New York Times and BBC (to name a few), and who have taken up editorial positions at local media organizations seem to understand local newsgathering practices as “haphazard”, “chaotic”, “messy”, “unsystematic” and lacking in “process orientation”, often leading to issues of “unaccountability”. Newsgathering processes that are more (organizationally) controlled, in their view, lead to more accountable journalism as one can more easily locate where various problems lie in the journalistic process. Emphasizing this point, reporter IJ11 insists,

“I tell my team, journalism is like science, it’s not an arts field where anything goes. There are steps to follow to make your story good and credible.”

Adding to this point, IJ13, another journalist with extensive experience, argues, “We can’t go on like this, like how I described how we work; we need a system with checks”. Thus, some interviewees clearly express a need for a more process-oriented approach to newsgathering in India, where journalism practices still operate in an ad hoc manner. Journalist IJ11 describes this as “personal intuitions” acting as a guide rather than any guidelines where “simple dos and don’ts go a long way keeping reporting on track”.

The need for more process-oriented newsgathering may be felt, especially in large media organizations that employ significant numbers of reporters working with different news segments in print and broadcast. Implementing guidelines specific to the organization appears to be the main option for those desirous of more structured and monitored newsgathering. In this vein, some organizations are now investing in defining their own mandated guidelines. IJ18, an ex-employee of Reuters, was involved in one such process at the time of the interview. He describes, “We are just now in the process of building our guidebook and slowly a very thin style guide has emerged.” His justification for this guidebook is to achieve more standardized journalism output across the organization.
“We want to create an organization which will be process driven and the application of process is uniform across the company. So tomorrow, even if some of the editors change, we want this practice passed on.”

In the same vein, IJ22 explains how, inspired from previous workplaces, she is currently involved in creating guidelines.

“Currently, this is being done orally. Everybody is passing it through word of mouth, and we can’t do that. We need to document it. So we have started the process of documenting all these processes, various stuff, what are the dos and don’ts are […]”

In her account, she does not claim to adopt the particular practices of foreign news organizations but rather their more formalized approach to managing journalism work. A similar example is provided by IJ13.

“We are now discussing what we mean with objectivity, more critically, I would say. And we are talking about ethics guidelines, what to do in certain situations. And this is very novel for us. I mean, traditionally, nothing is written down, or if you write something down, no one would read it, you know?”

Although the need to have organization-specific journalism guidebooks was reiterated by some of my interviewees, developing such guidebooks has its own challenges within the Indian sub-continent as argued by IJ27: “There is a need [for an organization-specific guidebook], but it is very challenging work to produce”. The reasons relate to many of the facets of Indian journalism discussed in section 7.3. As IJ24 explains, “[…] we have to do it Indian-style since we’re in India … and all that comes with it.” As some interviewees argue, the challenge they face when developing journalism manuals is that they cannot heavily draw on the manuals encountered in their previous international media firms or copy manuals of leading media organizations as such manuals are designed based on dissimilar (media) laws and regulations. Whereas the guidelines are based on supposedly universal principles of journalism related to accuracy and relatively straightforward ethical issues, such as unbiased reporting and not taking bribes to present partisan views, rules relating to more debatable topics, such as sourcing, pose a greater challenge to the formulation of clear-cut instructions. In the absence of systematic media laws in India (e.g., regarding protection of sources) and, perhaps more importantly, uncertain implementation of existing legislation, it is difficult to formulate rules that journalist should always follow. IJ13 summarizes the dilemma: “Perhaps rather than always trying to have it like Reuters or whatever organization, perhaps in India, we have to compromise sometimes”.

Another interviewee, IJ18, who is in the process of developing a guidebook, states the challenges of having very tight instructions on news sourcing: “[A]ll news will not necessarily pass through that process” due to particularities of the Indian context. “What will you do then - will you not report on the news? […] You are doing
disservice to the market by not giving that news merely because it does not fit into your framework of editorial policies”, he concludes.

The key challenge for these initiators of manuals for Indian media organization is thus to create instructions on newsgathering that take into account the institutional peculiarities of India. IJ25 seems to have come up with a solution, although implementing it has its own challenges, as she explains:

“But what I think is that you should make it clear to the reader when you have compromised, you know? Don’t pretend that you have more facts and sources than you have. That we could do more easily than changing everything […] . Readers are mature, and we give them some responsibility of citizen journalism”.

Although her suggestion may seem like a good solution, documenting it in a guidebook may not be as easy, as she further explains: “In black and white, it might look childish […] and prone to confusion too, [and] misinterpretation can happen.”

Notably, two of my interviewees offered other innovative suggestions for making newsgathering more credible and journalists more responsible for the work they perform. To IJ21, it is important to understand the special role of journalism in society, and once that is clear, responsible journalism should follow. “No, it’s not a profession [journalism]; it’s a social call. You need to be passionate about a cause”. For IJ21, responsible journalism can thrive only “when reporters are devoted to some social cause”, unlike thinking of it as a “glamorous career option”, which, judging from many of the accounts in previous sections, seems to be a norm in current Indian journalism. Also commenting on this point, reporter IJ20 concludes that “rather than having rigid guidelines [on newsgathering] and taking ideas from outside, […] it’s good to use our own wisdom”. When discussing the need to “look inward” rather than import ideas, IJ20 makes a case for Karma as a guiding principle in newsgathering. “You know, it’s important to ask yourself what consequence your report will have; have you been really honest? –Karma should guide us”. Thus, although these reporters do not deny what some of my interviewees portray as questionable standards of journalism, they insist on the need for a more holistic understanding of newsgathering, an understanding rooted in Indian ethos.

The narratives above represent examples of hybridization where journalists juggle between more than one framework and translate one into the other. The attempt to institute a more process-oriented form of journalism is a direct inspiration by newsgathering practices performed in leading international media firms. However, in the act of imitating, they also face the situatedness of the dominant model, realizing the impossibility of producing a neat copy. As the quote below by IJ18 exemplifies,
“Through our own understanding, through our own experience, our entire thing [guidelines] is tailored to our organization, so any other organization style book will not fit in. I can’t take the AP style book and keep it, or maybe the Chicago manual and keep it with me, or may be the Reuters from where I came in, but it will not work for me”.

