

Local/Global

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At its most fundamental globalization refers to the interconnection of regions, nation-states and continents through economic, technological and political means. Anthony Giddens has pointed out that modernity is 'inherently globalizing' (1990: 63). In our current informational age new technologies like the Internet and the fax machine make it possible for me sitting here in London to bounce messages around the globe and access information from archives in places as remote as North America, India and Brazil. But the notion of globalization means more than just interconnect-edness. It enables us to think about the relationship between time and space and how societies in a particular locality are affected by political and economic changes elsewhere. Giddens attempts to identify this through what he refers to as 'the intersection between presence and absence' (1991: 21). Put another way, global social relations are integral to the nature of local circumstances even though they may remain latent. In this sense we cannot neatly separate the global from the local: these two notions together constitute a *relationship* rather than a dichotomy.

With the emergence of electronic media it became possible to communicate and share intimate dialogue while remaining at a physical distance. Marshall McLuhan summed this up in a famous passage from his book *Understanding Media*:

After three thousand years of explosion, by means of fragmentary and mechanical technologies, the Western world is imploding. During the mechanical ages we have extended our bodies in space. Today after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a

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global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned . . . As electrically contracted, the globe is no more than a village. (1964: 11–12)

Yet, global interconnection cannot completely integrate human societies that remain spatially dispersed. Something distinctly local remains, or may even be being fostered, within the global circuits of capital and culture. I want to try and unpick these complex relationships by looking at a particular locality, namely the area known as Deptford, South London in which Goldsmiths College is located and from which I am tapping out these thoughts.

FROM THE CRADLE OF EMPIRE TO THE HEART OF DARKNESS

Every morning as I walk down New Cross Road to my office I pass Deptford Town Hall, an elegant Edwardian structure built in the early part of the twentieth century (Figure 1). This building is a monument to South London's maritime past. It is modelled on a the hull of a ship, and four statues of British admirals adorn the front of the building and look down on passers-by. At the top of the building above a clock tower is a weather-vane in the form of a ship. In 1994, when the building was being renovated, some heartless villain or anarchist guerrilla stole the original. During the year it took to replace the wrought iron miniature my walk to work was not quite the same. Somehow Deptford doesn't make sense without its ship.

The galleon was the technology *par excellence* of the imperial age and it was here on the banks of the Thames that these vessels were constructed at the King's Yard established by Henry VIII in 1513 (Steele 1993). Deptford's local culture cannot be understood without an appreciation of its maritime history and the global connections that were established through ships and the local people both notable and destitute who sailed in them. Indeed, Goldsmiths College, where many of the sociologists contributing to this book work, was a boarding school for the sons of officers in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines until 1889 (Firth 1991).

The official guide to the borough published in 1915 describes the significance of the national heroes celebrated in stone at the Town Hall:

Sir Francis Drake with a globe in the background suggests the first circumnavigation of the world. The gallant [Robert] Blake, with 1652 underneath his effigy, recalls that admiral's first engagement with [the Dutch admiral] Von Trump in that year. On the opposite side of the oriel window the figure of Nelson, with the date of Trafalgar 1805, is a reminder of the appropriate opening of the Town Hall on the centenary of the famous action. The fourth admiral is a conventional representation of a British admiral of the recent period. (Bingham 1915: 25)



FIGURE 1 Maritime connections, Deptford Town Hall, 1 August 1996

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Blake was not only renowned for his battles against the Dutch but travelled extensively to the Caribbean to raid the Spanish colonies. The Town Hall was opened on 19 July 1905 with the Fabian reformer Sidney Webb present. Every surface of the building is adorned with maritime emblems including dolphins, shells, cables and anchors, tridents and windlasses. The souvenir brochure published to commemorate the occasion emphasized the figurative portrait of history in the design:

The note of symbolism is maintained down to the smallest trifle, as is illustrated by the wreaths under the admirals. Thus amid the foliage in the wreath under Admiral Drake is hung a cluster of beads and trinkets as well as a chalice and crucifix, which suggest the spoils of a Spanish galleon, or the plunder of some Spanish church, while among the oak leaves under Admiral Blake is a clasped Bible in allusion to his puritanism. (Borough of Lewisham 1905: 23)

The Town Hall was once described as 'obscene', not because of its imperial imagery but 'because its luxury contrasted so strongly with the poverty of the borough' (Coulter 1990: 114) (Figure 2). It was the first time that this district had been granted its own local form of government. Local identity is symbolized in a very self-conscious way through allusions to exploration, passage, and international conflict. Global relationships are thus sedimented in 'the local' setting.

