

Globalization and the Geography of Networks

Field Note Global Consumption

Walking into a Gap store in the Mall of America, my eyes were immediately drawn to a display of t-shirts on a circular table at the store's entrance. Each t-shirt had a special tag identifying it as (Gap) RED, which explained that a portion of the shirt's sale price would go directly to the Global Fund to combat AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa.

(PRODUCT) RED is a business model that creates partnerships with corporations, such as the Gap and Motorola (Figure 14.1), to establish a network of private sector funding for designated AIDS projects in Africa supported by the Global Fund.

Economic geographers have studied the geographies of consumption, focusing on spaces of consumption (discussed in Chapter 8), like the Mall of America, as well as consumer choices – how consumers make choices and whether social concerns, such as AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, factor into their purchases. According to geographer Jon Goss, economic geographers have observed an “attitude-behavior gap,” meaning that “consumers are not willing to pay higher prices for ‘cause-related products,’ lack adequate information to make effective choices, suffer from ‘care fatigue,’ respond more to short-term negative campaigns” and at the same time are concerned over “exploitation of labor and environment.”



Figure 14.1
(PRODUCT) RED offerings include items from the Gap, Converse, and Motorola. ©Tony Cenicola/The New York Times/Redux.

(PRODUCT) RED works to overcome the attitude-behavior gap by keeping the prices of RED products the same as non-RED products, by sustaining a dynamic marketing campaign, and by advocating transparency and disseminating information about the projects supported through funds raised.

The success of (PRODUCT) RED and other goods with connections to social concerns is one of many processes creating and recreating globalization. In Chapter 1, we defined **globalization** as a set of processes that are increasing interactions, deepening relationships, and heightening interdependence without regard to country borders. We explained that globalization is also a set of outcomes that are felt from these global processes—outcomes that are unevenly distributed and differently manifested across the world.

In the media and in debates on campus, the topic of globalization is often too quickly reduced to black and white—either you are for it or you are against it. If this were true, your choices as a consumer would be equally black and white. Globalization is possible because of increasing interdependence throughout the globe, where communications across people and places are relatively easy and inexpensive.

Rarely does the consumption of a certain product have a clear outcome—whether positive or negative. Jobs created by industry in one place can cause environmental damage in another. Consumption, or purchasing an item, is the end point in a commodity chain (see Chapter 10). Economic geographers study commodity chains to trace a product to its origins and discover why production occurs where and how it does and to understand the impacts of production (including labor and environmental) at each step in the commodity chain.

Take, for example, the production of an iPod. Central to the iPod is the microchip that runs the iPod's wheel, stores your favorite songs and movies, and provides high-quality sound. The iPod's microchip is produced by PortalPlayer, a Californian company with offices in India. In his piece on PortalPlayer called "The World in an iPod," journalist Andrew Leonard explains that PortalPlayer has a 24-hour development cycle because engineers in California and in India can work around the clock (with time zones 12 hours apart) to design and redesign the microchip. The actual microchips are created in Taiwan, and the commodity chain for PortalPlayer (Figure 14.2) reveals how people and places around the world interconnect to design and create the company's microchip.

The act of consumption is an end point of a commodity chain, and it is also the beginning of the product's afterlife. What happens when you discard or donate the item, or what are the costs or benefits created by the funds (whether funds for a charity or profits for a corporation) generated by your purchase? Corporations such as Apple, which sells the iPod, work to reduce consumer waste by recycling iPods and computers, and by offering discounts to consumers who recycle their old iPods. Nonetheless, in many global cities in poorer parts of the world, adults and children work in garbage dumps to recover valuable copper wire and other components of computers and other electronics made by Apple and its competitors.

Your everyday acts as consumers happen in a global context and have global (though not always easy to see or track) ramifications. In this chapter, we recognize that understanding outcomes and impacts is not an easy task, and in so doing, we focus on the geography of globalization and the outcomes of globalization across scales. We describe how people and places are interconnected and the kinds of networks they have built both because of and in spite of globalization. Finally, we examine changing identities, looking at how people make sense of themselves in a globalized world.