In some instances, discussions on instituting systematic, process-oriented procedures also veered to output measurements and individual performance assessments. These may play a role in not only measuring output in quantitative terms but also in highlighting the qualitative aspects of journalistic output so that they may also serve a role in ensuring objectivity and accuracy. A few of my interviewees had encountered assessment systems while working for international firms and argued that such systems may benefit Indian journalism. For example, IJ24 argues that performance measurement may be a “good step in organizing this chaos of Indian media” as such an assessment would not only improve productivity but also clarify accountability. Reporter IJ12 argues, “Well, all successful business have performance measured, so why not us? It’s about time to think of journalism as a profession like it is in US.” Although many of the fastest-growing larger media groups in India may have some sort of performance evaluation in place, some interviews gave me the impression that these may be applied in an arbitrary fashion and that they are not developed in accordance with existing labour laws. Also in this regard, interviewees reflected on Indian journalism methods and the limitations imposed by the lack of source protection and subsequent difficulties in verifying the accuracy of news (as discussed in earlier sections). Under such conditions, although the act of introducing well-defined performance measurements may, to some, seem like a positive development in large organizations that have had arbitrary assessment policies and remuneration appraisals, it also carries with it fears of unfair policing, not least in the absence of effective supporting institutions and legislation, such as ombudsman, laws on journalist’s rights as employees, and terms of employment and remuneration. Pre-existing legislation may also be inadequate in dealing with the current complexities of the media industry, such as changes brought by globalization and digital technology. Thus, if inspired by leading media firms, their counterparts in India are introducing performance assessment without the supporting network of institutions (or effective enforcement of existing legislation), the emerging forms of hybridity perhaps challenge Bhabha’s (1994) influential notion of an energetic and innovative third space (Kraidy, 2005; Tomlinson, 1991) as a positive force by which “newness enters the world” (Bhabha, 1994:303). However, it would be simplistic to conclude the analysis here; I have argued that hybridity should be perceived as an ongoing process, thus often escaping efforts to neatly capture it in terms of outcome. When organizations introduce foreign rules such as those discussed above, these do not meet passive organizational members. Rather, they face actors who possess the agency to resist and challenge systems. For example,
IJ26, an editor, explains, “Enforcing such strict rules in India will get out of hand; it has to be a slow process; people won’t take it, you know”. Similarly, media analyst IJ10 reflects that “there is always a danger that those measurements will take a toll on employees. That’s a concern to be addressed”. Whereas one interviewee saw these changes as benefitting employees through their more formalized assessment measures and giving a “much-needed professional status” to journalism, others emphasized the difficulties of formalizing assessments as they can often be exploitative in the absence of supporting legislation on journalist rights. A few other interviewees also raised challenges to Western-inspired performance measurement systems within their organizations and noted that these were even perceived as exploitative and often met with resistance\textsuperscript{14}. Although Western-inspired performance assessment systems may represent hybrid applications in the absence of corresponding institutional frameworks, resistance to such systems may result in further hybridization.

In my empirical work, I did not specifically set out to look for “levels” or “categories” of hybridity; however, the various narratives I have collected regarding tensions and negotiations surrounding the imitation of systems from international organizations lead me to suggest that hybridity can be understood as an organizational phenomenon and an individual-level phenomenon. Hybridity at an organizational level may involve practices such as putting in place Western-inspired systems but filling these with, at least partly, local content. Subsequent resistance to such initiatives by individuals may give rise to hybridity at an individual level, e.g., in the form of attitudes regarding how particular functions should be performed. Such attitudes, in turn, form based on experiences with attempted implementation of foreign practices and reflections regarding their suitability in relation to local practices. The two levels are thus interlinked, suggesting that hybridity is an ongoing process; its definite beginning may be difficult to establish, and its end impossible to observe as reflecting individuals resist systems, thereby influencing their nature (as organizational practices) and making new experiences that find expression in new attitudes and means of resistance in an ongoing dialectic.

**Example 2: Astrological Interpretations of Business News**

During the course of my interviews, I came across other instances of hybridity operating at the organization level. In India, astrology is an important aspect of life for many people. Most media outlets, such as newspapers, TV and other broadcast media, and Internet publications, devote sections to astrology where weekly predictions are made based on planetary zodiac signs (Rao, 2009). Although dismissed as unscientific in most of the Western world, astrological

\textsuperscript{14} Prime examples include the Times of India and Hindustan Times, both leading multimedia news organizations with a national presence.
readings in India thrive as people seek guidance on making decisions regarding almost every aspect of life, ranging from marriage to business decisions, buying a house, buying a car, etc. Even most business newspapers devote a section to astrological predictions related to financial reporting, such as stock market predictions. Inspired by the scope of astrological predictions within the business realm, many business newspapers and news channels employ full-time astrologers to make in-depth predictions, particularly to support business decision-making regarding stocks and other traded instruments and goods. To people who subscribe to the astrological framework, such predictions and interpretations give veracity to news in ways not dissimilar to expert commentaries in the Western media and may give news an air of accuracy and objectivity.

After two decades as a business correspondent for the Economic Times and Reuters India, IJ14 took an entrepreneurial initiative to launch a 20-page pamphlet-like newspaper that rehashes news from leading business news outlets such as Reuters, Economic Times and TV18 while offering astrological interpretations of those news products for Indian investment readers. Explaining his initiative, he argues, “In India, most of the time people go to astrology to make business decisions”. Although organizations such as Reuters offer analyses based on “objective”, rational assessments (e.g., using market data and calculations of stock sensitivity), in the words of IJ14, “investors in India or even many non-resident Indians would rather like astrological interpretations […]”. He further explains the need for such a niche within the Indian sub-continent:

“When I was working there, I also felt a need, that this is not enough for Indian investors. How more can I help them taking business decisions? You know, who takes a decision without consulting jyotish [astrologer] in here?”

Although IJ14’s initiative is still at its budding stage, with only 5000 copies in circulation, he is negotiating a tie-up with a leading language newspaper from the Gujarat belt. The plan is to also launch a portal specifically devoted to astrological readings of business news.

Hybridity in this example involves taking the Western notion of analysing financial and business events, but rather than employing the “rationalist” Western framework to lend accuracy to these analyses, a local framework of astrology is employed.

