2 GLOBALIZATION AND LOCALIZATION

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INTRODUCTION

The intention of this chapter is to examine the notions or concepts of globalization and localization, and to explore them with reference to sustainable development. In this way, hopefully, it will clarify the utility of globalization and localization as concepts that are designed to throw fresh perceptions on change at the local level, set against the transition to sustainability. The following questions have guided this analysis:

- What do we mean when we talk about globalization?
- What do we mean when we talk about localization and locality?
- What does globalization say that is of use in terms of local sustainable development and the capacity to respond to sustainability at the local level?
- What does the literature on globalization say about the nature of sustainable development?

This chapter will look first at the theories of globalization and some of the counter evidence. Second, it will examine the literature on locality and how this can be conceptualized, as well as at the relationships between the global and the local. Finally, it will examine the implications of looking at the pathways to sustainability.

GLOBALIZATION

Globality, globalization, globalism – these are all ambiguous words that have come into common usage since the 1960s, but have only been part of the social science vocabulary since the early 1980s. Despite the relative newness of this language, it abounds in the literature on international

relations, sociology and human geography and is creeping into the lexicon of social scientists studying the nature of global environmental change. However, the definition of these terms is often left unstated. Globalization through popular interpretations (journalistic and media representations) is a process of primarily economic, but also social and political, change that encompasses the planet, resulting in greater homogeneity, hybridization and interdependence – a 'global enmeshment' (Hurrell and Woods, 1995) of money, people, images, values and ideas that has entailed smoother and swifter flows across national boundaries. These processes are driven by technological advance, the growth of the informational sector, international cooperation, and processes of structural adjustment to a new global capitalist economic and political order headed by multinational corporations and international governmental institutions.

Associated with this concept are ideas of the promotion and domination of Western culture and capitalism to the exclusion of all other cultures and economic systems, a loss of social diversity and the disappearance of local distinctiveness and community in favour of global culture and society. These ideas carry with them feelings of loss of control by the individual over their lives, the inability of national governments to act in the best interests of its citizens, a fear of blandness and a society based on consumption rather than collective good. This is the rhetoric surrounding the concept of globalization, but the reality of the processes of change and their scope is somewhat different. What is occurring with the growing body of academic work on globalization is the emergence of literature that moves beyond the rhetoric of globality to an understanding of what this means, what the causes are and how it can be theorized: in short, a discourse.

Drawing mainly on Milton's discussion, within the social sciences the notion of 'discourse' has both general and specific meanings (Milton, 1996, p166). Generally, it 'refers to the process through which knowledge is constituted through communication'. At a specific level, however, there are two meanings. First, discourse can refer to 'a particular mode of communication; a field characterized by its own linguistic conventions, which both draws on and generates a distinctive way of understanding the world', and can compete with alternative understandings (Milton, 1996, p166). Second, discourse can be 'an area of communication defined purely by its subject matter' and as such is not associated with a way of communicating or interpreting the world, and does not compete but 'merge[s] and separate[s] as participants define and redefine their subject matter' (Milton, 1996, pp166–167).

This distinction is important as sustainable development and globalization are both discourses of the second type, but operate within the first type – namely, the interaction or economic, political and cultural world views. O'Riordan and Voisey (1998), for example, show how various interpretations of social change influence the characterization of sustainability. They point to political, ecological, economic, anthropological, legal and sociological angles on sustainability, emphasizing how the discourse varies both with disciplinary perspective and style of democracy. The relevant table is reproduced here with a second, comparative table for

translating this material into discourses of globalization and localization (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2). Using the second specific definition of discourse for globalization indicates that this is an emerging area of study not

Table 2.1 *Patterns of discourse that apply to the transition to sustainability*

	Market	*Regulatory*	*Equity*	*Revelatory*
Myths of nature	Expandable	Precautionary	Breached	Negotiated
Social values	limits	limits	limits	limits
Policy orientations	Price signals	Rules of contracts	Equality of opportunity	Communication
Distributional arrangements	Markets	By agents of rule-makers	By democracy	By negotiation
Generating consent	Compensation	By agreed rules	Negotiation and compensation	By reasoned discussion
Intergenerationality	Future looks after itself	Future helped by present	Future planned by present	Future envisioned
Liability	Spread losses	By redistribution	Burden-sharing	By negotiation mechanisms