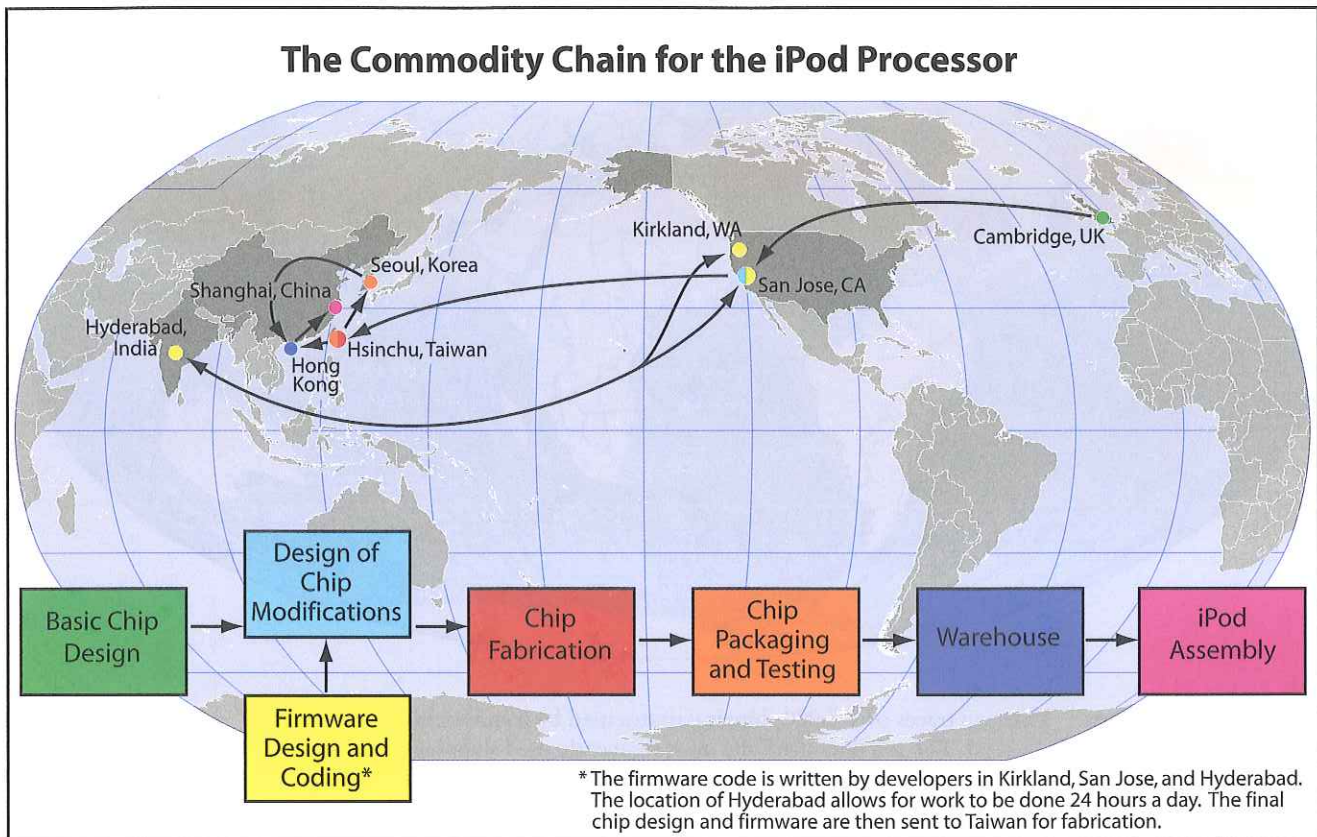


Figure 14.2

Inside an iPod: The PortalPlayer World. Map designed by Stephen P. Hanna, based on information from: Andrew Leonard, "The World in the iPod" Spiegel Online, 8 August 2005.

Key Questions For Chapter 14

1. What is globalization, and what role do networks play in globalization?
2. At what scales do networks operate in the globalized world?
3. How have identities changed in a globalized world?

WHAT IS GLOBALIZATION, AND WHAT ROLE DO NETWORKS PLAY IN GLOBALIZATION?

Whether you are in favor of or opposed to globalization, we all must recognize that globalization is "neither an inevitable nor an irreversible set of processes," as John O'Loughlin, Lynn Staeheli, and Edward Greenberg put it. Andrew Kirby explains that globalization is "not proceeding according to any particular playbook. It is not a smoothly evolving state of capitalist development." Rather, it is fragmented,

and its flows are "chaotic in terms of origins and destinations."

Globalization is a "chaotic" set of processes and outcomes created by people, be they corporate CEOs, university administrators, readers of blogs, or protesters at a trade meeting. The processes of globalization and the connectedness created through globalization are not limited to state-to-state interaction. Rather, the connectedness of globalization occurs across scales and across networks, regardless of state borders.

The backbone of globalization is trade; thus, debates over globalization typically focus on trade. To visualize how trade creates and maintains a globalized world, examine a

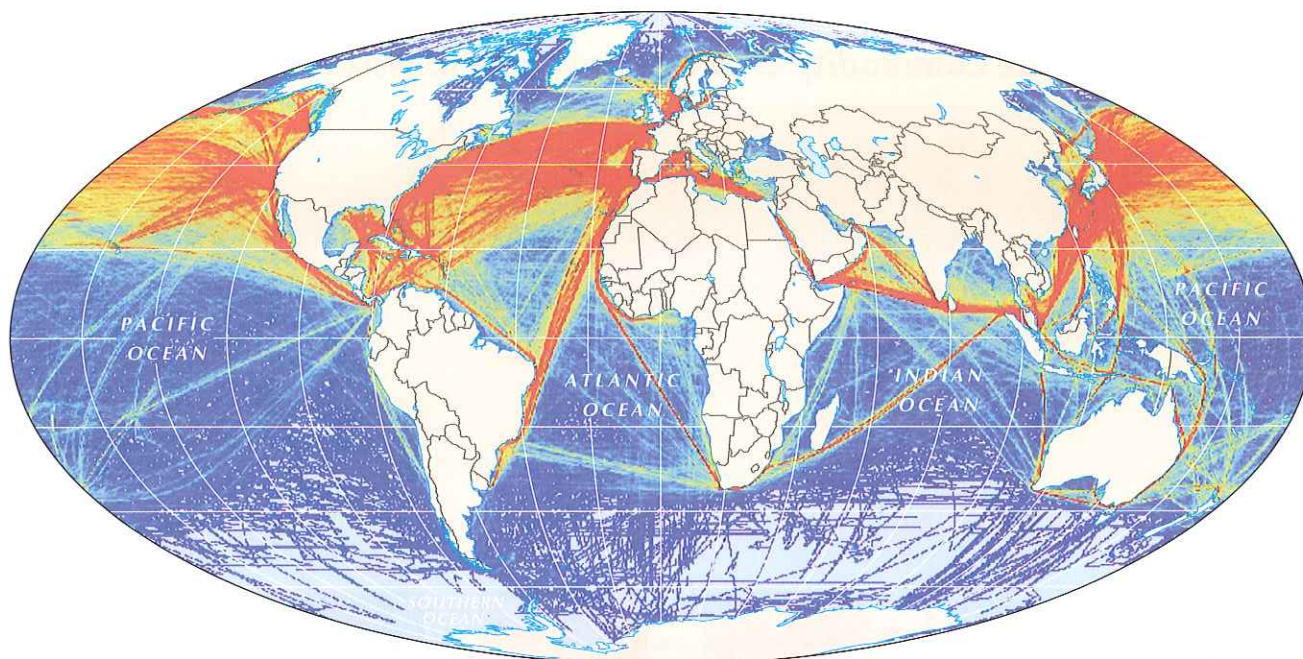


Figure 14.3

Global Shipping Lanes. The map traces over 3,000 shipping routes used by commercial and government vessels during 2006. The red lines mark the most frequently used shipping lanes, globally. Map courtesy of: National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis, <http://ebm.nceas.ucsb.edu/GlobalMarine/impacts/transformed/jpg/shipping.jpg>, last accessed August 2008.

map of shipping routes used around the world in one year (Fig. 14.3). The arguments in favor of globalization, as economist Keith Maskus states, are that “free trade raises the well-being of all countries by inducing them to specialize their resources in those goods they produce relatively most efficiently” in order to lower production costs, and that “competition through trade raises a country’s long-term growth rate by expanding access to global technologies and promoting innovation.”

