Chapter 26

The Fate of the Local

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Understanding Locality

Discussions about global processes are typically grounded in two key premises. First, globalization is an evolutionary process that is unavoidably and irrevocably changing the world. Second, the homogenizing and unifying aspects of the globalization process are eliminating local cultures and replacing them with a generic, uniform global culture. Among critics of globalization, one of the most prominent suggestions for defeating globalization – or at the very least stemming its tide – is an imperative to locate, rescue and preserve local cultures. Often combined with anticapitalism movements such as the protests that accompany World Trade Organization meetings, these efforts to sustain the local are often framed as efforts to protect local, small-scale communities that are in danger of losing their unique lifestyles and independence to the forces of global imperialism. As Anthony Giddens has described it, today's global world is a 'runaway world' that is increasingly out of our control (2000: 20). From the local perspective, however, none of these premises completely explain how globalization transforms local communities and their culture. Globalization does indeed greatly impact the way people in local communities relate to each other, and the cultural practices that they follow, but it often does so with the active agency of people in local societies who choose particular life strategies, selectively adopt non-local cultural practices and desire commodities that are exchanged in the expanding global market. Moreover, people in local communities throughout the world are transformed by globalization unequally; those with more economic and social resources can exercise their agency more profoundly than others.

Our task in this chapter is to explore how accounts of globalization have grappled with the question of the local. That is, to what extent do scholars acknowledge the local in their accounts of globalization? When they do recognize the local, what does this local look like? To what extent do perspectives on the local adequately

account for changes? Can the local ever change, or is it forever doomed to one of two fates: disappearance or preservation in analytical formaldehyde?

LOSS OF THE LOCAL

Although globalization is generally recognized as a feature of the late twentieth century, global interconnections between different local communities have in fact long existed throughout history. Archaeological excavations and historical documents attest to the dispersal of social and material artefacts from far-flung cultures throughout the world (Wolf 1982; Mintz 1985). Ancient trade routes linking Asia, Africa, Oceania and eventually Europe and the New World facilitated the movement of people, goods and cultural practices across the globe. Similarly, although concerns with the disappearance of the local are most recognizable to studies of globalization from the past 20 years, this, too, is not a recent development. Already in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, social theorists like Karl Marx were ruminating on the implications of global trade and industrialization for local communities. Marx anticipated the positive potential of international commerce and technological innovation for the improvement of living standards, labour relations and international cooperation. But at the same time, he raised questions about the consequences for local communities who suddenly found themselves caught up in political, economic and social forces that drew them into relationships with other cultural systems and societies. On the one hand, Marx's vision for social change was predicated on a global community of workers who, united, could change global political structures. But on the other hand, when Marx cast his gaze to the effects of political and economic globalization on specific communities, he voiced concerns about the ability of cultural traditions to withstand these forces. For the specific case of the British colonialist project in India, Marx writes 'England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing. This loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one, imparts a particular kind of melancholy to the present misery of the Hindoo, and separates Hindostan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions, and from the whole of its past history' (Marx 1978: 654-5). Marx's despondency at the loss of cultural specificity in the late nineteenth century foreshadows later critiques of global capitalism in the late twentieth century.

What makes globalization the dominant concern in the twenty-first century is that the degree of rapidity, influence and reach of transnational flows is changing the very fabric of everyday life in profound ways. Consequently, one of the most prevalent and recurring fears articulated by globalization foes among academics and the general public is that local communities and cultures are being displaced, destroyed and eliminated by global forces at a greater rate and to a greater extent than ever before. Contemporary social analysts link these developments with a host of social pathologies: identity crises brought about by the erosion of the cultural values on which individual societies are based (Friedman 1991; Huntington 2004; King and Craig 2002); the disappearance of civic engagement (Putnam 2000); the commodification of social life (Barber 1995); and the loss of meaning in everyday life (Ritzer 2004).