7.4.3 Discussion

In this section, I have first engaged with aspects of mimicry as a form of resistance against neo-colonial norms, of which capitalist expansion is one expression (Kiridy, 2005). I have approached the issue of mimicry by
recognizing its original colonial-historical strategy to reform the native subject via mimicry as a process of internalizing the values of the colonial framework and its continuity in postcolonial times to argue that in its most recent forms, mimicry renders itself to reflexivity. Like all postcolonial societies, India has been intent on finding a middle ground between retaining its own (national) identity and accommodating global/Western standards. In this process, those caught in-between feel the need to assess their own position in a globalizing world and, hence, to be self-reflexive. This variant of mimicry is pushed to assess its own values through the dominant perspective and therefore be self-reflective. In other words, it assumes the colonial gaze and must look upon itself from that very gaze. Mimicry in the post-globalization era is therefore primarily a statement of new forms of resistance rather than a loss of resistance.

Hybridity is a result of mimicry; it can be understood as disruption of the authoritative command of dominant text by way of oppositional reading by those inhabiting the third space (Hall, 1988). More specifically, I have attempted to explore instances of hybridity that result from labour mobility and imitation. The examples may seem sporadic and do not indicate a clear pattern of hybridity, however. They should perhaps primarily be seen as signs of hybridity that emerge in the process of mimicry as – in line with my arguments in previous sections – locals engaging in self-reflexivity. The narratives thus reveal that the imitation of Western norms and practices is complicated by knowledge recipients’ agency, leading to hybridization. Consequently, the process of hybridization (influenced by acts of mimicry that are self-reflective) often has significant conscious elements in which subjects use the dominant language to claim a space for themselves (cf., Ferguson, 2002). The narratives of my subjects may not always go the next step – to demonstrate something new or innovative – but pave the way for that step.

7.5 Summary and Concluding Reflections

The overarching focus of this project is to examine the potential of postcolonial ambivalence and its impact on the contemporary process of economic globalization. Matters related to the original (West) and the imitation (East) and the traditional (East) and the modern (West) continue to command influence not only within the cultural realm, where it has mostly been explored, but also within the IBM domain of postcolonial globalizing India. In making a case for the relevance of this characteristic condition of postcolonial nation space, I have argued for a hybridized nature of IBM phenomena, such as knowledge spillover, challenging influential assumptions that knowledge spillover either results in a neat copy or in complete failure. By proposing the hybrid nature of knowledge spillover, I also hope to have presented a more human-centred approach to studying the spillover phenomenon.
At the end of the previous chapter, I presented a conceptual model by taking into account the human nature of the spillover phenomenon, proposing a dynamic quite dissimilar to mainstream conceptualizations (See Figure 6.2). My empirical study has illustrated this dynamic in various ways by looking into the debate on FDI, how foreign knowledge meets institutionally embedded local practices, and how this meeting may result in hybrid knowledge and practices. My empirical work has also allowed me to deepen the arguments presented initially. To summarize this work, I will emphasize a few aspects.

First, hybridity in spillover should not be understood as an automatic or deterministic process. Rather, it has significant elements of selectivity as participants in this process exercise their agency. Selective spillover, I argue, is largely a consequence of the reflective nature of mimicry in the era of globalization. By this, I mean that when process participants have significant experience with local as well as foreign frameworks – in my particular case of journalism frameworks – they are in a position to reflect on these and choose elements they may think fit their local context; it is perhaps primarily in this process of selective copying that hybridity emerges rather than in genuine attempts to emulate the aspirational culture of the dominant wholesale and the inevitable partial failure to do so, as implied by Bhabha’s (1994) use of the term mimicry.

Second, in the context of knowledge spillover, hybridity can be understood both as organizational practices and as individual attitudes to knowledge. Hybrid organizational practices take shape based on knowledge acquired when working for (or observing the work of) foreign firms, knowledge that is (selectively) adopted and adapted to the local context. At the individual level, the hybridization process represents reflective mimicry as foreign knowledge is tested in the local context, representing an ongoing reconstitution of attitudes. I argue that these two “levels” or “facets” of hybridity interact in a dialectic pattern that may not have a natural ending point. That is, organizational practices are shaped by attitudes, and attitudes are formed from experiences with organizational practices; herein, we see ongoing hybridization.

Finally, and on a more general level, whereas instances of hybridity in my studies may not always suggest a liberating potential in Bhabha’s (1994) sense, they nevertheless underscore the potential of resistance in refusing to be curtailed within fixed categories of cultures and identity. We find in this ongoing “production of slippage” the impulse of postcolonial ambivalence, in effect disrupting universalism claims by the project of global modernity. In this disruption of authoritative discourse, hybridity emerges.

Having said as much, it should be emphasized that I do not propose a complete theory of knowledge spillover. Rather, I suggest that scholars take into
consideration a set of conditions hitherto absent from extant research, conditions that may help shed light on why spillover takes certain forms and which forms these may be. In this endeavour, I find support specifically in postcolonial theory. Other frameworks may help unearth other sets of factors and conditions relevant to the spillover process. There is also no doubt that when studying the spillover of knowledge (and values) relating to newsgathering practices, I have encountered individuals – journalists – who may, to a greater extent, reflect on the relevance of foreign practices in a local setting as they represent an intellectual class trained in critical thinking. The setting is thus an extreme one, propounded by the fact that newsgathering is associated with strong (or at least contended) values. My findings may therefore not be replicated precisely in other empirical settings. I would, however, contend that they hold broad relevance to our understanding of the knowledge spillover phenomenon and that their applicability in other industry and cultural contexts may be a matter of degree rather than complete rejection or acceptance. In other words, local practitioners in various industries may not necessarily be as reflective about indigenous and foreign knowledge, practices and values as the journalists I have interviewed but will surely exhibit a measure of critical thinking, reflect on potential spillovers and allow such notions to influence the ways in which and the extent to which they apply foreign knowledge and adopt foreign values.

When comparing the results of my spillover study to my findings regarding knowledge transfer, a more critical stance towards foreign (Western) knowledge can be noted in the former setting. This is hardly surprising as spillover study participants do not operate inside a Western organization and are not required to adopt its practices. It may also be the case that journalists who have left Western organizations do not, to the same extent, rely on foreign knowledge and practices for the construction of their own identities and may therefore adopt a more critical stance. They may also be in a better position to critically reflect on the relative benefits and applicability of local and foreign practices because they operate in a setting where they can “test” either.

As a final commentary to mainstream spillover research, I propose a more nuanced approach to the study of spillover outcomes. In my work, I have primarily considered outcomes as the hybrid practices and attitudes that form in a reflective process with significant elements of human agency. Mainstream research tends to be concerned with outcomes in terms of increases in industry productivity, export growth, etc. However, by opening the spillover black box and considering the learning and adaptation of practices that represent the actual spillover phenomenon, mainstream research may find a “mediating variable” that has significant effects on “mainstream outcomes”.