In 1553 *The Primrose*, built at Deptford, was part of a small fleet which established the first contact between the English and the African kingdom of Benin. Indeed key figures in the emerging slave trade like John Hawkins, Treasurer of the Queen's Navy, were closely connected with the Deptford yard. Joan Anim-Addo comments in her excellent history of black South East London:

John Hawkins, who lived in the Treasurer's House at Deptford Dockyard, could be considered the 'English Father of the Atlantic Slave Trade'. On his first slaving trip in 1562 Hawkins was able to combine trading activities for the two chief commodities of the period. He took gold from Lower Guinea and at least 300 slaves from Upper Guinea, 1,000 miles away. (1995: 8)

Travelling on to the Caribbean Hawkins traded his human cargo for pearls, ginger, sugar and hides. Thus was established the triangular trade that would be so devastating for the African chattel, yet lucrative for London's merchants. Hawkins flaunted his success in slaving. His coat of arms showed three black men shackled with slave collars and his crest showed a captive slave tied and bound (1995: 9). Indeed, on his third slaving trip in 1567 he was accompanied by none other than Francis Drake whose memory is celebrated in stone at Deptford Town Hall. This part of London was to provide an important base for the city's expanding commerce. There



FIGURE 2 My walk to work as it would have been about 1910 (published with permission of Lewisham Local Studies Archive)

was little distinction in this community of seafarers between the maritime adventurer and the ignominious slaver. Joan Anim-Addo concludes: 'The ships themselves, the majority built or fitted out at Deptford for the maiden voyages, often returned to Africa after repair in the area's dockyards' (1995: 12). These histories, often hidden within the public versions, provide an important reminder of how this particular locality both affected and was affected by the early forms of European expansion. All this makes me think of the traces of a different past every morning as I gaze upon the miniature iron galleon which sits on top of my favourite 'local' building.

Joseph Conrad in his novella *The Heart of Darkness* captures these international connections between the imperial metropolis and the colonial hinterland. The book is about a voyage that starts in London and ends in the African interior, as Marlowe – the book's protagonist – searches out a brutal colonial administrator called Kurtz. Written between 1898 and 1899 the following passage describes the departure:

The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth . . . And indeed nothing is easier for a man who has, as the phrase goes, 'followed the sea' with reverence and affection, than to evoke the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames. They had sailed from Deptford, from

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Greenwich, from Erith – the adventurers and the settlers; kings' ships and the ships of men on 'Change; captains, admirals, the 'dark interlopers' of Eastern trade, the commissioned 'generals' of the East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of the unknown earth! . . . The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealth, the germs of empires. (Conrad 1990: 136–7)

What Conrad captures in this passage is the role that the river played in establishing the routeways of European expansion and the effect this had on the 'race that peopled its banks'. It also draws a clear connection between **empire** and exploration. Francis Drake – after his forays in slaving – circumnavigated the globe aboard the *Golden Hind* and looted the Spanish Empire along the way. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth I on the deck of the *Golden Hind* at Deptford in 1581. Drake died in the Caribbean in 1595 along with his fellow traveller and slave trader John Hawkins.