For the specific issue of 'the local', social analysts have observed that global processes have uprooted communities and lifestyles from their historical, geographical and cultural origins (Featherstone 1995; Giddens 1990). At the same time, physical spaces themselves are transformed as interconnections of diverse localities in the postmodern capitalist production process have made local boundaries more porous, segmenting local communities along geographical lines that are not contiguous (Harvey 1990). It is, as Clifford writes, a struggle to 'define the local, as a distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement' (Clifford 1994: 308). Anthony Giddens writes that places are no longer real but have become phantasmagoric' (Giddens 1990: 140). Benjamin Barber observes that there is no longer any 'there' there: 'You are nowhere. You are everywhere. Inhabiting an abstraction. Lost in cyberspace' (Barber 1995: 99). In a similar perspective, Mike Featherstone has written that 'Localism and a sense of place give way to the anonymity of "no place spaces", or simulated environments in which we are unable to feel an adequate sense of being at home' (1995: 102). In this perspective, local spaces take on the feel of the surreal - they are simulacra of reality and not necessarily reality themselves (see also Stewart 1988).

At the same time, globalization also speeds up the tempos of daily life. Advances in telephone and media technology have helped make the world smaller and more instantaneous. During the Gulf War in the early 1990s, CNN led the way in bringing news to people's living rooms. More than that, CNN's live format meant that viewers could watch events unfold in real time. High speed transportation systems mean that tuna caught off the coast of Maine can be eaten in a Tokyo restaurant within a matter of hours (Bestor 2004). Advances in telephone technology make it possible to 'reach out and touch someone' anytime, anywhere in the world. GSM (the Global System for Mobile Communications) means that people can travel the world with the same phone number and not be physically located in one single place. High speed communications systems enable software employees who are physically located in Ireland, India and the United States to work collaboratively at the same time as if they were in cubicles next to each other (Riain 2000); in fact, this chapter was written by two authors who were on two different continents at the time (one was in China while the other was in the United States, on her way to Russia). The next time you visit the drive-through at your favourite restaurant, your order may be taken by an employee working half-way around the world.¹ Rapid transnational flows of media and information through the Internet and satellites have created what Arjun Appadurai has referred to as a 'mediascape' that is crucial to the work of the imagination that structures social relations and generates possibilities. As a result, people's experiences of both time and space have become volatile - subject to rapid and intense change, dislocation and disjuncture that Harvey refers to as 'the postmodern condition'.

New technologies that facilitate processes of 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1990) make the world feel smaller and more intimate (Robertson 1992; Tomlinson 1999), which in turn affects how people identify themselves and their attachments to local communities. In particular, the speed with which daily life moves throughout the world, and the increasing rates of mobility among many sectors of the world's population (students, workers, tourists and lovers, among many others), complicates efforts to find anyone and anything standing still long enough to qualify

as local. Reflecting on more than 30 years of research following the global movement of residents from San Tin, a village in the Hong Kong New Territories, James Watson writes: 'Diasporics are moving targets. What they are today, they will not be tomorrow. How can one possibly write an adequate ethnography of a group that is always and inevitably in the process of transformation?' (Watson 2004: 894). This global movement of people has led to a wide literature on diasporas – also referred to in more specific terms as transnational migrants, displaced persons, depending on the specific definitions and categories used (see for example Ong 1999; Guest 2003; Small 1997; Levitt 2001; Basch et al. 1994), where the definition of diaspora has been widely contested (Ho 2004; Clifford 1994). Families and communities themselves are becoming virtual. Such experiences have made local communities and particular cultural practices not so much disappear as take different form.

LIFESAVING 101: RESCUING THE LOCAL

Rescuing 'the local' first requires defining it, a challenging task given analysts' inability to settle on common qualities or perspectives.² Among anti-globalization purists, 'the local' is shorthand for communities untouched by the modern conveniences of civilization and who engage in cultural practices that are unique, static and exotic – or better yet, primitive. In this fantasy, local communities are small-scale, culturally and socio-economically homogeneous, idealized places where 'everybody knows your name'. This is the perspective driving heritage recuperation programmes such as the Slow Food Movement, with its mission to respond to the presumed homogenization inherent in fast food by preserving indigenous culinary traditions and lifestyles (Petrini 2001).³ Yet this vision of pristine, traditional societies is in fact a myth, debunked perhaps most vividly in Gary Larson's cartoon of native tribesmen frantically hiding their electronics and home appliances in anticipation of the arrival of the anthropologists.