These fundamental principles of free trade (and how to achieve it) are often described as the **Washington Consensus**. Antiglobalizationists see the Washington Consensus as a Western push for the rest of the world to privatize state-owned entities, to open financial markets, to liberalize trade by removing restrictions on the flow of goods, and to encourage foreign direct investment. Antiglobalizationists focus on the role of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization as purveyors of the Washington Consensus, often gathering at the meetings of these major global organizations because they see the organizations as set up to benefit the countries of the global economic core. (Fig. 14.4) Antiglobalizationists argue that the countries of the core continue to protect their own economies while

forcing the countries of the semi-periphery and periphery to open their economies to foreign direct investment and to remove protections on their domestic production. According to Maskus, the rules negotiated for the World Trade Organization “inevitably reflect the economic interest of powerful lobbyists” in states such as the United States and the European Union. Antiglobalizationists agree with Maskus and argue that free trade is not “free;” rather, it builds up a global economic network that sends most benefits to the core.

With globalization, we are living on an unprecedented scale. As Andrew Kirby perceptively describes it, we are living “not so much in a world without boundaries, or in a world without geography—but *more literally in a world*, as opposed to a neighborhood or a region” (emphasis added). What does it mean to live “in a world?”

Networks

Manuel Castells defines **networks** as “a set of interconnected nodes” without a center. The idyllic network is horizontally structured, with power shared among all participants and ideas flowing in all directions. The multitude

Field Note

“You cannot come to southern Brazil without seeing our biggest city,” said the vintner who was showing me around the Cooperativa Aurora, the huge winery in Bento Gonçalves, in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. “Besides, it’s January, so they’ll be having the big marches, it’s almost like carnival time in Rio!”

So I headed for Porto Alegre, only to find that a hotel room was not to be had. Tens of thousands of demonstrators had converged on the State’s capital, largest port, and leading industrial city—and what united them was opposition to globalization.

It was not quite a carnival, but the banners held aloft by the noisy, sometimes singing and dancing demonstrators left no doubt as to their common goals.

The World Social Forum has become an annual event held in cities around the world, with ever-larger marches and meetings to protest the actions of the world’s dominant states, especially the United States. The World Social Forum is a network of antiglobalizationists—people who seek an alternative economic reality for the globe, one not centered on accumulation of capital. Socialist economic views, leftist political leanings, and support for minority causes combine each year at the World Social Forum in a show of strength.”



Figure 14.4
Porto Alegre, Brazil. © Lima Agliberto/Gamma-Press/Zuma Press.

of networks that exist in the world—financial, transportation, communication, kinship, corporate, nongovernmental, trade, government, media, education, and dozens of others—enable globalization to occur and create a higher degree of interaction and interdependence among people than ever before in human history.

While networks have always existed, Castells says that they have fundamentally changed over the last 20 years as a result of the diffusion of information technology that links places in a global, yet uneven, way. Through information technology networks, Castells argues that globalization has proceeded by “linking up all that, according to dominant interests, has value anywhere in the planet, and discarding anything (people, firms, territories, resources) which has no value or becomes devalued.” Information technology networks link some places more than others, helping to create the spatial unevenness of globalization as well as the uneven outcomes of globalization.

Time–Space Compression

Access (or lack of access) to information technology networks creates time–space compression (Chapters 1 and 4). Time–space compression means that certain places, such

as global cities (especially in the core), are more interconnected than ever through communication and transportation networks, and that other places, such as those in the periphery, are farther removed than ever. According to Castells, the age of information technology networks has been more revolutionary than even the advent of the printing press or the Industrial Revolution. He claims that we are just at the beginning of this age “as the Internet becomes a universal tool of interactive communication, as we shift from computer-centered technologies to network-diffused technologies, as we make progress in nanotechnology (and thus in the diffusion capacity of information devices), and even more important, as we unleash the biology revolution, making possible for the first time, the design and manipulation of living organisms, including human parts.”

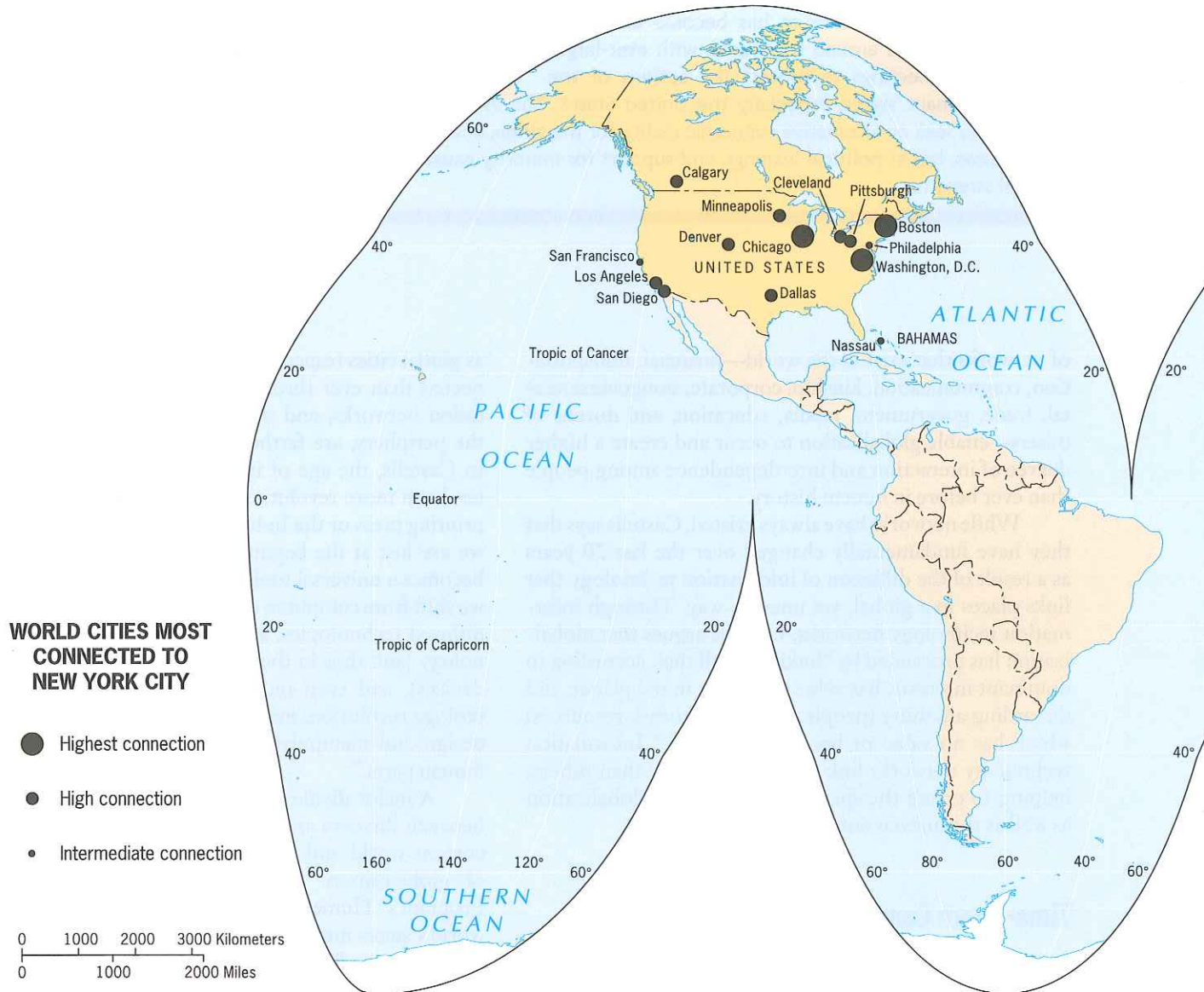
A major divide in access to information technology between the core and periphery is both a hallmark of the current world and an example of the uneven outcomes of globalization. The United Nations Development Program’s Human Development Report divides the world’s states into high income, middle income, and low income (according to gross domestic product) and reports on accessibility to technology according to these classes. In 2005, the World Resources Institute reported that on