London emerged as 'a kind of Emporium for the whole Earth' (Joseph Addison, quoted in Porter 1994). Peter Linebaugh comments in his seminal study of eighteenth-century London society:

The Thames was the jugular vein of the British Empire. London the largest city in the western hemisphere, containing by 1800 nearly a million souls, was both the capital of England and the centre of the Empire that embraced the workshops of Bengal, the plantations of the Caribbean, the 'factories' of West Africa and the forests of North America . . . Through these waters passed the wealth of the Empire. (1991: 409–10)

Along with the flow of commodities came migrations of people from various hinterlands: Jews came to London from Poland and Germany, and French Huguenots came fleeing religious persecution. It is also little known that from the middle of the eighteenth century there were between 5000 and 10,000 Africans living in London, of whom some were seamen but most were transported to Britain as servants and chattel (Fryer 1984). London provided the financial centre from which Britain's slave trade was funded and it was developed economically from the fruits of slavery. From the late eighteenth century London's population, and in particular its working classes, may be likened to a popular drink of the time called 'All Nations': this intoxicating mixture sold in 'dram shops' was made up of the dregs of different spirits (Linebaugh 1991: 358).

The great imperial companies of the era established themselves on the banks of the Thames. To the north the West India Company built large dock complexes in the last years of the eighteenth century. It was from here that sugar – the fruit of Caribbean plantocracies – was unloaded and popularized amongst London's citizens regardless of class. Indeed, so

prized were these Caribbean spoils that a River Thames Force was established in the late eighteenth century as the first force in London's history to command centralized state authority, responsible for the payment of the West India Fleet's 'lumping gangs' and dockside workers (1991: 433). South of the river the East India Company – founded in Deptford – traded silver to Chinese merchants, and brought home among many other items tea, which became a favourite English drink in the eighteenth century (Rediker 1987: 39; Dews 1971; Steele 1993). Some of the most quintessential icons of Englishness – like the cup of English tea – barely dissolve the sweet traces of an imperial legacy (Hall 1991b; 1992a). It is crucial to stress here that the development of London and its localities has depended on flows of commodities and labour for at least 300 years. Even fish and chips, the most evocative culinary emblem of 'native London life', conceals a translocal cultural history. Popularized in the late nineteenth century, fish and chips was the result of the fusion of French styles of preparing fried potatoes and an East European Jewish tradition for frying fish (Malvery 1907; Walton, 1992).

The relationship between imperial expansion and culture is central to the story of what it means to be part of English society in general and London in particular. Equally, the historical denial of the long-standing presence of Africans and South Asians has meant that their contribution to English society has been ignored. London has a global, **multicultural** past to be recovered but the historical traces of this history have been bleached from public memory. English culture, whether embodied in the 'afternoon cup of tea', the Friday night 'fish and chips supper' or the 'jovial London Bobbie', is part of the story of imperialism. Yet these global processes also brought the children of slavery and empire 'up river'.

Ignatius Sancho, one of the first black writers to emerge from this part of London, was born during the middle passage on a slave ship in 1729. Joan Anim-Addo documents this extraordinary life in her book *The Longest Journey* (1995). Sancho was bought by a family in Greenwich as a servant for three young sisters. His thirst for learning and education brought him into conflict with his mistresses. Eventually, he ran away and made his case to the Duchess of Montague who employed him as a butler. In the Montagues' library Sancho taught himself to read and write. The Montagues were involved in the plantation system in the Caribbean but they were also philanthropic and keen on 'racial experiments':

The Duke of Montague had previously involved himself in the education of Francis Williams, a boy born of free blacks in Jamaica. Wishing to see if education would affect a black child in ways similar to a white, the duke had provided for the young Francis to be educated at a grammar school and then at Cambridge . . . It is likely that local black people would have seized any opportunity to exchange news and stories, particularly about sympathetic whites. (1995: 48)

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This 'local knowledge' enabled Sancho to become one of London's earliest black writers. The *Letters of Ignatius Sancho* – his first publication – became a bestseller and captured a national audience. Olaudah Equiano was another black literary and political figure who was brought to Deptford and resold into slavery there. Later after buying his freedom he campaigned for the abolition of slavery and wrote *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Laudah Equiano or Gustav Vassa*: this autobiography documented in detail the experience of slavery from the slave's point of view. The stories of Sancho and Equiano mark the beginning of an intellectual movement that needs to be understood in both local and international terms. The unintended consequence of imperial expansion was that it allowed intellectuals like C.L.R. James – who spent the last years of his life in the neighbouring district of Brixton – to use the metropolis to transform the cultural legacy of empire and to challenge the very forms of knowledge that were produced in its institutions.