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PART IV
CONCLUSION
8 Contributions

In this final chapter, I first present a concluding discussion in relation to my broader purpose related to postcolonial ambivalence and IBM (8.1). Subsequently, I summarize my main contributions in relation to my more narrowly formulated purpose dealing with international knowledge transfer (8.2) and knowledge spillover (8.3). I also outline contributions to the debate on media ethics (8.4) and the FDI policy discourse (8.5). Next, I summarize contributions to managerial practice (8.6). I conclude the chapter by reflecting on the connection between knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover (8.7), the inter-context transferability of my arguments and findings (8.8), and how institutional duality relates to third space (8.9). I summarize my main contributions and arguments in a table (see Table 8.1).

8.1 Postcolonial Ambivalence and Theories of IBM: Concluding Discussion

I began this thesis by relating the heated debate on FDI in Indian media, a debate characterized by strong polarization. FDI proponents present foreign investment as a remedy for poorly developed work processes, lack of capital and dated technology. FDI sceptics, on the other hand, argue that foreign investments will destroy the unique character of Indian media and even pose a threat to the nature of Indian society. Such debates are commonplace in postcolonial societies, where there may be simultaneous impulses to embrace and resist the foreign, that which represents domination but also a development logic reminiscent of colonial days. Although these debates operate at societal or collective levels, they may also find expression at the individual level as people grapple with contradictory pulls. In my dissertation, I set out to explore the potential influences of this postcolonial ambivalence – a dialectic of simultaneously looking inwards and outwards that is symptomatic of postcolonial societies – on phenomena of economic globalization, as exemplified by the Indian FDI debate. As I sought to make a case for postcolonial ambivalence as a qualifying condition in the analysis of contemporary IBM processes, I looked to the psychic realm as this is where the residues of history continue to operate and generate material consequences for the present.

Having undertaken two empirical studies, one of international knowledge transfer and one of knowledge spillover, I have increasingly come to the realization that both the pro- and con-globalization arguments rest on similar
assumptions, namely, that FDI is endowed with the power to fundamentally transform host societies, either for the better as in the pro-FDI argument, or the worse, as contended by those against foreign investments. In other words, the central theme of transformative power remains the same regardless of position. My research, however, leads me to suggest that perhaps the power of FDI to bring about change is overstated. The reason is that the pros and the cons fail to take into consideration the agency of local actors. Indeed, the very core of my theoretical starting point is that the MNC does not enter a vacuum. To the contrary, it enters a setting where its existence may be contested and where there may exist institutionally embedded knowledge and practices. As the MNC meets this context, a reaction among local actors is generated that, at least to some extent, subverts the MNCs’ transformative power. This reaction may be unintentional as local employees are unable to fulfil the aspirations of the MNC, but it may also have significant elements of conscious resistance as individuals fight back against practices and knowledge pushed on them and the categories into which they are placed. I thus argue that to understand globalization processes, we must not only look at the forces that promote or try to prevent globalization but also the forces that subvert its power — the forces that turn the supposedly hegemonic into something else, something new, something hybrid in nature.

I have explored these forces in the context of the formerly colonized and now rapidly globalizing India. In relation to knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover, I have argued for traces of postcolonial ambivalence among local knowledge recipients and have attempted to illustrate how postcolonial ambivalence may dictate the contours of these IBM phenomena in a postcolonial setting. My study finds manifestations of this impulse in the manner in which host country nationals imagine their role and negotiate their position, how they inhabit more than one world and how they oppose the labels that seek to situate them within monolithic pre-existing categories. Although such impulses may be a fundamental part of life for all those caught in the global exchange (cf., Appadurai, 1996), their unique expressions in India provide a suitable example of processes by which the forces of global capital are exercised and resisted. For example, by examining how local employees working for Reuters justify their attempts at not complying with Reuters’ mandated guidelines while simultaneously describing those very rules as superior to Indian practices, and by examining how local journalists position themselves and Indian journalism in relation to (what they perceive as) global journalism standards and standards stipulated by international media organizations, I hope to have illustrated the role of agency within the contemporary realm of capitalist force. In particular, in the contestation and re-articulation of their roles and positions within the globalizing site, the subjects of my studies subvert attempts by pre-existing categories to define and pigeonhole them. As they reconstitute the boundaries of their location as
Indian journalist, they exemplify what it means to exist within the interstitial of global flows.

By exploring instances of negotiation within the performative realm, wherein individuals simultaneously co-opt and resist forces of global capitalism, my study also seeks to make a case for hybridity as a complement to processes of economic globalization, challenging dominant conceptualizations of IBM processes that strive to theorize the crossover of organizational practices/knowledge/routines within a binary paradigm of either success or failure at the receiving site. In this vein, my study shows that mimicry and imitation, contrary to intuitive understanding, stand in the way of homogenization. The translation of organizational practices and knowledge from one setting to another is thus a far more complicated process than is assumed by both those hopeful of and those fearful of a homogenization of world systems. In proposing the hybridized nature of IBM phenomena and the significant role of human agency, I do not, however, eschew the role of power within economic globalization. In particular, the case of spillover reminds us that even hybrid practices can contain elements of subjugation when used to promote corporate interests. Nevertheless, my studies also show that as hybridity expresses itself at organizational and individual levels, its expressions can be productive and liberating. Thus, although I do not attempt to negate the role of power within economic globalization, my studies also reveal the potential of the agency of locals.

The forces of power and subversive agency, which are both palpable in my studies, underscore the point that subjects caught within the grip of power will push back against it. Both my studies exemplify how the repetition of practices and knowledge is unattainable without the production of difference and that, in this very difference, there is the potential to subvert hegemony. Therefore, power and agency are conjoined. Of course, either can be examined separately in the context of IBM, but any suggestion that economic globalization is determined by only power or agency is a simplistic one. This understanding of power within the realm of globalization reflects the morphing nature of power itself in contemporary times. To further explore this, a Foucauldian view of power may be useful. In his works *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and *A History of Sexuality* (1978), Foucault explains that this very capacity of power to transform is reflective of a move from the classical conception of power to more disciplinary forms wherein power affirms itself not through taking life but by investing in life. To understand the disciplinary notion of power, Foucault examines the historical move from punishment of the body to a focus on the soul and its accompanied change in the judiciary system from chiefly being concerned with penalizing criminals to understanding the nature of crime. Foucault argues that these changes were paralleled by new conceptions of man, in particular consideration of man as an object of knowledge production. In the
words of Foucault (1978), the “scientifico-legal complex” (p. 23) instituted man as “an object of knowledge for a discourse with a ‘scientific’ status” (p. 24), systematically binding power to knowledge and vice-versa. In this newer modality, power “invests them [the subject of the disciplinary society], is transmitted by them and through them, it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them” (1977:27). This reformed relationship thus conditions and controls the individual. In his re-conceptualization of power, Foucault also elucidates the various forms through which power works in everyday, seemingly mundane habits of subjects, exposing itself to its own inversion through counter-struggles. Power, in this sense, is as dispersed as it is diffused, taking on varying forms at each site of engagement.