Not only does attention to the constructedness of the local illuminate the contingent nature of what qualifies as 'local', but it also acknowledges the shifting sands of the politics of globalization studies more generally. To recognize the dynamic interplay between the global and the local as a process by which the global becomes integrated into the cultural particularities of local life, Robertson proposes the term 'glocal' (1992: 173). Friedman displays a similar approach to the interplay of the two registers but prefers terms like 'creolization' that emphasize the hybrid nature of these dynamic creations (Friedman 1994: 208). Giddens, meanwhile, refers to cultural particularities as 'local nationalisms' in distinction from global forces (2000: 31), a move that reifies both the national and the global. Yet another approach characterizes the local as that which is familiar or comfortable (Featherstone 1995; Lozada 2001; Wilk 2002). What links these various definitions together is the recognition that 'the local' is not so much a thing to be discovered as it is a process of social change. And the struggles over definition that emerge are in fact struggles over how to capture and represent these processes.

Fieldworking ethnographers who are based in specific local communities for long periods of time have been uniquely positioned to document the social structures and

cultural practices that define locality. In such ethnographic studies, cultural change does not necessarily suggest the loss of cultural uniqueness or long-standing traditions. Instead, what anthropologists have carefully and consistently documented for local communities within different societies throughout the world has been that diversity and contradictions exist within seemingly homogeneous localities. For example, Hannerz (1992, 1996) examines the medium for transnational cultural flows, embodied in his social category of cosmopolitans (mediators who straddle the global and the local), in the formation of creole cultures, or unique non-territorially defined cultural systems (1992: 264-5). While 'locals' are rooted in a culture that is more geographically bound, cosmopolitans interact with global cultural centres and serve as the primary mediators in the creation of creole cultures. From Hannerz's model, *mobility* has become the means of stratification; while both locals and cosmopolitans share creole cultures, Hannerz highlights how they are shared unequally. Mobility gives cosmopolitans a wider array of social, economic and political resources and a more diverse range of strategies from which to improve their standing in local communities.

Arjun Appadurai goes further in his model of globalization, claiming that all aspects of everyday life must be understood from the perspective of maintaining a sense of locality. Appadurai asserts that 'locality is an inherently fragile achievement' (1996: 179). His model of transnationalism reveals these connections as the focus for anthropologists in the field, through his explication of neighbourhoods -'situated communities characterized by their actuality, whether spatial or virtual, and their potential for social reproduction' (1996: 179). Globalization shapes the structures and practices of neighbourhoods through five dimensions: (1) ethnoscape (the transnational movement of people); (2) technoscape (the global transfer of technologies that are shaped by both the generalities of the market and the specificity of transnational social networks); (3) financescape (the flow of global capital); (4) mediascape (the global production, distribution and consumption of media); and (5) ideoscape (the transnational flow of ideologies and counter-ideologies) (Appadurai 1996: 33-6). The key element in Appadurai's model, however, is that such large-scale structures and practices take place in very specific local communities globalization becomes situated in localities: a 'frame or setting within which various kinds of human action . . . can be initiated and conducted meaningfully' (Appadurai 1996: 184).

The very issue of identifying meaningful localities is one of the hallmarks of anthropological fieldwork, which relies on anthropologists embedding themselves in a local community for long-term participant-observation research. Even before globalization was seen as a principal factor structuring everyday life, anthropologists such as E.E. Evans-Pritchard (whose classic studies of the Nuer in what is now southern Sudan) grappled with the problem of the locality as he describes the 'nuerosis' (1940: 12–13) he encountered in his ethnological inquiry. He found that lineage, age-set and geographic social systems create shifting social boundaries through a process of fission and fusion based on the specifics of the particular social issue, a process that can be understood by the idea that the 'enemy of my enemy is my friend'. His model of segmentary political systems, moreover, reflects this Nuer grappling with the problem of the local. In many ways, this classic ethnography foreshadows postmodern ideas of the compression of time and space (cf.