average high-income states had 527 telephone mainlines, 849 cellular subscribers, and 571 Internet users per 1000 people. On average, middle-income states had 209 telephone mainlines, 382 cellular subscribers, and 111 Internet users per 1000 people. The states in the low-income class had an average of 35 telephone mainlines, 78 cellular subscriptions, and 43 Internet users per 1000 people.

The quickening pace of change in technology is another hallmark of the globalized world and magnifies the global technological divide. We may be shocked to see how quickly technology has changed and diffused. In 1992, the highest income states had on average only 10 cellular subscribers and 2.5 Internet users per 1000 people (contrasted with 849 and 571, respectively, in 2005).

Figure 14.5

World Cities Most Connected to New York City. This map shows the 30 world cities that are the most connected to New York City, as measured by flows in the service economy. *Data from:* P. J. Taylor and R. E. Lang, "U.S. Cities in the 'World City Network,'" The Brookings Institution, Survey Series, February 2005. http://www.brookings.edu/dybdocroot/metro/pubs/20050222_worldcities.pdf, last accessed September 2005.

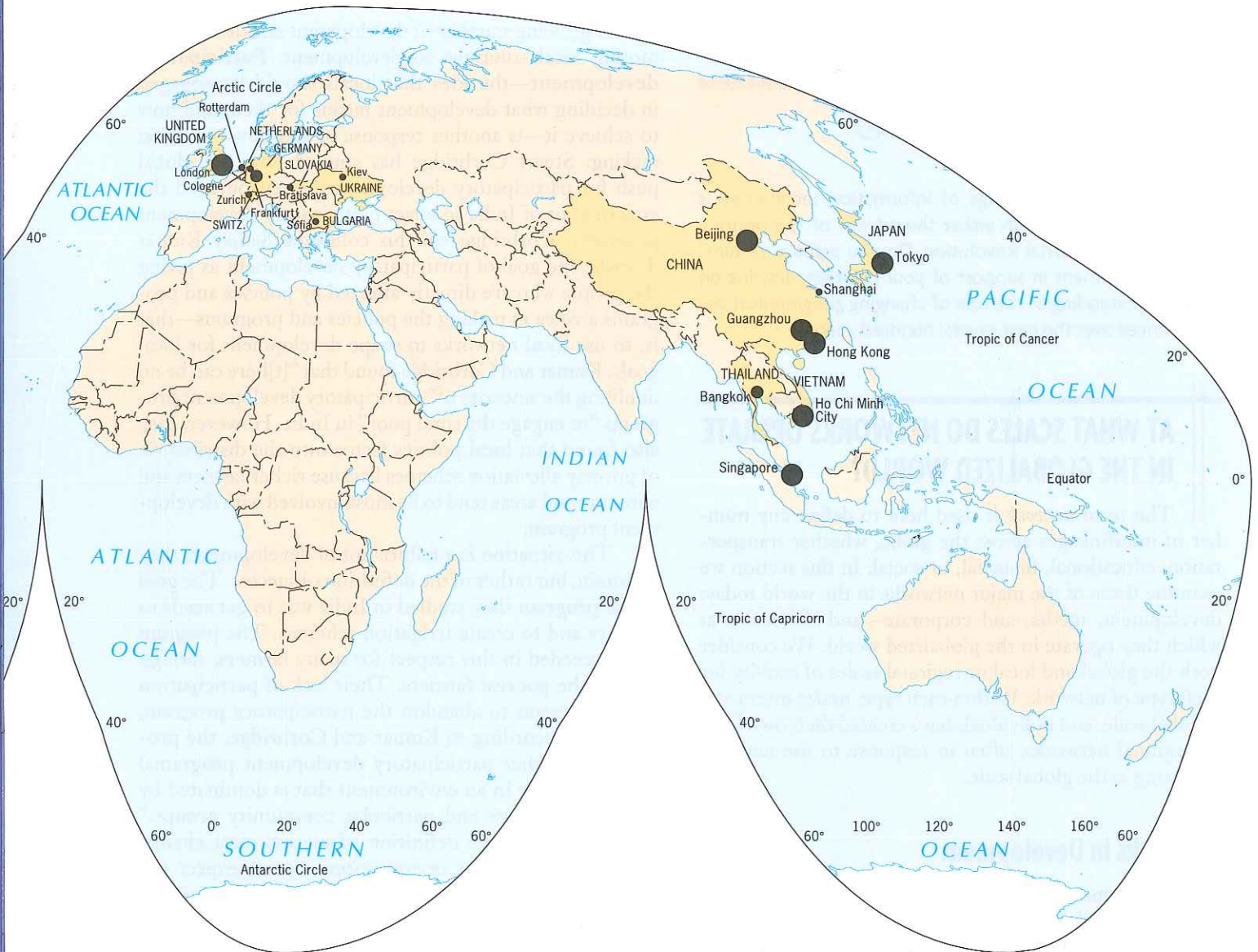


Global Cities

Time-space compression has helped both to create and reinforce a network of highly linked global cities. In Chapter 9, we discussed the growth of *global cities* in the core, semi-periphery, and periphery of the globe and the growth in their connectedness. We considered much of the research published by geographers in the Globalization and World Cities group based in the United Kingdom. The group of researchers who contribute to the Globalization and World Cities group use network analyses of global cities to examine levels of connectivity among cities for factors such as air

travel between cities and global outreach of financial and advertising networks from global cities, and to generate data by individual cities rather than by countries.