Deleuze (1992) extends Foucault’s incisive examination on the morphing nature of power from the disciplinary society into societies of control signified by the advent of digital systems (typified by computer and Internet technologies). Here, Deleuze claims, power becomes even more malleable and its capacity to control more totalising for in this context “A man is no longer a man confined, but a man in debt” (1995:181). In contrast to the confinement (prison) of disciplinary society, Deleuze notes that “We’re moving toward control societies that no longer operate by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication” (Deleuze, 1995:174). Deleuze illustrates the system of control societies by presenting an image of a highway that does not confine but keeps the individual’s movements and the choices available in check. Thus, the ability of power to transmute makes it more persistent and permeating. In this re-conceptualization of power, both theorists offer insights into how modern day subjects negotiate their positions and identities within global flows of knowledge, ideas, systems, practices and products. In particular, such insight into the conditioning nature of power cannot be envisaged without simultaneously addressing its counter-currents. As it allows space for resistance, newer modalities of power are more circuitous and covert. Counter-struggle challenges these while at the same time opening space for its mutation into newer forms. Indeed, this ability of power to metamorphose into newer forms makes “its actual exercise unnecessary” (Foucault, 1977:201).

This understanding of power provides me with a framework through which I can engage with the dialectic of power and agency that emerges in my studies. It makes new categories available in which I can locate the contradictory impulses that subjects in my studies experience – that they can both be interpellated within geo-political global structures and simultaneously have space for subversion and that any global flow (whether cultural, economic or political) must resonate with existing local meanings and structures to succeed. This very characteristic of power highlights both its ability to morph while simultaneously creating space for resistance by subjects. In this vein, my studies find the power/agency binary to be mutually and compulsorily combined, and
my attempt has been to show this intersection of both within the identity matrix of subjects.

In closing the loop of this argument, which by its very nature tends towards circularity, postcolonial ambivalence relates to power and agency in various ways. In their everyday negotiation with global power, the phenomena as well as the subjects of my studies inhabit a third space. The quotidian habits of those dwelling in this interstitial site challenge the notions of concrete and permanent categories of nation, culture and identity, i.e., they challenge the covert exercise of power to which they are subjected, creating the very interstitial space they inhabit.

To summarize, although positive accounts of globalization in the broader discourse stress its progressive potential, and although bleak prophecies raise a hand of warning against hegemonic power, these discussions pay little attention to the actual people involved. The impact of the multitude of forces on individuals caught within the crosswire of the global and the local thus remains a rather unexplored aspect of research within the IBM domain. By engaging with narratives of those caught between these changes and how they negotiate their positions within it, my study seeks to instantiate theories of economic globalization. I show that regardless of whether one chooses to embrace or resist global capital forces, the very engagement with global influences changes those caught within these processes and between its polarized arguments. Thus, the notion of pure forms of culture is as much a fallacy today as ever, and my study points to a need for further attempts at in-depth analyses of IBM processes that face a multitude of contradicting forces.

Although my study investigates two particular phenomena of economic globalization, the sheer vastness of the IBM scene opens itself up to countless explorations of the ways in which the residues of history influence the present. Uncovering the significant characteristic of postcoloniality and how it informs contemporary IBM phenomena while keeping the dialectic of power and agency in focus, helps me paint a more nuanced picture of globalization, certainly a more nuanced one that if in our analysis we only consider the movement of capital at the expense of history and its ongoing influence. To summarize, rather than viewing the past from the vantage point of the present, my project represents an attempt to write the “history of the present” (Foucault 1977, p. 31).

The discussions above relate primarily to my broader purpose, i.e., my aim to add postcolonial ambivalence as a qualifying condition in studies of IBM phenomena. In the following two sections, I present contributions in relation to my more narrow and specific purpose, i.e., to generate a deeper understanding of the influence of postcolonial ambivalence on international
knowledge transfer and spillover. These discussions are, in various ways, informed by the insights related above.

8.2 Contributions to the Literature on Knowledge Transfer

The literature asserts that international knowledge transfer is a complicated process, especially when knowledge is transferred between regions with significant institutional and cultural differences. My study does not provide evidence to the contrary; in fact, it lends support to this assertion. However, employing a postcolonial framework allows me to see and dissect some of the complexities, contradictions and encounters in the knowledge transfer process that dominant mainstream conceptualizations do not recognize.

8.2.1 Searching for Third Space

Although the literature on knowledge transfer to some (minor) extent recognizes the existence of local knowledge and emphasizes the role of local institutions in the knowledge transfer process, I argue that its understanding of the influence of host country institutions on knowledge transfer is still in its infancy. By studying the tensions that arise due to postcolonial ambivalence, I have attempted to illustrate some deeper complexities in the transfer process. I argued that home-host country duality and distances do not rest on a neat divide between their institutions; rather, there are overlaps, clashes and tensions. The underlying values of institutionalized practices may even be backed by the same ideology, but the way they are expressed in practice may still differ. This lays the foundation for what postcolonial scholar Bhabha calls in-between space or the third space.

My empirical work thus buttresses the argument that institutional duality/differences will give rise to a third space (Frenkel, 2008), a phenomenon that cannot be captured by the type of outcome-based studies that still represent the majority of work in the knowledge transfer area, where a dichotomous perspective on success/failure is adopted with little recognition of the hybridization of practices. To understand what happens when knowledge transfer takes place, it is thus important to see what type of practices emerge due to institutional duality/differences rather than starting with an assumption that institutional duality/differences will act as a barrier to knowledge transfer. The in-between or third space that institutional duality helps bring about should therefore be the focus of future research, which may address issues, such as how foreign and local knowledge and underlying values relate in the minds of supposed knowledge recipients, which components of either practice are
selected and why (in an ongoing hybridization process), how knowledge recipients navigate between practices, and how new practices emerge.