Evans-Pritchard 1940: 94–138 with Harvey 1990), where what is considered local politically is not bound by geographical space but by social space. As a result, contradictory claims in defining what is a locality (such as those definitions generated by political entities such as states versus those generated by kinship groups, age or interest cohorts, businesses) is one of the first things faced by the anthropological fieldworker.

More recently, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson highlight this problem as a contradiction in their analysis of the impact of a fieldwork-based methodology on anthropological knowledge: 'On the one hand, anthropology appears determined to give up its old ideas of territorially fixed communities and stable, localized cultures, and to apprehend an interconnected world in which people, objects, and ideas are rapidly shifting and refuse to stay in place. At the same time, though, in a defensive response to challenges to its "turf" from other disciplines, anthropology has come to lean more heavily than ever on a methodological commitment to spend long periods in one localized setting' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 4). Gupta and Ferguson's solution is not to take for granted definitions of the local, but instead to focus on the idea of location – examining the processes by which the local is generated. This is especially relevant in an age of globalization, where such 'location-work', as Gupta and Ferguson call this examination, is faced not only by professional social analysts, but also by everyday people in everyday life.

Despite our best efforts to 'find' something that we can call 'the local', the reality is that in some cases, it is the researcher who in fact represents the most stable and continuous presence in and for local communities. In revisiting his former field site in San Tin (2004), James Watson discovered that by recording and writing about this community's history and genealogies (1975), he has become the authoritative source for third- and fourth-generation non-Cantonese-speaking diasporics who want to get in touch with their cultural heritage. Since her 1997–8 fieldwork in a transnational Protestant community in Moscow, Melissa Caldwell has watched as most of her informants have moved away, died or disappeared as the programme has changed its focus and location (2005b). In other words, concerns with the status of the local in fact reflect the particular interests, values, beliefs and preferences of particular social actors – both locals and their observers – at a given moment in time. Thus, what may be more important is to ask the question, 'Local for whom?'

Collectively, these approaches reveal just how ambiguous 'the local' is and how attempts to define and recover 'the local' are in fact more focused on recovering and fetishizing the idea of 'the local' (Appadurai 1990: 307).⁴ In contrast to approaches that bemoan the loss of the local, 'local life' remains the reality of everyday life, albeit perhaps in a slightly different form (Giddens 1991; Inda and Rosaldo 2002; Tomlinson 1999). Tomlinson reminds us that 'globalization disturbs the way we conceptualize "culture" (1999: 27), but culture itself does not disappear. Although globalization is increasingly colonizing the local, this process involves changing the nature of localities themselves, so that 'the journey into locality then is a journey into the challenging reality of cultural difference' (Tomlinson 1999: 8). This emphasis on the dynamic nature of locality resonates with Miller's suggestion that analytical perspectives that search for the local are in fact proposing a reality that may not in fact exist (Miller 1995). To circumvent issues about the authenticity

of local cultures, Miller proposes to shift analyses towards emphases on 'the construction of local culture' (Miller 1995: 11), which will reframe locality as a dynamic, interactive and continually renegotiated process (see also Ekholm-Friedman and Friedman 1995; Wilk 1999, 2002).

INTERVENTIONS INTO STUDIES OF THE LOCAL

As we have suggested, rethinking the nature of 'the local' through the prism of dynamic change requires new points of departure. In the following section, we outline four areas that, in our opinion, demonstrate theoretically innovative and ethnographically promising approaches to the study of the local.