The researchers generated data for 315 global cities, focusing on the interactions and connections among them. They measured the information technology flows among the cities by tracking the flow of advanced services among the cities, focusing on accounting, advertising, banking/finance, insurance, law, and management consulting. Figure 14.5 shows the 30 cities that are most connected to New York City, as measured by the flow of



advanced services. By tracking flows, the authors found that Miami, not Los Angeles, is the U.S. city most closely linked to Latin America and New York is the second most *globally* linked city in the world (behind London and ahead of Tokyo). Chicago is also a highly ranked member of the global city network, coming in seventh. The researchers found that New York and Chicago stand apart from other world cities in that these American cities have greater domestic linkages than global cities in the Pacific Rim or the European Union.

The linkages among global cities provide insights into the spatial character of the networks that underlie globalized processes. A multitude of globalized processes such as financial transactions and flows (represented here by banking/finance and accounting) occur across the network of global cities. Similarly, this network reflects the flow of advertising and marketing consultation services, which in turn reflects the flow of ideas through the media across the globe.



Castells claims that the age of information technology is more revolutionary than either the advent of the printing press or the Industrial Revolution. Do you agree with him? Write an argument in support of your position, drawing on your understanding of the role of changing geographical circumstances over the past several hundred years.

AT WHAT SCALES DO NETWORKS OPERATE IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD?

The term *network* is used here to define any number of interlinkages across the globe, whether transportation, educational, financial, or social. In this section we examine three of the major networks in the world today: development, media, and corporate—and the scales at which they operate in the globalized world. We consider both the global and local or regional scales of activity for each type of network. Within each type, nodes interact at a global scale, and individuals have created their own local or regional networks, often in response to the network operating at the global scale.

Networks in Development

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have propagated a web of global development networks over the last 20 years in response to the top-down decision making (e.g., structural adjustment loans) coming from global

organizations dominated by the core (e.g., the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund). Development networks are seen as counterhegemonic, serving as a response to the power of the major decision makers in the world. The goal of NGOs is to include the voices of the poor and those directly affected by development, permitting them to express their opinions and lifestyles. In development networks, northern NGOs and southern NGOs work together to reach a consensus on how to achieve economic development in a particular place.

Despite the goal of sharing power across a network, most development networks (like most other networks) have power differences within them. Indeed, Leroi Henry, Giles Mohan, and Helen Yanacopulos find that power relationships exist both within and between networks. Many networks have hierarchies of power within them, often privileging the views NGOs in the core, as opposed to those in the periphery.

A growing number of development entities are promoting local solutions to development. **Participatory development**—the idea that locals should be engaged in deciding what development means for them and how to achieve it—is another response to top-down decision making. Stuart Corbridge has studied how the global push for participatory development has encouraged the government of India to enact participatory development programs. Corbridge and his colleague Sanjay Kumar describe the goal of participatory development as giving the people who are directly affected by policies and programs a voice in making the policies and programs—that is, to use local networks to shape development for local goals. Kumar and Corbridge found that “[t]here can be no doubting the sincerity of” participatory development programs “to engage the rural poor” in India. However, they also found that local politics factor into the distribution of poverty alleviation schemes because richer farmers and elites in rural areas tend to be most involved with development program.

This situation is a failure not of development, they maintain, but rather of the definition of success. The goal of the program they studied in India was to get seeds to farmers and to create irrigation schemes. The program has succeeded in this respect for many farmers, though not for the poorest farmers. Their lack of participation is not a reason to abandon the participatory program, however. According to Kumar and Corbridge, the program (like other participatory development programs) has to “operate in an environment that is dominated by better off farmers and particular community groups.” They argue that the definition of success must change because development organizations cannot expect the poorest to “participate in groups that have little meaning for them.”

The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and even state governments are increasingly embracing

the ideal of participatory development, loosening demands for trade liberalization in the periphery and semiperiphery. As Kumar and Corbridge explain, politics will enter participatory development, just as it enters the development networks and the global development organizations. The goal of participatory development is worthwhile, even if the short-term results do not mesh with Western concepts of success.

Local Currencies

Another way people in localities, whether in the core, semiperiphery, or periphery, shape local development is by establishing local currencies. Uneven development affects not just the periphery but also the core and semiperiphery. Economic downturns are a frequent occurrence in local places, and unemployment is a common result. As Michael Pacione explains, finding families and neighbors who can help in times of economic hardship can be quite difficult because globalization results in less connectedness:

Social trends inherent in global capitalism, including decreasing household size, increasing distance between relatives, and attenuation of neighboring relations within cities, have served to inhibit the operation of informal relations in which disadvantaged households could exchange goods and services for partial or no payment within the “moral” economy of their own family or neighborhood.

During the 1980s, the people of Vancouver Island, Canada, established the first **local exchange trading system (LETS)**. When the two major employers in the area, a U.S. Air Force base and a lumber mill, closed, many of the island’s 50,000 people faced severe economic hardship. The community began a local currency, LETS, through which members traded services or goods in a local network separated from the formal economy. People who needed services (such as plumbing) would pay others with their own services or goods (such as providing accounting services in exchange for the plumbing call).

LETS systems and other local currency systems are alternatives to global norms of development, serving as a local response to global or regional economic change affecting a locality (Fig. 14.6). Because the currency is local, it fuels the local economy: it can only be traded locally, thus keeping economic activity locally. The person who spends LETS for shoes, for example, can only spend them at the local shoe store, and not at an online store or in a catalog.