8.2.2 Lack of Absorptive Capacity or Lost in Translation?

Lack of absorptive capacity of the recipient is explicitly cited or can be inferred as one of the most important factors preventing the success of knowledge transfer. Regions where institutional distances are high from those of MNCs’ traditional home countries (i.e., the West) are generally believed to have lower absorptive capacity. By labelling knowledge failure as lack of absorptive capacity, researchers make use of the available discourse on the inferiority of developing countries. Such studies neglect to see what actually takes place at the recipient’s end, however. As I have argued, knowledge failure (if, in the first place, it actually represents failure) may not be due to lack of absorptive capacity but rather may result from recipients grappling with the institutional tensions that they face. For this reason, it is important for future studies to take a more process-oriented view. Otherwise, we will not understand how recipients address contradictions between new and old knowledge. Such an approach may also help rid the field of the colonial discourse that still permeates discussions on knowledge transfer and help future studies free themselves of simplistic assumptions regarding historically subordinated regions.

8.2.3 Recognizing the Role of Colonial History in the Knowledge Sender-Recipient Relationship

Although the knowledge transfer literature recognizes that the relationship between the sender and receiver influences knowledge transfer success, studies are silent on the historical situatedness of such relationships. My empirical work shows how historically informed relationships between the sender and the recipient regions influence the process of knowledge transfer, representing another key argument for why using absorptive capacity as an explanation for knowledge transfer outcomes may lead researchers to draw overly simplified conclusions. For example, historically-embedded relations that play out in present-day hostility as well as resource inequality may be factors that influence the knowledge transfer process. It should, therefore, be the ambition of future studies to include fine-grained analyses of historical ties between important actors in knowledge transfer and how such historical ties are enacted in light of the omnipresent globalization debate.
8.2.4 Provincializing Multinationals and Their Knowledge

My study makes another important contribution by demonstrating how local knowledge, institutions, practices and values are derived and how these may differ from those propounded by MNCs. By giving due space to local practices, researchers can rid themselves of the assumption that local knowledge is inherently inferior to MNC knowledge. Researchers may also realize that the knowledge, institutions, practices and values of MNCs are historically, socially, and politically (etc.) embedded, rather than the yardstick against which everything non-Western should be measured (and be found wanting).

8.3 Contributions to the Literature on Knowledge Spillover

In my thesis, I have attempted to identify some potentially important determinants of knowledge spillover, i.e., factors that may impact the spillover process. I have brought out these determinants by utilizing the framework of postcolonial theory. Below, I discuss my contributions to spillover conceptualizations and how future research should incorporate these contributions.

8.3.1 Existing Local Knowledge and Its Impact on Spillover

In spillover studies, there is virtually no recognition of local knowledge. This may be traced to normative, universalistic assumptions that local knowledge should be replaced by superior forms of knowledge that multinationals bring to host countries. Arguably, though, in most local industries, there will be significant knowledge that is historically, culturally and socially embedded. In my study, I have attempted to illustrate this and how knowledge developed in a different institutional setting and brought to the host region may therefore generate limited spillover due to incompatibility with the current institutional context and existing practices, not because individuals are unable to understand foreign knowledge.

By studying existing local practices, we may thus understand more about the logic that give rise to these and the values on which they are based. Doing so represents a significant step forward compared with extant conceptualizations. A second step involves understanding the logic of foreign knowledge and values. By subsequently relating foreign knowledge to local knowledge as they meet in the spillover process and determine its outcomes, future studies may provide a less biased understanding of knowledge spillover.
8.3.2 Selective Spillover

By taking a recipient’s perceptive, my analysis highlights that knowledge spillover is a selective process that gives rise to hybrid practices. When ex-employees of MNCs start working for local firms, they do not apply the practices learned at the MNC wholesale (or not at all), as the literature seems to presume. Rather, locals apply some practices learned at previous workplaces depending on the fit of these practices in their new organizations and the local industry set-up. New knowledge may also often be modified to fit within existing local frameworks. Thus, when new knowledge is introduced, there may be hybridization rather than complete adoption or rejection. Consequently, the spillover process should be understood as a hybridization process rather than as a simple imitation process with a dichotomous outcome. Future research, therefore, needs to re-conceptualize notions such as “imitation” and “demonstration effect” and should borrow from other fields of inquiry that have generated a deeper understanding of these phenomena, e.g., postcolonial theory and some branches of cognitive and psychoanalysis, to name a few. This also implies that spillover research should accommodate perspectives from other disciplines rather than just engaging itself with econometric models; spillover is a process that is invariably influenced by social actors, and silencing these will lead only to skewed analyses devoid of the human elements that actually drive the spillover processes and generate their outcomes.

My study also leads me to conclude that in the analysis of spillover, it may be fruitful to consider hybridity a multi-level phenomenon; although we may primarily think of hybridity in terms of hybrid organizational practices that represent an amalgamation of different organizational frameworks (or hybrid practices applied across organizations, e.g., at the industry level), we may understand hybridity also as an individual-level phenomenon where attitudes are dialectically formed as actors acquire (foreign) knowledge, attempt to implement it (in the local context), subsequently modify their attitudes and select those elements of either framework that makes sense to them. By giving agency to the local actor, it thus also becomes apparent that the hybridization dialectic has strong inter-level elements, where individual hybrid attitudes influence organizational practice and vice-versa.
8.4 Contributions to the Debate on International Media Ethics and Objectivity

By highlighting the complex nature of media ethics and objectivity in a postcolonial context, my study also contributes to the academic debate on the globalization of media ethics. With media globalization, the transnational media firm has become a commonplace phenomenon, and the debates on “international” media ethics codes have intensified (Deuze, 2005; Hanitzsch, 2007, 2009; Hanitzsch et al., 2011). This has generated attempts to find an ethical framework that would be globally applicable, and the quest for universal values is one of the greatest challenges facing the media ethics field (Christians, 2005). Although, in recent years, attempts have been made to incorporate ethical concepts from non-Western contexts into global media ethics frameworks, the frameworks themselves remain rooted within the dominant West-centric discourse. As a result, there is growing recognition regarding the need for a more inclusive debate on media ethics, one that incorporates the realities of indigenous theories on ethics (Wasserman & Rao, 2008). Such a response cautions against a coercive universalism of media ethics and incorporates the insights of critical theories, such as postcolonial theory. This approach also provides a counter-narrative that insists on the incorporation of indigenous knowledge frameworks and locally lived experience into overarching global media ethics. My thesis makes a contribution to this urgent call. By focusing on the lived experiences of journalists, it brings to light the ways in which subjects diversely positioned in terms of culture, institutions and political and social set-ups, practice objectivity in the daily routines. My thesis thus opens up space for addressing how we can understand journalistic objectivity when viewed from a postcolonial perspective. More specifically, by situating universal norms flowing from the West within everyday experiences, professional practices, and journalistic traditions in a postcolonial context, I argue that universal norms should be discussed critically against the background of (colonial) history and within the contemporary struggles that globalization generate.