Thinking about the river as the routeway for modernity and imperialism's globalizing impulses helps us bring into focus the historical processes which existed prior to the current period where the relationship between the local and the global have become more intense. Paul Gilroy has reminded us that the relationship between contemporary London and the global colonial hinterlands is not an 'other story' which should be seen as some kind of appendix to London's official story: it is an integral part of *the* story (1993a: 84). Edward Said in his book *Culture and Imperialism* sums this up beautifully:

Far from being unitary or monolithic autonomous things, cultures actually assume more 'foreign' elements, alterities, differences, than they consciously exclude. Who in India or Algeria can confidently separate out the British or French component of the past from present actualities, and who in Britain or France can draw a clear circle around British London or French Paris that would exclude the impact of India and Algeria upon those two imperial cities? (1993: 15)

Said argues persuasively that in this context we need to see imperialism not merely as an economic and political phenomenon but also as embodied within culture and enshrined within art, ideas, science and architecture. The prime meridian fixed at Greenwich in 1884 – just a few miles from Deptford – is the place from which time is measured (i.e. Greenwich Mean Time). It is also the point from which everywhere else in the world is plotted: the cartography of empire was drawn from a hill in South London. In 1894 a small group of London anarchists attempted to blow up the first meridian. This incident is dramatized in Joseph Conrad's brilliant novel *The Secret Agent*, first published in 1907 just two years after Deptford Town Hall was opened. Maybe there is a connection between the Greenwich bomb, anti-imperial sentiment and the recent theft of the Town Hall ship.

From its high perch this symbol of Deptford's imperial past oversaw the breakup of the dockyards, the dismantling of empire and the settlement of three generations of post-colonial subjects from the Caribbean, Ireland, Africa, South East Asia and Cyprus. Such diverse communities give this part of London an intensely multicultural and international resonance, and the combination of these differences refashioned the social landscape yet took on a distinctly local form. Deposited within 'the local' are present global relationships, but also we can find there the historical imprint of past connections. In his *Prison Notebooks* the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci – who was incarcerated by Benito Mussolini for his leftist politics – argued that the starting point for any critical understanding of our place in the world involves a kind of archaeology of everyday life. He wrote that we are a 'product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory' (Gramsci 1971: 324). We can extend this principle to the local context in which past and present global interconnections are registered and begin the processes of building an inventory of local/global relationships.

'FROM ROOTS TO AERIALS': SPACE, CULTURE AND TIME

The Brazilian musician Gilberto Gil has suggested that we live in an age where roots have been replaced by aerials (see Back 1996: 218). He captures the sense here that within the informational age the relationship between space, culture and time has been radically reconfigured. It took Francis Drake three years to circumnavigate the globe by ship and sail. Today through electronic media one can make the same trip through virtual means within a fraction of a second. In the context of these technological forms of integration the relationship between local and global has become more intense and immediate. It is this traffic that Gilberto Gil attempts to name. He prioritizes the importance of being 'tuned in' to the global networks that are made possible by informational **technologies**. The electronic highways of the late twentieth century have exceeded infinitely their maritime counterparts. Iain Chambers (1994) has recently argued that in contemporary societies social forms are fluid and itinerant and produced within global *routeways*. From this perspective local rootedness has been superseded by global interconnection.

This brings us back to Marshall McLuhan's visionary comments about the globe being reduced to an electronically created **global village**. David Harvey has referred to this process of reordering temporal and geographical relationships through the notion of 'time-space compression' (1989: 240). He emphasizes that under the pressure of economic and technological change, spatial and temporal distance is collapsed so that people within

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remote localities can be brought together without moving physically. In the context of financial markets this has clear consequences because changes in Japan's financial centre will immediately impact on its counterpart in Britain or the United States. Harvey also argues that this process of contraction is not smooth and lineal. Rather, he suggests that the restructuring of capitalism produces intense episodes of time-space compression where economic and social processes are 'speeded up'.