Source: O'Riordan and Voisey (1998, p42)

Table 2.2 *Patterns of discourse that apply to globalization and localization*

	Market	*Regulatory*	*Equity*	*Revelatory*
Globalization	Expandable limits	By agents of role makers	Mixed scanning for vulnerable	Evaluation of social responsibility
	Competitive advantage	By common agreement	Reliance or global watchdog activities	Corporate and governmental reputation
		Reliance on voluntarism and negotiated agreement	Solidarity agreement	Stakeholder ownership and involvement
Localization	Initiative	Precaution and pragmatism	Social–local identity	Deliberative and inclusionary procedures
	Opportunism through social markets	Links to global standards negotiated by local stakeholders	Local citizenship initiatives through social networks	Social commitments to participatory involvement through best-value procedures

constrained by existing social science disciplines. Taylor (1996) has suggested that a new social science beyond disciplinary boundaries can be created. Globalization has presented a challenge to social sciences which are embedded in the notion of a nation state (Taylor, 1996; Yearley, 1996; Robertson, 1992, especially Chapter 6).

The response has occurred in two stages. Initially, the aim was to reformulate models. Then, more radically, there was a move towards inter-disciplinarity – with the development of global referents at the periphery of the social sciences (culture studies) – and transdisciplinarity, with new frameworks that attempt to transcend the existing disciplines (for example, urban studies which focus on global cities). There is a discourse of globalization, and a very influential rhetoric about the changes encompassed by it. But what globalization actually means is very difficult to pin down. There is more than one process, more than one globalizing world, and a multitude of possible explanations.

Theories of globalization

Theoretically, there are many precursors to the concept of globalization. Three of the main approaches are: world-systems theory, globalization as an outcome of modernity and globalization as a dual process which centres around culture.

World-systems theories
Globalization from the perspective of a world system is associated largely with the work of Immanuel Wallerstein. His world-systems theory is involved principally with the global capitalist economy and combines a sociological and historical look at its development and maintenance, arguing that it is created by a single 'division of labour' – more complex, extensive, detailed and cohesive than ever before. This body of work posits that the world system consists of three worlds: a centre or core, a semi-periphery and a periphery. There are many criticisms of this approach (see Bergesen, 1990), but the most pertinent is that it represents only a mono-causal explanation of globalization. Other theorists have emphasized it more tellingly as a multidimensional process. It can also be criticized as being an historical rather than a theoretical description of a 'unique historical process' (Milton, 1996, p145). The same criticism can be levelled at the international relations world-system model, which holds that there is a global political network, created by the increasing interdependency of sovereign states and the consequent proliferation of intergovernmental organizations. Although at one time this process was seen as leading towards a world state, this is now not an assumption that can be supported, even as a theoretical abstraction.

Modernization and globalization

[I]n a general way, the concept of globalization is best understood as expressing fundamental aspects of time–space distanciation [namely,

*the conditions under which time and space are organized]. Global-
ization concerns the intersection of presence and absence, the
interlacing of social events and social relations 'at distance' with local
contextualities. We should grasp the global spread of modernity in
terms of an ongoing relation between distanciation and the chronic
mutability of local circumstances and local engagements . . . globaliz-
ation has to be understood as a dialectical phenomenon* (Giddens,
1991, p22–23).

*Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of world-wide
social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local
happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice
versa . . . Local transformation is as much a part of globalization as
the lateral extension of social connections across time and space*
(Giddens, 1990, p64, quoted in Waters, 1996, p50).

Giddens (1990, p7) puts social relations at the centre of his analysis, which
comprises four areas: the world capitalist economy, the nation-state system,
the world military order and the international division of labour. These, he
argues, relate to his four institutional dimensions of modernity within which
the processes of globalization take place: capitalism, surveillance, military
power and industrialism. Giddens (1990, pp55–56) sees capitalism and
industrialism as two different dimensions. Capitalism relates owners to
capital wage labour; industrialism applies to the link between people and
the natural world, including the environment. In this analysis it is modern
institutions, such as money, that are globalizing as they disembed
mechanisms, lifting relations out of local contexts and enabling them to
take place across the globe in a manner that was previously regarded as
inconceivable.