The number of local currencies in use in the world today total well over 1000. Many local currencies are used in rural areas, but local currencies have also found success in cities as diverse as Glasgow, Scotland and Berkeley,

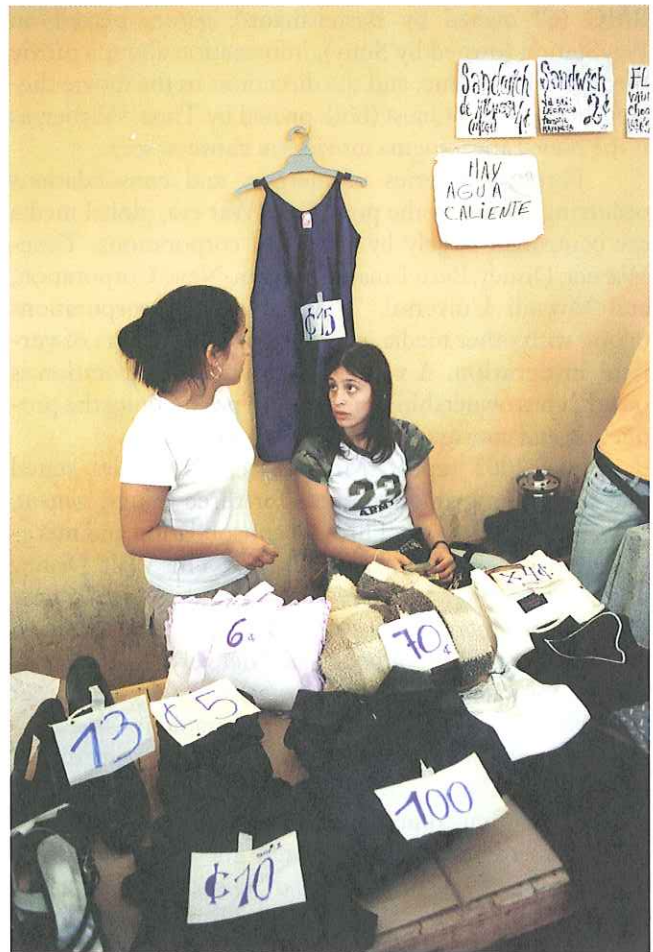


Figure 14.6

Bernal Buenos Aires, Argentina. Since its economic crisis began, the number of local currencies in Argentina has proliferated, now hovering around 5000 different local currencies and barter clubs. In this suburb of Buenos Aires, girls sell clothing that is priced with “credits,” a value system established in their local currency system. © Homer Sykes/Alamy.

California. In Berkeley, the local currency did not develop as a response to economic hardship. In Berkeley, the local currency developed from a desire to not support the global currency system.

Networks in Media

Global diffusion of products and ideas associated with popular culture depends largely on global media and retail store networks as well as the advertising practices in which both engage. The global media today encompass much more than print, radio, and television; they also include spaces of entertainment, such as the New Amsterdam Theater in Times Square in New York (owned by Disney); songs produced under record labels like RCA, Jive, and

BMG (all owned by Bertelsmann); games played on PlayStation (owned by Sony); information about a movie through MovieFone, and the directions to the movie theater through MapQuest (both owned by Time-Warner, as is the New Line Cinema movie you chose to see).

Through a series of mergers and consolidations occurring mostly in the post-Cold War era, global media are controlled largely by six global corporations: Time-Warner, Disney, Bertelsmann, Viacom, News Corporation, and Vivendi Universal. These six media corporations (along with other media corporations) are masters of **vertical integration**. A vertically integrated corporation is one that has ownership in a variety of points along the production and consumption of a commodity chain.

In a 2003 report, Miguel Mendes Pereira stated that media companies compete for three things: *content*, *delivery*, and *consumers*. Through consolidation and mergers, global media companies such as The Walt Disney Corporation (Fig. 14.7) are vertically integrated to gain content (production companies, radio shows, television programming, films, or books) and delivery (radio, television stations, magazines, and movies). Delivery of content also refers to the infrastructure of technology—the proprietary technologies used for creating and sharing digital media. Vertical integration also helps media giants attract and maintain customers through **synergy**, or the cross promotion of vertically integrated goods. For example, within the vertical integration of Disney, you can visit Disney's Hollywood studios at Walt Disney World, go to a High School Musical Pep Rally, and meet the muppets characters at Muppet vision 3-D. Then, you can hop over to Disney's Animal Kingdom to catch the Festival of the Lion King, based on the Disney Theatrical Production that was based on the Walt Disney Picture.

Vertical integration of media changes the geography of the flow of ideas globally by limiting the ultimate number of **gatekeepers**, that is, people or corporations that control access to information. A gatekeeper can choose not to tell a story and the story will not be heard. We can interpret the consolidation of media as resulting in fewer ultimate gatekeepers. In this vein, we would see the ultimate gatekeepers as the big media conglomerates. Or we can focus on the competition for customers and the proliferation of sources of delivery for media (the vast number of cable television channels, radio stations, Internet sources, and magazines) and argue that there are more gatekeepers in the world today. The diversity of media outlets supports this proposition, with television channels geared to specific segments (or markets) of the population. For example, both the globally reaching Al-Jazeera satellite television station and the new cable channels in the United States that are targeted toward the Muslim American population are geared to specific segments of the global or American population.