8.5 Contributions to the FDI Policy Discourse

FDI policy in many developing countries is founded on the notion of positive externalities that multinationals will bring, in turn leading to growth and development of the host region. I have attempted to show that such
assumptions may be somewhat simplistic. I instead argue that local practices represent adaptations to institutional and other contextual peculiarities. Unless policy-makers get their hands dirty by engaging in the debate on the underlying factors determining the suitability of new knowledge in the host context, FDI may fail to deliver some of its promises. For example, in discussions on FDI policy and its relevance for economic development, questions such as what kinds of institutional support do host environments offer new inflows of knowledge and in what ways do existing and established local knowledge and practices complement each other, need to be addressed. Blindly assuming that FDI will lead to development is thus a rather immature argument. Policy-makers also need to understand that instead of replacing existing practices with those of MNCs, FDI may lead to hybrid practices where existing practices and foreign practices adapted to the local institutional context mingle. This, in turn, may prove innovative and have a positive impact on developments in the host region.

8.6 Managerial Implications

My study also allows me to make some suggestions for multinationals operating in environments distinctly different to those of their home countries, particularly for MNCs whose core activities relate to value-based knowledge transfer to its subsidiaries.

First, MNC training programs should acknowledge and take into consideration existing local practices and how they relate to MNC practices. Only then can effective training programs be devised. Rather than orientalizing local practices, managers and training programs should thus focus on the institutional situatedness of both the MNC’s practices and local practices. By doing so, a greater understanding of the complementarities and contradictions between the two bodies of knowledge can be generated, not only to make the training program more suitable to deliver intended knowledge but also to facilitate the process of knowledge implementation. This will also help managers discard assumptions that emanate from colonial stereotyping of local practices as inferior rather than different.

Second, there are suggestions in the literature that firms should either go completely local or remain ethnocentric. My analysis suggests that MNCs that wish to bring best practices into new environments should first assess the values behind their best practices and try to understand their situatedness. Relating these systems may be first step towards finding a middle way that can support more successful knowledge transfer processes.
Third, international knowledge transfer may involve hybridization. This should not necessarily be seen as an obstacle to MNCs’ operations and their potential success in the host environment. Rather, theorists of hybridization argue that hybrid practices have an innovative energy. MNCs should therefore recognize that the success of knowledge transfer cannot only be gauged in terms of the degree of adoption of their original practices. As knowledge is interpreted, negotiated and adapted, elements of MNC knowledge and practices may merge with local elements to generate innovative practices drawing on the advantages MNCs may possess but are uniquely suited to host environments.

8.7 Reflection: Link between Knowledge Transfer and Knowledge Spillover

Knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover are two important forms of knowledge diffusion that are extensively researched in what may broadly be defined as international business and management literature. However, there has been no cross-fertilization between the two streams. There is an obvious connection between the two phenomena, though; for spillover to take place, knowledge transfer has to be successful. However, as seen in my knowledge transfer study, the transfer of new knowledge is a complex process where institutional duality may give rise to hybridity. Such complexities may be just as apparent in knowledge spillover. Although I have not explicitly addressed this link, by taking into account the transfer and spillover of one particular type of knowledge, my study indicates that knowledge transfer will have an impact on knowledge spillover. That is, local institutions that effect knowledge transfer and generate third spaces will influence the spillover of that knowledge. By taking a recipient’s perspective, I have illustrated how knowledge transfer can generate hybridity, i.e., result in hybrid practices. When employees subsequently leave MNCs to work for local firms or when locals observe and attempt to copy MNC practices, hybridization may therefore be the starting point for spillover rather than “pure” Western knowledge (if such a thing exists at all). Future research on FDI and development may thus consider knowledge diffusion as a two-stage process with an expressed link between knowledge transfer and its spillover. By following the hybridization process through these stages, a stronger link between the phenomena can arguably be created, and we may, for example, be able to address whether hybridization through labour mobility is different from the hybridization that relies on learning by watching.
8.8 Reflection: Inter-Context Transferability

I have studied knowledge transfer and spillover relating to media practices and underlying principles of objectivity. Arguably, journalists and other media industry practitioners represent a segment of society that is prone to have opinions on these matters and is therefore better informed on issues relating to FDI and foreign knowledge than people on average. In that sense, the context I have studied may, to a great extent, be characterized by self-reflexivity and represents an extreme case. Similarly, journalism may be a particularly value-laden practice. The question then arises: how relevant are my conclusions and arguments for other sectors in society? Already in the beginning of the thesis I distinguish between technical knowledge and more value-laden managerial practices. Although the former may be easier to transfer with the help of instructions and manuals and do not necessarily rely on an understanding of or agreement with any particular underlying values, the latter are more complex to transfer. The complexity as such should not be specific to media practice, however; on the contrary, it may be shared by other professional practices, such as accounting, law and many fields of research, sectors where people may have strong opinions about their own and foreign practices. I therefore argue that my insights are relevant for a broader context of value-based professions than just journalism.

The individuals participating within my case studies inhabit what may be termed the third space, challenging notions of permanent and stable culture and “being” to which studies of international management usually subscribe. As very few places remain untouched by economic globalization and its flows of culture and capital, India is obviously just one of many sites where this liminal space operates. Although my study is located specifically in India, I nonetheless believe that its findings may resonate also with those situated at other such sites.