Criticisms of this approach centre on the complexity of this multi-
dimensionality, as well as its failure to provide any specific implications
that arise from these globalizing processes, rendering it a 'descriptive,
nominalistic definition approach to global-level phenomenon' (Yearley,
1996, p16). For Robertson (1992, p145), globalization is not just an outcome
of the Western project of modernity as Giddens claims. Giddens is also
criticized for not taking cultural matters seriously enough.

Culture and dual processes

Milton (1996, p215) has examined the theoretical approaches to global-
ization from the perspective of culture, defined as 'consisting of everything
we know, think and feel about the world'. She distinguishes between those
who refer to globalization as the way the world is seen or imagined, defined
as cultural phenomenon, and those who refer to events going on in the
world, which although dialectically related to culture are not part of it.
The two approaches already discussed are the latter, whereas Robertson
(1992, p8) treats globalization as occurring both outside and inside culture:
'Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world
and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.'

In this sense globalization is a dual arrangement, not just events taking place in the world, but also through cultural transformations. This approach models the 'global field' or the 'global-human condition' as having four major components. Each represents how globalization has proceeded, as well as how it is possible to make sense of globality. The components are: humankind, selves, national societies and the world system of societies. The intention is to illustrate global complexity – that globalization can take many different forms as a result of diverse understandings, although Robertson (1992, p175) argues that in contemporary times it has taken just one form. Each of the corners on Figure 2.1 have been made more identifiable by a process of clarification between the forces of globalization and local identity response. As a consequence, the understanding of the many interpretations of globalization has improved. Simultaneously, each corner has also altered in the way they are constructed. Each is autonomous and yet constrained by the other three. However, Robertson does not attempt to define the mechanisms that have caused globalization; instead he sees his model as an appropriate starting point, an outline, that requires greater work on the relationships between the four components.

This model moves away from an historical explanation of events. It takes into account understandings as the prime factor in social relations, and illustrates multidimensionality. Globalization here is not simply a modernizing or Westernizing process that is relentless in its progress. While some people may be globalizing, others may be deglobalizing as a result of
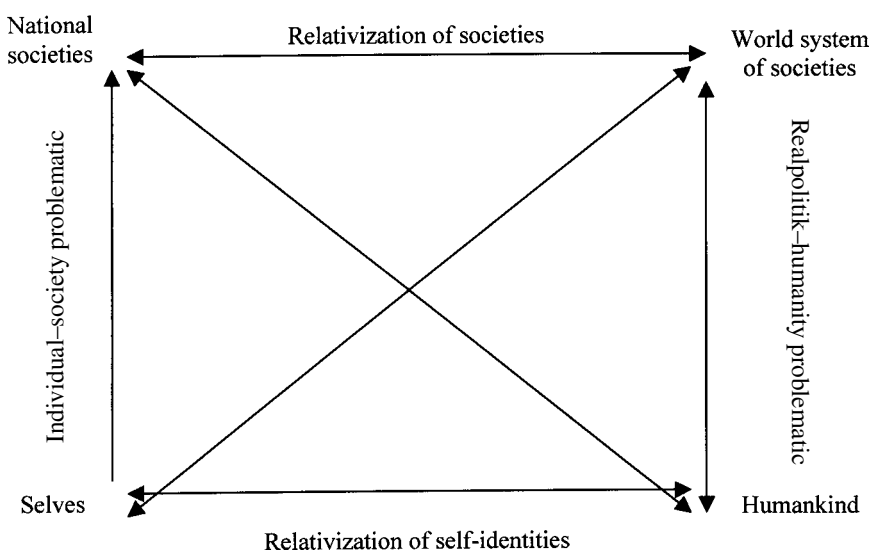
Source: Robertson (1992, p8)

Figure 2.1 *Interpretations of globalization as a set of relationships linking individual 'schools' to various spatial configurations of 'society' and, in turn, reorientating a sense of personal and collective identity*

diverse perceptions of the global. Deglobalization, that is, attempts to undo the compression of the world, is 'encapsulated within the discourse of globality' (Robertson, 1992, p10) as a result of an emphasis on the cultural.