Perhaps the first and most well-established intervention into studies of the local comes from research on specifics of the *circulation* that comprises globalization (Tsing 2000) in studies of global commodity chains. This approach follows things, people and ideas as they move from place to place and charts the relationships created by these movements and the ways in which individual encounters affect the meanings of the entities moving through these networks (e.g. Bestor 2004; Freidberg 2004; Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994). By considering the relationships that exist between partners in these chains, this approach accommodates multiple and shifting locales as well as subjects who may otherwise not 'fit' easily into territory-based identity classes. The flexibility of commodity chain approaches also pushes us beyond the directionally based models of core versus periphery, West versus Rest and insider versus outsider that remain pervasive in anti-globalization perspectives.

A second productive avenue of inquiry in recent ethnographies focuses on virtual communities, such as those that rely on the Internet (online gaming groups, listserves, forums etc.) (Miller and Slater 2000; Hakken 1999; Lozada 1999; Rai 1995; Escobar 1994). Instead of finding a new exotica created by computer-mediated communications, researchers have found that the Internet is in many ways replicating – rather than erasing – traditional social relationships, but in ways that compress time and space. Miller and Slater discuss in their ethnographic study of the production and consumption of the Internet in Trinidad how virtual communities are in fact structured by older communities: 'Not only were older identities such as religion, nation, and family embraced online, but the Internet could be seen by many as primarily a means of repairing those allegiances' (Miller and Slater 2000: 18). Similarly, in a study of Internet marriage services and 'mail-order brides', Constable (2003) finds that Chinese and Filipino women (and American men) value their e-mail and Internet forum communication with others and the online relationships as 'real' relationships. Relationships that are established over the Internet frequently lead to face-to-face contacts and marriage.

Although communities in an age of globalization are increasingly deterritorialized in ways that may appear to weaken bonds of locality, people are adapting and reconfiguring traditional structures and practices to maintain coherence. In his ethnographic study of a southern Chinese village in Guangdong, Lozada (2001) argues that this community must be seen as a transnational village. There are three characteristics of this Chinese village that makes it a deterritorialized community. First,

its very existence was a result of China's penetration by the prototypical transnational organization, the Roman Catholic Church. Second, the villagers are part of a global diaspora, the Hakka; the movement of villagers in and out of the physical space has historically and in the present been a part of this community's social reality. Third, because of the demands of transnational capitalism, young adults from the village almost all work and study far from home. Even with these potentially fragmenting processes, where spatial disjunctions are created through the scattering of community members, the village still maintains its coherence as a community because of a multiplicity of communication and exchanges and through participation in key rituals (calendrical Catholic, life-cycle and other cultural rituals). Villagers maintain locality through a variety of mechanisms – a locality that must be seen not as a physical property (an accident of geography or the design of the nation-state), but as a social process, ongoing and in flux.

The effects of changing social structures reverberate in the identities and roles that people make for themselves at the most intimate levels of gender and family. Olwig describes a transnational African-Caribbean village, where immigration has resulted in a deterritorialized community focused on the spatial site of the home village though the maintenance of a 'family home' in Nevis and the steady flow of remittances, no matter where in the world migrants actually live and work. Such practices, maintained over generations of migrants, emphasize their continued presence and rootedness in local island communities, no matter where they are located. These cultural practices of rootedness resolve the contradiction of being socially present in multiple, specific localities – a condition that Olwig refers to as translocal (1997: 33) - and of a local community's dependence upon social and economic resources that are far from their geographic location. In her study of female Indian labour migrants from the state of Kerala to the United States, Sheba George documents radical changes in Indian families who formerly found single, wage-earning women dangerous but now find themselves dependent on daughters and wives who immigrate as nurses to the United States (George 2000).

Research on international adoptions and child sponsorship programmes offer critical insight into how changing notions of the family and personal identities are also intertwined with changing definitions of race, ethnicity and nationality (Anagnost 2000; Frechette 2004; Tunina and Stryker 2001; Volkman 2003). Volkman describes how her Chinese-born daughter rates the Asianness of her American classmates on the basis of whether they were adopted or not. Writing on the related subject of child sponsorship projects in Africa, Erica Bornstein argues that transnational remittances transform anonymous interactions between adult donors and child recipients into familial relationships, even though the parties are separated by continents located on opposite sides of the world and will never meet. It is the sending and receiving of remittances and letters that creates 'relationships of belonging' that are every bit as real and substantial as those existing in biological, face-to-face families (Bornstein 2001: 614). One child related that she liked exchanging letters with her sponsor because 'I am feeling like I am becoming part of their family' (Bornstein 2001: 614). Nancy Scheper-Hughes's work on global organ trafficking shows similar findings in terms of how human bodies are themselves the means by which intimate social formations are being transformed (2000). The process of removing body parts from citizens of one nation and implanting them in