All technologies which enable travel or communication change the relationship between space and time. What makes the current period distinct is the intensity of the shift. Kevin Robins sums this up neatly: 'Globalization is about the compression of time and space horizons and the creation of a world of instantaneity and depthlessness. Global space is a space of flows, an electronic space, a decentred space in which frontiers and boundaries have become permeable' (1991: 33). The interpenetration of the local and global has a long history but today new technologies are accelerating this process at heightened frequency.

Important questions are raised here. Who is using this technology? What global geometry of power has resulted from these new and highly efficient informational networks? Does this merely result in the spread of so-called Western culture? Some have argued that these developments produce a form of *cultural imperialism*. This perspective is related to the 'dependency paradigm' associated with figures like André Gunder Frank and Walter Rodney. It suggests that international flows of technology and media hardware strengthen the dependency relationship between the West and the former colonial peripheries and promote a form of cultural homogenization. One of the criticisms of this model is that it obscures the deep effects of imperialism itself. In the same way that the culture of metropolitan London is deeply imbued with global traces, so too are cities like Bombay and Kingston, Jamaica, in part the product of the export of European religion, education and other values which long ago and perhaps irretrievably altered the cultural milieu of the colonized (Bhabha 1994).

Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi (1991) argues persuasively that emphasizing the Western domination of media and communication technologies masks the fact that the nations of the South are producing more and more complicated forms of media. Within the current situation complex forms of media flows are occurring. For example TV Globo, a major Brazilian network, exports its programmes to 128 countries including Cuba, China and Germany. It even exports its programmes back to its former colonizer – Portugal. The station produces more programmes than any other channel in the television world (Tracey, 1988). Equally, India's Bombay film industry – or 'Bollywood' – is the largest in the world, producing over 1000 films per year distributed throughout the South Asian diaspora including Britain, Canada, the United States, Scandinavia and Africa. These examples disrupt any simple notion that the global culture is being homogenized through processes of cultural imperialism.

Arjun Appadurai has attempted to explain these complex flows of culture and translocal relationship through developing a new way of describing how social relations are expressed and formulated spatially: 'The new global cultural economy has to be understood as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing centre-periphery models (even those that might account for multiple centres and peripheries)' (1990: 296). Here the notion of a 'disjunctive order' is crucial. What he means by this is that the processes of globalization are not smooth and integrated. Rather what exists within these new configurations of time, space and culture are distinct landscapes that may function in a way that remains distinct from other aspects of global culture. Appadurai argues convincingly that the process of globalization is complexly variegated. He attempts to develop a language whereby we can begin to specify and theorize the distinct forms of globalization. He refers to this as an 'elementary framework' which he defines as consisting of five spatialized units or 'scapes'. The distribution of technology he refers to as *technoscapes*; networks of international finance he calls *finanscapes*; patterns of media dissemination he designates as *mediascapes*; spatial distributions of images and meaning becomes *ideoscapes*; and finally, he names 'landscapes of persons' like tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles and guest workers as occupying a transnational *ethnoscape*. What is useful within Appadurai's approach is that he provides a series of concepts which enable us to describe how complex social relationships are sustained through time and space. More recently Appadurai has argued that the nature of these connections means that the local or regional setting becomes little more than the arena in which transnational, religious, economic and political forces are played out (Appadurai 1995).

The intensifying of global interconnection has not resulted in the flattening of cultural difference. Indeed, one might even speak of a kind of 'corporate multiculturalism' that can be found within the advertising imagery of companies like Benetton, Philips and Sony (Solomos and Back 1996: 185). Rather than a reduction of cultural diversity within commercial cultures we have seen a fascination with difference and a marketing of ethnicity and otherness (Hall 1991a). Kevin Robins has shown that globalization does not obliterate local cultures but rather packages them: 'The local and exotic are torn out of place and time to be repackaged for the world bazaar. So-called world culture may reflect a new valuation of difference and particularity but it is also very much about making a profit from it' (1991: 31). Drawing on the work of Theodore Levitt (1983), in particular his notion of the 'global standardization of segments', Robins describes the ways in which the plurality of cultural segments are expanded to world-wide proportions within the context of global markets.