Deglobalization is in opposition to 'globalism', a negative term for the intention and desire to make more global, otherwise described as 'one-worldism'. For Milton (1996), Robertson's model provides a framework in which to examine how environmentalism can be transformed into a cultural phenomenon, namely 'transcultural discourse'. This is a second-order communication that crosses cultural boundaries. However, it is still not clear what globalization is from this discussion and how it relates to experiences of 'globalizing processes' at the local level. It does indicate, though, that culture is a crucial dimension to any examination of globalization and is integral to the discourse of sustainability.

A global culture?

A global culture has been characterized as an 'extrapolation from recent Western cultural experiences of "postmodernism"' (Smith, 1990, pp176–177). Smith argues that assertions of a global culture are premature because the meanings of images communicated through worldwide telecommunications networks, as mechanisms of a global culture, are still created by the historical experiences and social status of the populations receiving them. The globe does not possess the collective cultural identity required for common perception and understanding. In other words, national cultures do exist as derived from historic experiences, but 'a global culture is essentially memoryless' if perceived in national terms (Smith, 1990, p179). Arguments for the existence of a global culture seem to suggest that the structural changes of economic globalization will bring about the conditions, impetus and content of a global culture (Waters, 1995).

Smith believes such arguments fall foul of economic determinism and disregard the role of shared experiences and memories in creating identity and culture. He also demonstrates that the nationalistic project is still in evidence through cultural competition, as can be seen by the recent disintegration of Yugoslavia and the recreation of separate nations on ethnic lines. The idea of nationhood is strong for 'threatened' communities, by which he refers to communities who feel excluded, neglected or suppressed in the distribution of values and opportunities. Alternatively threatened communities may be suffering from a lack of social cohesion, particularly in the face of a take-over from another culture. Nationhood, therefore, holds within its meaning the commitment to the idea of a national society; it contains the 'aspirations for collective autonomy, fraternal unity, and distinctive identity' (Smith, 1990, pp181, 185). As a result, nationalism looks set to continue rather than to diminish.

Smith (1990) continues with this theme. He believes that we are entering a phase of 'cultural areas' which are not constructed, nor necessarily directed or intentional, but are the result of historical circumstances. Paradoxically, these may be a form of nationalism linked to the political

goals of peace and economic prosperity for nations, creating 'pan-nationalisms' based around common cultural characteristics (political idealism, institutions, rights and moral principles). European cooperation can been seen as an expression of this. However, cultural areas, as a loose and casual collection of cultural elements, are not a challenge to the national cultures, nor do they equate to the pursuit of a global culture in the face of the stronger pursuit of competition between cultures.

For Robertson (1992, p112) one of the crucial issues in social sciences is developing an understanding of globality without reference to the idea of culture as nationally defined. He is not arguing that society based around the idea of a nation is disappearing; indeed, this idea is being 'revamped . . . as the multicultural society, while "old European" and other nationalisms have reappeared – but in new global circumstances'. Asserting that the idea of societalism – namely, the commitment to the idea of a national society – is a crucial aspect of contemporary global culture, he claims that a global culture does exist and indeed has a 'very long history' if it is seen as a discourse on global or world themes where humankind has identified itself within its empires, civilizations, communities and societies in response to an ever widening context (Robertson, 1992, p113). It is this external versus internal discourse that is at the core of global culture.

What the above discussion of global culture indicates is that, depending on your interpretation of culture and the global, it is possible to argue that global culture exists or it does not. Smith's approach is useful in illustrating that if we conceive of culture along the national lines of orthodox social science, then there is no global culture as we know it. Instead, there is at best a number of loose cultural areas. Robertson's wider definition, using the second order of discourse and the cultural phenomenon side of globalization, shows that it is possible to see some form of global culture as present today and in the past.