citizens of other countries evokes critical debates about what constitutes local identities. Katherine Verdery's study of dead body politics in post-communist Europe illustrates the power – and danger – of bodies that are dug up from their burial spots, transported across regional and national borders, and reburied in new locations (Verdery 1999).

As all of these studies illustrate clearly, persons, their bodies and their body parts do not necessarily belong to a specific locale but can be transported – both virtually and actually – across regional, national and international borders and integrated into new locales. In this sense, origins are less important than destinations in the constitution of local communities and families. In the end, what studies of virtual communities and persons illuminate is the extent to which *all* social groups and identities are in essence 'virtual'. In other words, families, villages, towns, counties and nation-states are all imagined communities (Anderson 1983), even though the social and political technologies⁵ of administration and control make communities seem real and natural (Aretxaga 2003; Trouillot 2001).

How globalization is transforming cultural systems of meaning in ways that paradoxically do not obliterate and may even reinforce local systems of meaning offers a third promising set of topics. In particular, although global aspects of religion have long attracted academic attention - in studies of the global spread of religion, 6 the transnational organization of religion (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996), syncretism (Worsley 1970; Watanabe 1990) and in inter-religious dialogue (Eck 1997), among other topics - the events of 11 September 2001 have made the study of religious globalization especially urgent. National security concerns, international relations and religiously inspired terrorism and conflict are all outgrowths of the globalization of religion. Studies of these issues highlight how religions that have been seen as a major component of local identity are being challenged by globalization. As Barber notes, 'What ends as Jihad may begin as a simple search for a local identity, some set of common personal attributes to hold out against the numbing and neutering uniformities of industrial modernization and the colonizing culture of McWorld' (Barber 1995). Although a 'clash of civilizations' grounded on competing systems of meaning is not necessarily inevitable, what comes through in these studies is that transnational religious systems are also transformed through a process of localization, creating a sense of locality through contextually driven systems of meaning.

In many respects, transnational religion provides an alternative basis for local authority that competes with the dominant nation-state political system and the hierarchies of global capitalism. As Ho points out in his study of the Hadrami diaspora and the spread of Islam in South and South-east Asia, the Islamic public display of authority and the conflict between diaspora and empire in the recent political conflict between the United States and bin Laden has historical and symbolic roots in the dissolution of the Muslim Caliphate (Ho 2004). Global Islam is not the only world religious tradition to provide competing authority to the Westphalian state, however. Other studies of transnational grass-roots movements of Pentecostals (Meyer 2004; Brodwin 2003), Catholic liberation theology in Latin America (Nagle 1997) and the spread of religious traditions from the periphery to the centre (as in the case of Falungong or Vodou, see Chen 2003 and McCarthy

Brown 2001) show that this resurgence of religion is a wider response by different local communities to global challenges.

Other studies of transnational religion shed light on how global processes are not only introduced and integrated successfully into local communities, but also stabilize local social systems. In her work on Chinese Muslims, Maris Gillette documents how the introduction of Western snack foods in China gave Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese a medium through which they could give and accept hospitality – and social relations – with each other (Gillette 2000). For the case of Russia, Melissa Caldwell writes that Muscovites have responded to the influx of transnational religious groups in Russia by forcing religious leaders to refashion the services they provide to focus less on theology and more on the provision of social services and personal networks (Caldwell 2004, 2005a). What Caldwell has found is that as global religions are made locally meaningful in Russia, they have emerged as partners (albeit uneasily in some cases) to the Russian state.