One of the things which both Robins and Levitt underestimate is the flexibility that transnational corporations can have with regard to cultural difference. Advertisers are willing to integrate all kind of notions of

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difference as long as they serve their purpose. An example is Nike sportswear's use of the black director Spike Lee in their commercials. The aesthetic of urban blackness can quite comfortably be assimilated in Nike advertising because such imagery appeals to the youthful audience – both in the United States and globally – that the company is trying to attract. Yet, at the same time, the kinds of cultural representations that make it into the 'world bazaar' are highly selective. These images have to be saleable within a cultural supermarket that in large part remains dominated by a Western clientele. Stuart Hall reminds us: 'If you want to sample the exotic cuisine of other cultures in one place, it would be better to eat in Manhattan, Paris or London than in Calcutta or Delhi' (1992a: 305). The point here is that globalization can go hand in hand with the commercialization of exotic local cultures.

The growing international forms of technological integration do not necessarily undermine the potency of nationalism or other forms of localism. Globalization can strengthen local identities while still operating within the logic of time-space compression (Hall 1992a). Through the Internet electronic messages, texts and symbols can be circulated throughout the globe and accessed by anyone who has the appropriate computer hardware. Ultra-right-wing political movements seem able to combine a transnational technology with xenophobic nationalism without any contradiction. These nationalist groupings are using this technology to redraw their maps of belonging. A good example of this syndrome can be found on the American neo-fascist website The Aryan Crusader's Library (ACL), which is run by Reuben Logsdon. Beneath the title of The Aryan Crusader's Library is a map of the United States. Inside the map are the words 'Keeping America White'. Figure 3, taken from ACL, maps all the key sites of American neo-fascist activity. This includes Stormfront in West Palm Beach, the Institute of Historical Review in California, Resistance Records in Detroit and the Zündelsite across the border in Toronto, Canada. This image works at two levels. Websites and net activists are mapped within the borders of the American nation. Beyond this it plots the utopian network of American nationalists. The image is placed within a specific territory. Yet, it is equally the embodiment of a racist utopia which is entirely dependent on cyberspace to give it meaning: Greater White Amerikkka is a virtual home. The Internet provides these groups with an arena in which utopian and racially exclusive nationalism can be expressed in an unregulated fashion. These patterns disrupt received understandings of globalization and localization. The Internet serves to reinforce rather than threaten the intense forms of localization at the heart of ultra-right nationalist ideologies (see Back et al. 1996).

Returning to Gilberto Gil's prophetic comment about 'aerials' and 'roots', it is clear that the technologies of cyberspace will not necessarily undermine the 'rootedness' that is so closely related to the ideologies of nationalism and xenophobia. The progression towards a 'global village' is unevenly