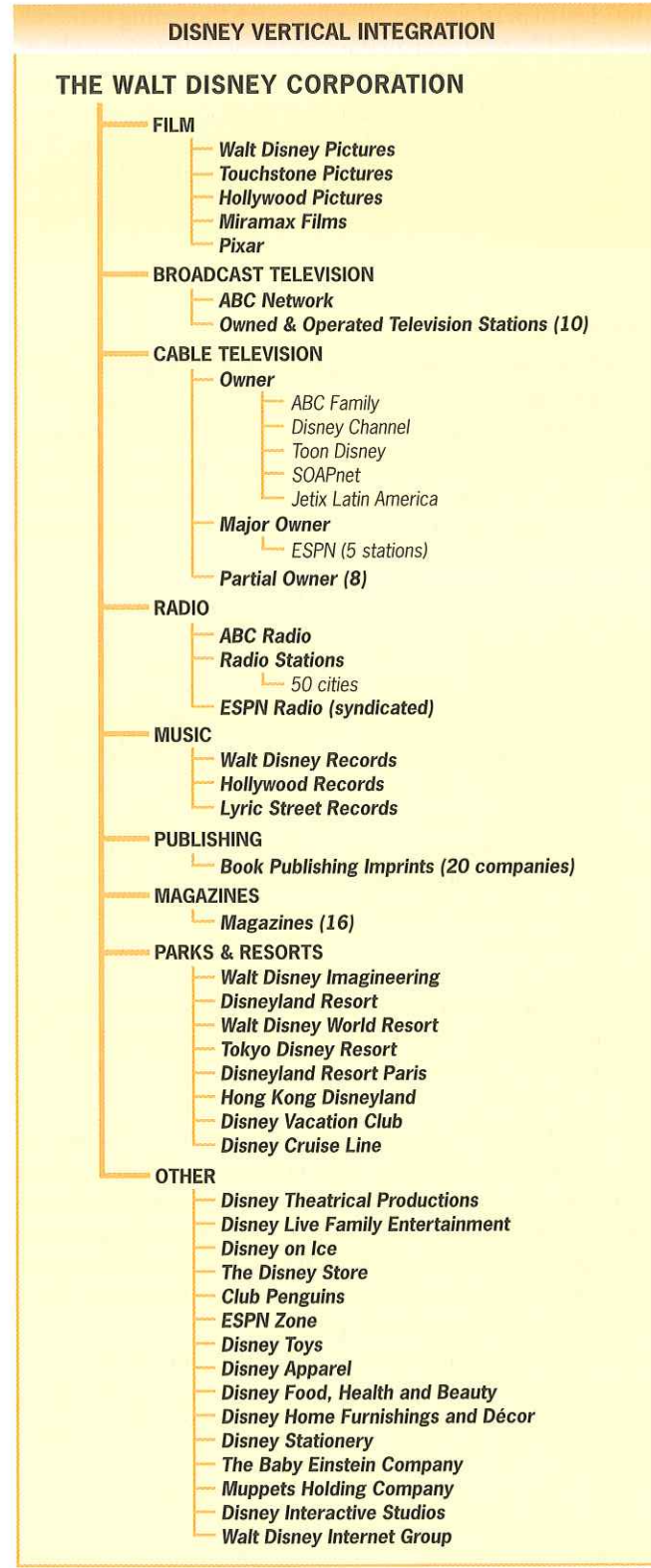


Figure 14.7

The Walt Disney Corporation. Data from: Columbia Journalism Review, Who Owns What. <http://www.cjrarchives.org/tools/owners/disney.asp>

Blogs

Historically, governments and journalists had the ability to be strong gatekeepers by choosing what stories to release or tell. Today, with the extraordinary growth of blogs on the Internet (upwards of 8 million in 2004 and over 100 million in 2008), tight gatekeeping is much more difficult. A blog is a free service provided on the Internet to post individual thoughts, photographs, and experiences, and to create links to websites or other blogs. Blogs are in many ways an individual way of creating local, regional, or global networks that respond to (and exist separate from) the global network of media.

Anyone with access to the Internet can read a blogger's postings and comment on them. Blogger, the original blog site created by the small company Pyra Labs in 1999, was sold to Google. Media giants are finding their way into the blogosphere (as the blog space of the Internet is called) with sites such as MSN spaces and AOL journals. The blog site hosts your blog for free and provides a format for your blog, so that you need know nothing about website publishing. Blogs influenced the U.S. elections in 2004 and 2008. They also help with cross promotion by linking other websites, and they spur stories in the mainstream media.

Networks of Retail Corporations

Unlike major media corporations that are vertically integrated, major retail corporations are typically horizontally integrated. A horizontally integrated corporation is one that at first glance appears to be different retail companies in pursuit of different market shares; however, all of the retail companies are owned by the same parent corporation.

Horizontal integration means that when you shop for similar products in different places or across a mall, your dollars will often support the same parent corporation. If you go to the mall to buy a pair of jeans, your choice to shop at Banana Republic, the Gap, and Old Navy sends your dollars to the same parent company. And your choice to take a break at the food court to drink a Gatorade, eat a bag of Doritos, and buy a Quaker granola bar for later also sends your dollars to the same parent corporation (in this case, PepsiCo). You may look up and wonder when Taco Bell started selling Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut pizza (all three are part of YUM! corporation, which also owns A&W, and Long John Silvers. YUM! is a spin-off of PepsiCo).

Neil Wrigley, Neil Coe, and Andrew Currah have studied the globalization of retail corporations, such as Wal-Mart (U.S.), Costco (U.S.), Ikea (Sweden), Metro (Germany), and Carrefour (France). In their comparison of manufacturing corporations and retail corporations,

they found that global retailers are more spatially disaggregated, with stores in hundreds or thousands of locations, whereas global manufacturers are more spatially concentrated, especially at production sites. In addition, global retailers engage directly with consumers and have a local presence in a place that manufacturing corporations do not. Consumers who enter local stores interact directly with the global retailer at the local scale.

Also at the local scale, people have created numerous networks of protest against the building of global retail stores in their locality, whereas others have created networks to encourage and invite such stores into their community.

Analyzing the global consolidation of media, the global networks of development, and the global presence of retail corporations helps us see the diversity of global networks, with some increasingly centralized and others increasingly disaggregated. In each case, the global network does not change local places uniformly. People interact with the global network, shaping it, resisting it, embracing it, and responding to globalization in unique ways.



Think of a place you have been where the global media have worked to create a synergy. Describe the presence of the global media entity in the place and show how the global media have imprinted the cultural landscape of the place. How has that imprint affected your experience in (and your sense of) the place?

HOW HAVE IDENTITIES CHANGED IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD?

Gillian Rose defines identity as “how we make sense of ourselves” and explains that we have identities at different scales: we have local, national, regional, and global identities. At each scale, place factors into our identities. We infuse places with meaning and emotions based on our experiences in those places. Few people living in the globalized world today are world travelers. And many of those who have traveled the globe have missed out on the uniqueness of place by visiting only global cities, living the lives of businesspeople (visiting airports, office buildings, and hotels), or staying in luxurious resorts (separated from the “local”) as tourists. How, then, can a person have a global identity if he or she has not experienced the globe?

Guest Field Note

Columbine, Colorado

I took this photo at the dedication ceremony for the memorial to the victims of the Columbine High School shooting of April 20, 1999. Columbine is located near Littleton, Colorado, in Denver's southern suburbs. The memorial, dedicated on September 21, 2007, provides a quiet place for meditation and reflection in a public park adjacent to the school. Hundreds came to the ceremony to honor those killed and wounded in the attack, one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history.

After tragedies like the Columbine shootings, creating a memorial often helps to rebuild a sense of community. Public ceremonies like this can set an example for survivors

who may otherwise have difficulty facing their loss in private. A group memorial helps to acknowledge the magnitude of the community's loss and, by so doing, helps assure families and survivors that the victims did not suffer alone—that their deaths and wounds are grieved by the entire community. Memorials are important too because they can serve as a focus for remembrance and commemoration long into the future, even after all other evidence of a tragedy has disappeared.