Finally, a fourth point of departure for critically exploring the local has emerged in recent studies of leisure and entertainment. While movies, television, music and other forms of entertainment are often cited as proof of the homogenizing influences of globalization (Hannerz 1996; Kearney 1995), these studies have found that people often use these globalized cultural artefacts to strengthen ideas of locality and for social purposes that make sense only in the local. One example of this is Richard Wilk's study of temporality in the consumption of television in Belize, where he finds that working-class people use the immediacy of satellite television to challenge the cosmopolitan claims of Belizean elites (Wilk 1995). In contrast, Lila Abu-Lughod (1993) finds that the state control over Egyptian television is used by the elite to push a national agenda that itself is struggling with its own modern Islamic identity. Television advertisements, as well as the television programmes themselves, have also shown their grounding in specific localities – even as they push global products (McCreery 1997; Mazzarella 2003). Similarly, in the realm of music in Tanzania, Kelly Askew (2003) finds that music - both ngoma ('traditional dance')⁷ and dansi (globally influenced 'urban jazz') – is central to, not an outcome of, local Tanzanian politics. In film, the global spread of non-Western films is rooted in local understandings of particular places such as Hong Kong and India, not solely in dialectical opposition to Hollywood – which itself is an occidental gloss (Wong and McDonogh 2001; Tyrrell 1999; Ginsburg 1994).

In this vein, sport is especially illustrative of a re-defining of the local, since it is not only images and ideas that are on the move, but also human bodies. As a key cultural arena in which multiple identities are created, performed and essentialized (Messner 2002), sports serve as a boundary-maintenance mechanism (Barth 1969), providing people with bodily means to differentiate themselves from others latitudinally or hierarchically (MacClancy 1996). The connection between sports and identity is most visible in the areas of ethnicity and nationalism (Klein 2000; Morris 2000), especially in the spectacle of the Olympic Games (Fan 1998; Girginov 1998; MacAloon 1981). Joseph Alter, for example, demonstrates how Indian wrestling spreads an ideology that on the one hand is critical of the Hindu caste system through its interpretation of the body, but on the other hand is critical of the conditions of the modern Indian state (Alter 1992). As a result, the successes and failures

of individual athletes in competition are social projections of regional and national pride (see also Brownell 1995; Stokes 1996) and can help integrate diverse societies through an imagined community generated by athletes and teams that physically represent the nation (Elling et al. 2001).

Locality is redefining itself in the realm of sports, now that the players who make up 'the home team' are from elsewhere and their careers on the team are ephemeral. Sports today is deterritorialized, marked by the transnational movement of athletes and sports and the global commodification of sports by transnational corporations such as Nike (Jackson and Andrews 1999; Korzeniewicz 2000). Kendall Blanchard suggests that organized sports, as the 'New American Religion' (Sands 1999: xi), are heavily exported by the United States to other countries as part of the politicization of popular culture inherent in globalization (Nye 2002; Wang 2001; Fukuyama 1995), and need to be explored as part of what social analysts refer to as 'transnational civil society' (Florini 2000).

While sport affirms or establishes new social identities within a particular social community and connects people intergenerationally within ethnic communities, it can also demarcate differences that socially inscribe ethnic or foreign others (Shukert 2002; Bairner 2003). Nation-states are heavily involved in the use of sports for unifying diverse cultures and communities (Scherer 2001; Alter 2000), and through patronage transform sports into a political arena (Silverstein 2000; Moore 2000; Appadurai 1996). While the nation-state serves as an important patron of sports and other forms of popular culture, there are a number of other civil society organizations (including transnational business corporations, religious organizations and other civic associations) that at times compete with the state to promote their own ideologies and interests. As a result, global sport becomes local sport; while local sports, through the connections established, become global in the persons of athletes, commodities and organizations.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS: THINKING WITH LOCALIZATION

Our goal in this chapter has been to explore how globalization studies have dealt with the issue of the local and to identify several promising trajectories for future research. Ultimately what guides our perspective is the idea that 'the local' is in fact a vantage point from which to get at larger questions about the nature of change, social relationships, social structures, cultural practices, authenticity and tradition, among many others. In this sense, we see studies of the local as returning to fundamental issues in social analysis.