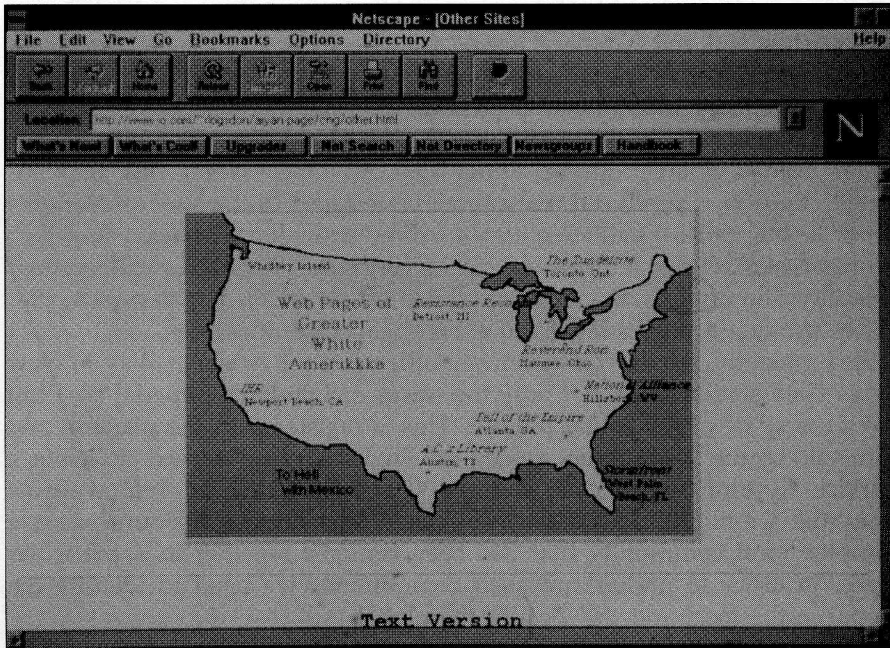


FIGURE 3 Key sites of American neo-fascist activity

developed. The technological revolution of our current informational age has radically reordered the relationship between social and economic life, time and space. Yet, this does not automatically eclipse the importance of local patterns of culture and identity.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, globalization is an uneven process in term of both its episodes of time-space compression and the communities it involves and affects. Doreen Massey (1991) has argued that an emergent 'power geometry' exists within the new global technologies. She contrasts the 'jet-setters', who are sending and receiving faxes and e-mail, controlling the news, writing books, organizing investments and international currency transactions, with 'The undocumented migrant workers from Mexico, crowding into Tijuana to make a perhaps fatal dash for it across the border into the United States to grab a chance at a new life. Here the experience of movement, and indeed the confusing plurality of cultures, is very different' (1991: 26). While the power geometry of the present age does not exactly replicate those of the imperial past, it still retains some aspects of Western domination.

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I have tried to stress the importance of looking at the local/global as a relationship and not a binary opposition. Regardless of the current, and sometimes excessive, commentary on the impact of information technology on our lives, the virtual world always exists in a relationship with its non-virtual counterpart. In this sense neighbourhoods and regions provide the nodal points where cultural routeways converge. When this happens something new is produced that cannot be reduced to the sum of its global parts. In this sense localities matter for they provide the context in which people make sense of their sometimes confusing world. For all of their volatility, the notions of solidarity which are established within particular places provide a power means to express collective identities.

As I make the return walk from my office down Lewisham Way to New Cross Gate station, I see not only the traces of London's imperial past but the signs of its post-colonial present. This is registered in the plantain and yam sold by the South Asian grocer; the English 'fry-up' served at Gem's, a Turkish Cypriot owned café; and the Caribbean 'fried chicken' available from the Cummin' Up takeaway. These transnational flavours serve a complex local community that has been brought together in a particular place. In order to understand such communities we need to identify the global in the local and the local in the global.

KEY CONCEPTS

LOCAL This is a concept that sociologists use to refer to that which is close, parochial, part of a community or a society. The local is the experience of nearness, intimacy, shared assumptions and a common pattern of communication.

GLOBAL The global is a way of speaking about the wider picture, that which is beyond the local. It is also a way of referring to the modern tendency, through technology, communications and economic forces, of the world becoming smaller and faster and having more in common, in some senses!

Multiculture A society where people from a variety of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds live in a proximity, and with a degree of interaction, is a multicultural society. Such a society makes no guarantee of integration between the groups but it has to be achieved at some level, usually that of a common language.

Technology Modern electronic means of production and communication which accelerate all social processes by enabling quicker forms of output and more rapid relationships. Technology also facilitates the exercise of power.

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Global village This is the idea that through technology and new converging forms of economy and political state that the world is shrinking and diminishing the importance of peoples differences. It also means that local differences become subservient to global decisions and global power.

Empire This refers to a state that rules and combines many territories usually brought together by defeat or capture. An empire names a cluster of societies brought together not by choice but by a dominating power. See the Roman Empire, the British Empire.