Although I have focused specifically on the Indian media sector and employed postcolonial theory to understand my observations, scholars in the postcolonial tradition have long since begun extending their research beyond settings characterized by ex-colonizer/ex-colonized relationships. Any context where one practice is subordinated to another based on a binary, hierarchical understanding of those participating in the respective practices (and where the practices of one context are associated with strong aspirational values) may potentially be analysed by the application of postcolonial theory. I therefore argue that my findings may be relevant to consider in other developing-developed country contexts, as well as within national contexts where hierarchical relationships exist between groups.
8.9 Final Reflection: From Institutional Duality to Third Space

As I have had cause to point out several times in this thesis, the mainstream literature presents institutional duality (or institutional distance, psychic distance, etc.) as the main obstacle to successful knowledge transfer and spillover since, when differences between institutions are great, knowledge recipients may be unable to absorb foreign knowledge. This perspective emphasizes that differences between institutions are inherently detrimental to the international activities of MNCs. Therefore, in the project of modernity where developing countries should be raised to the economic level of developed (Western) countries through FDI, the former group of countries should strive to change their (political, cultural, social) institutions to align with those of the latter (notwithstanding the differences that exist within this group). Such assumptions go largely unchallenged in mainstream IBM studies. In fact, they find ample support in the orientalist discourse which hierarchizes nations and cultures, always positioning the West as the aspirational peak of a development pyramid. It is, thus, hardly surprising that institutional duality is given such emphasis in research and that it carries with it such negative associations.

If we rid ourselves of the hierarchizing binaries of the orientalist discourse, however, we may also challenge the assumption that non-Western countries should follow the development path of the West and that Western institutions (and knowledge) are inherently superior to those of developing countries. Homi Bhabha’s notion that the meeting of cultures and knowledge systems takes place in a fluid and constantly reconstituting third space that does not represent the context of the dominant or the dominated, allows us to further develop this line of reasoning. As the dominated meets the knowledge system of the dominant and attempts to copy this, something is always lost in translation. In other words, the institutional situatedness of existing knowledge finds hybrid expression as Western and non-Western knowledge systems meet. This represents an – in many ways innovative – force, the potency of which may be recognized when we take a step beyond the binary framework of developed-developing and grant agency to the knowledge recipient.

Bhabha’s work thus does not negate the importance of institutions – indeed, without institutional differences there may be no scope for third space – but it does allow us to challenge the notion that differences between institutions are inherently detrimental and that they act as an obstacle to successful exchange between cultures (and, by extension, between organizations). My work in this vein represents a small effort to replace the hierarchizing institutional duality framework with a more inclusive explanatory framework drawing on notions of third space and the hybrid expressions for which it allows.
### Table 8.1: Summary of contributions and key arguments

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<th>Contributions and key arguments</th>
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| Incorporating power and agency dialectic  | - While pro- and con-globalization arguments rest on the transformative power of FDI/MNC, my study leads me to suggest that local agency can subvert that power.  
- Studies of globalization therefore need to simultaneously consider both power and agency.  
- We should employ an understanding of power that allows for agency, e.g. as in the Foucauldian tradition.                                                                                                                   |
| understanding FDI-related phenomenon      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| International knowledge transfer          | - I find that the orientalist discourse operates prominently in various ways at individual level (e.g., in creation of identity) and organizational level (in the processes that support MNC globalization, such as training).  
- I extend discussions on the third space of MNCs by instantiating hybridity resulting from the meeting of different practices.  
- Hybridity may be captured by considering four facets of knowledge adoption: (1) adoption of underlying values, (2) learning/understanding of knowledge/practices, (3) application of knowledge and values in work processes, and (4) work output.  
- To move beyond the “lack-of-absorptive-capacity” argument, studies of knowledge transfer should employ processes-oriented approaches and consider the institutional situatedness (“provincialize”) of foreign knowledge as well as “local” knowledge and associated practices. |
| Knowledge spillover                       | - I argue that the potential of foreign knowledge spillover is to a great extent determined by its compatibility with existing local values, practices and knowledge. The spillover process may also be significantly influenced by local debates on the benefits and drawbacks of FDI.  
- Unlike earlier models, I argue that local actors possess significant agency in the spillover process, which may involve knowledge hybridization rather than neat copying.  
- Knowledge hybridization may have conscious elements as locals actors reflect on local and foreign practices and chose those that they perceive to be suitable in the local context – i.e. selective knowledge spillover.  
- In such instances, lack of absorptive capacity is not a very useful explanation for (supposed) failed knowledge spillover.  
- A dichotomous understanding of knowledge spillover success/failure is incapable of capturing these complexities.  
- Future research should pay greater attention to the historical/geopolitical situatedness of the MNC and its subsidiary when studying knowledge spillover.                                                                                      |
| Debate on global media ethics and objectivity | • Similar values may be upheld in different contexts by employing different practices grounded in local institutions.  
• By situating “Western” understandings of media ethics in everyday experiences of non-Western media practitioners and by analyzing these understandings and experiences from a postcolonial perspective, we can reveal false claims to universality and make space for a more inclusive debate. |
|---|---|
| Policy discourse on FDI (in media) | • Hopes of FDI proponents that MNCs can transform local (media) industries may be as overstated as (media) FDI-skeptics’ fears that local (media) culture may be erased; while FDI may bring impetus for change, change in local (media) practices may be slow as local (media) practices are strongly grounded in local institutional particularities.  
• We need a more measured (media) FDI debate open to the potential of hybridization. Such a debate should not only recognize the innovative potential of hybridity but also its exploitative potential resulting from the importation of foreign practices without supporting local legal frameworks. |
| Managerial practice | • To be effective, training should take into consideration the institutional situatedness of MNC knowledge and local knowledge, allowing for greater understanding of the complementarities and contradictions of MNC knowledge/practices and those prevalent locally.  
• The discussion whether “to go local” or remain ethnocentric may not only be based on the false premise that either is possible, but misses out on potential middle ways that may support more successful knowledge transfer processes.  
• MNCs should consider hybridization as an innovative force and as a potentially successful outcome of knowledge transfer; through hybridization, local employees may strive to act in the interest of the MNC, e.g. to uphold its values. |
| Postcolonial theory | • While discussions of postcolonial ambivalence have relied primarily on textual analyses in the field of literary theory, I show empirically that this is an important factor determining the shape of contemporary phenomena of globalization.  
• In the era of globalization, mimicry is not just an automatic attempt to copy the models of the dominant. Rather, with increasing awareness of the effects of globalization across the globe, in its current form mimicry has significant elements of self-reflexivity, potentially characterized by a more critical stance towards both the indigenous and the foreign.  
• Attempts to study phenomena of internationalization that involve imitation on the part of locals should be open to elements of reflexivity, the power of engaged awareness of the dominant culture, and the role of agency to subvert the power of the dominant. |


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