While the realities of global capitalism cannot be dismissed, neither can the untested promises of globalization be accepted. The power of the structures that promote and sustain global capitalism ultimately lies in the *belief* that people have in them, as analysts of the most recent global currency crisis demonstrate (the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997–8; see Yergin and Stanislaw 2002; Woo et al. 2000). Given the very real constraints and influence of global capitalism, it is easy to forget, as Jameson notes, that the rules of the global game are *cultural*, and that people's ability to navigate the waters of globalization is *social*:

In this respect, Gray's account of the resistance to the global free market is finally not cultural, despite his repeated use of the word, but ultimately social in nature: the various 'cultures' are crucially characterized as able to draw upon distinct kinds of social resources – collectives, communities, familial relationships – over and against what the free market brings. (Jameson 2000: 56)

The social resources that Jameson points to – communities, families and other social groups – continue to be relevant despite the pressures of mobility. As a result, locality is not lost in the tide of globalization, as we have described above in the summaries of numerous studies on the impact of globalization in various local communities; locality is instead transformed, changed, but reconstituted nonetheless.

This transformed locality does not look like our imagined past of small towns where everybody knows your name. Perhaps our own nostalgic memory of locality is itself cloudy, forgetting the inequality that kept people apart, the mobility that (while more limited in scale) has always been a part of communities and the indispensable interconnections between local communities that today, in an era of globalization, have become even more necessary. As social analysts, we have to be more conscious of this shifting terrain of locality.

Calls for 'localization' to combat 'globalization' (see the essays in Hines 2000)⁹ are not necessarily the solution to the well-documented problems created by global capitalism. The focus on localization that we have suggested is not a dismissal of globalization. What we would suggest instead is what Michael Herzfeld (2001) has called 'the militant middle-ground' – a position that, in this case, does not dismiss either the global or the local, but instead looks carefully at how the global transforms the local and, correspondingly, how the local transforms the global. The local is neither disappearing nor is it solely being analytically preserved. Instead, people in different areas of the world, within different social contexts and historical experiences, are recasting the way that they relate to other people as they face (or create) the challenges presented by globalization.

Notes

- 1 McDonald's is currently testing this off-site order processing at experimental locations in the United States; Chinese fast food companies have also picked up on this new technology, and have similarly created off-site order centres that are connected to restaurants by computers.
- 2 See also Bestor (2004) and Watson (1997).
- 3 For additional reading on this topic, see Leitch (2003) and the articles in Wilk (2006).
- 4 Appadurai writes that in studies of global economic systems, 'The locality . . . becomes a fetish which disguises the globally dispersed forces that actually drive the production process' (Appadurai 1990: 307).
- 5 Aretxaga describes such social and political technologies in her definition of the state as 'phenomenological reality... produced through discourses and practices of power, produced in local encounters at the everyday level, and produced through the discourses of public culture... an open field with multiple boundaries and no institutional or geographical fixity' (2003: 398). Sassen (1996) also addresses these technologies as part of her analysis of sovereignty.

- 6 Such studies focus on Christian missionaries, Marian devotion, Sufi saints, Buddhist pilgrimages, religion-based social justice activities etc.; see for example Hutchinson (1987), Turner and Turner (1978), Naquin and Yu (1992), Huang and Weller (1998) and Caldwell (2004).
- 7 In this study, Askew specifically questions this gloss which puts into opposition *ngoma* and *dansi*, as part of her critique of the lingering effects of such binary oppositions as traditional and modern in contemporary social thought.
- 8 While changing money in a Japanese bank in 2002, Melissa Caldwell discovered that her inability to speak Japanese and the bank manager's limited English did not prevent them from having a lively discussion about the Boston Red Sox and Japanese athletes who had played for American Major League Baseball teams.
- 9 In brief, such localization manifestos as in Hines (2000) emphasize greater local community and national control of the economy, a focus on building more self-sustainable communities (instead of interdependent communities).

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