In my research for *Shadowed Ground* I have visited hundreds of such places in the United States and Europe. I am still surprised by the power of such places and the fact that shrines and memorials resulting from similar tragedies are tended lovingly for decades, generations, and centuries. They produce strong emotions and sometimes leave visitors—including me—in tears. But by allowing individuals to share loss, tragedy, and sorrow with others, they create a sense of common purpose.

Kenneth E. Foote, University of Colorado at Boulder



Figure 14.8
Columbine, Colorado. © Ken Foote.

Globalization networks interlink us, and the flow of information technology is a daily way in which we are interlinked with the globe. A person may be overwhelmed by the flow of information and choose to ignore it, but even this person has a global identity. People identify themselves by identifying with or against at the local, regional, and global scales. As the flow of information continues, many people feel a need to make sense of the world by identifying with people and places. People personalize the flow of information, and in so doing they feel more connected to the globe and alter their local cultural landscapes to reflect their feeling of connectedness.

Personal Connectedness

The news in 1995 that Princess Diana had died traveled quickly from global media sources among friends, family, and even strangers. Many felt the need to mourn for a

princess they had never met in a place they had never been. Some wanted to leave a token offering for the princess—a rose, a note, a candle, a photograph. Impromptu shrines to Princess Diana cropped up at the British embassy in Washington, D.C., and at British embassies and consulates around the world. People in Britain left countless flowers at the royal palace in London, where Princess Diana resided.

In an incredibly divided world, in which the rift between rich and poor is growing at the global scale, what made people feel connected to a woman who represented the royal family, an elite group of people of wealth and privilege? The idea that people around the world are linked and have shared experiences, such as death, tragedy, and sorrow, draws from Benedict Anderson's concept of the nation as an imagined community (see Chapter 8). When massive tragedies such as 9/11, the Indian Ocean tsunami, or Hurricane Katrina occur, people often talk about someone they knew who was in the place (or had been at some point), someone who died (even those they did not know

but heard about in the news), or an act of bravery or triumph that occurred in the midst of tragedy. The desire to *personalize*, to *localize* a tragedy feeds off of the imagined global community in which we live. In the process of personalizing and localizing, a tragedy can be *globalized* in an effort to appeal to the humanity of all people in the hope that all feel or experience the loss tangentially.

When a death or a tragedy does happen, how do people choose a local space in which to express a personal and/or global sorrow? In a world where some academics argue that place and territory are unimportant because things like global superhighways of information transcend place, people continue to recognize territories and create places. In the case of Princess Diana's death, people created hundreds of spaces of sorrow to mourn the loss of a magnanimous person whose life was cut short. In the case of September 11, people transformed homes, schools, public spaces, and houses of worship into spaces of reflection by creating human chains, participating in moments of silence, or holding prayer vigils for the victims.

In his book *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, Kenneth Foote examines the "spontaneous shrines" created at the place of loss or at a place that represents loss and describes these spontaneous shrines as a "first stage in the commemoration of a disaster." Foote draws from extensive field research of landscapes of tragedy

and violence in the United States to show how people mark or do not mark tragedy, both immediately with spontaneous shrines and in the longer term with permanent memorials (Fig. 14.8). He examines the struggles over whether and how to memorialize significant people or experienced tragedy. His research focuses on the United States, and after tracing and following the stories of hundreds of people and places, Foote concludes that "the debate over what, why, when, and where to build" a memorial for a person or event is "best considered a part of the grieving process."

Foote realized that the ways sites are memorialized or not vary over time and across a multitude of circumstances, depending on whether funding is available, the kind of structure to be built, who is being remembered (only those who died or also those injured?), whether the site represents a socially contested event (which often happens when racism is involved), and whether people want to remember the site. In recent American history, major terrorist attacks have been memorialized, often with the word "closure" evoked. Oklahoma City permanently memorialized the site of a terrorist attack at the Murrah Federal Building on the five-year anniversary of the tragedy. Other tragedies, such as that experienced at the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001 take longer to memorialize (Fig. 14.9). Millions of people have a personal connection to the World Trade

Figure 14.9

New York, New York. The World Trade Center site is undergoing construction of a \$3.2 billion transportation hub, slated to open in 2013. By 2011, a portion of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum is slated to open, with the rest opening by 2013. This photo was taken September 10, 2007 at the site where almost 3,000 people died on September 11, 2001.

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Center site, and so consensus as to how the site should be memorialized and used has been elusive.

The din of information flowing our way each day is often overwhelming. As people filter through or ignore the flow of information, they may personalize the information and may differentiate themselves from particular people or places, but in the end many people's identities are shaped by the global scale. Living in a world, at a scale we have not experienced previously, changes us and profoundly changes places. Globalization, for good or for ill, has modified how we interact and has shaped how

we make sense of ourselves in our world, our state, our region, our locality.



Think of a large-scale tragedy you can remember, such as September 11, the Indian Ocean tsunami, or Hurricane Katrina. In what ways have memorials of that tragedy reflected both globalization and localization at the same time?

Summary

Globalization has been compared to a runaway train blowing through stations leaving much of the world to stare at its caboose. Yet this description is not entirely accurate. Globalization is a series of processes, not all of which are headed in the same direction. Even those processes headed down the globalization track are often stopped, sent back to the previous station, or derailed. The globalization track is not inevitable or irreversible (in the words of O'Loughlin, Staeheli, and Greenberg). Many of the most important globalization processes take place within networks of global cities (see Chapter 9), of places linked by popular culture (see Chapter 4), of governments (see Chapter 8), of trade (see Chapter 12), and of development (see Chapter 10). People and places are found all along these networks, and just as globalization influences people and places, those same people and places influence globalization's trajectory and future.

Geographic Concepts

globalization
Washington Consensus
networks
participatory development

local exchange trading
system (LETS)
vertical integration

synergy
gatekeepers
horizontal integration

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About media ownership

Columbia Journalism Review's Who Owns What Website
www.cjr.org/tools/owners/

About (PRODUCT) RED
www.joinred.com

About the GlobalFund
www.theglobalfund.org/EN/

About the Network of World Cities
http://www.brook.edu/metro/pubs/20050222_worldcities.pdf

About the World Social Forum
www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/