This general theme of polis (a collective cross-nation identity), and demos (a national identity that is secure enough to share meaningful connections in economy and culture across national borders) is central to the case studies that follow. Globalization is helping to widen the basis of the demos, but has yet to create an effective arrangement for a polis that shares common aspirations for sustainability and that transcends national borders. In Chapter 3, Svedin, O'Riordan and Jordan examine the conditions that may enable multicentred and many-layered patterns of governance to help fill this void.

The myth of globalization

Allen and Massey (1995, p3) have demonstrated that images of globalization are often compelling and suggestive, emphasizing certain aspects while neglecting or underplaying others; they are, in effect, distorted.

> [T]here appears to be a number of globalizations, a number of worlds, taking shape. There is the globalization of telecommunications, the

globalization of finance, the globalization of culture . . . the globalization of environmental concerns, and that of the struggles of indigenous peoples. Moreover, the networks of connections that each lays down do not map one on to the other. Some parts of the world are densely highlighted in some accounts, but not in others.

The 'story' of economic globalization focuses on the global market where borders are crossed and distances travelled with minimal effort by firms, currencies and commodities. However, it is not really a borderless economy; instead, it is a more level playing field. The significant borders are those created by major economic interests rather than countries (Allen, 1995, p110). Global firms are the supposed driving force of globalization, but the definition of what it means to be truly global – having a full production presence in all the relevant major markets – is met by few firms, for example, those operating in the banking and finance area. Such a global experience of economic integration is common only to a few places, and a few people, mostly in the Western world. Significantly, the free movement of labour, surely a characteristic of a truly globalized economy, has not progressed as well as that of capital and currencies, indicating that substantial barriers remain.

The rhetoric of political globalization is that of the continuing erosion of the nation state's powers and abilities to control or regulate an increasingly volatile and uncertain global world in the face of many changes – for instance, environmental risks or the rise of transnational organizations on the world stage. These organizations involve actors other than governments who usually operate at an international level and cut across the territorial interests of nation states (such as Greenpeace). However, many of the issues that such groups mobilize around involve limited states and people, or many states but not in a uniform manner, so such organizations may not be truly global in scope. The central distortion here is the tendency to speak about environmental, economic and social processes as if they are undeniably worldwide in scope and uniform in impact.

Cultural globalization refers to the homogenization and hybridization of worldwide culture (Allen, 1995, p113). The basis for this is supposedly the new technologies of communication. These are said to unsettle and loosen more traditional cultural ties, influences and established lifestyle codes, thereby exposing localities to different consumer styles, with the message that to consume is to be part of one (Western) world. Demand is produced by the global marketing of cultural styles and symbols and is met by global standardization of products. But such a homogenizing view of a global culture is false in two main ways. First, it is presented in a monolithic manner: we do not all understand and value consumer products or American entertainment in the same way (Allen, 1995, p117). Second, rather than eroding local differences, global consumerism has to work through them, exploring local differences in order to market them on a wider scale. Additionally, a global culture based on the consumption of Western styles and symbols is one that has to be bought into, which for a substantial part of the world's population is not possible. Such a view also

underexplores the influence of migration on culture and the creation of multicultural societies.

Summary of globalization

What can we gain from the above discussion of the nature of globalization?

- It is a contested concept around which much debate occurs, creating a discourse – defined as an area of discussion, rather than a mode of thought.
- Globalization challenges the orthodox embedded statism of the social sciences and creates expansions into new interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary areas.
- Globalization is differential, affecting places, people, societies, cultures, economies and markets in different ways through space and time.
- Globalization has many dimensions, not all of which are appreciated in any 'story'. These stories do, however, have a strong impact on perceptions of the process. Whether they are positive or negative, they are part of the globalization discourse and are thus manifestations of globalization and a 'global culture'.
- Globalization is linked to debates about the nature and existence of the nation state, economically, politically and culturally.
- Culture is one of the central elements of the theoretical discourse and goes some way to shedding light on globalization as an awareness of the global when making sense of the 'local' or immediate world.
- There is a fracture between the empirical and the theoretical sides of the debate on globalization. Indeed, the literature on globalization does not appear to provide a good basis for empirical analysis of societal change since there is no one model that it is possible to use.

APPROACHING THE LOCAL

Local sustainability is not just about sustainability undertaken at the sub-national rather than national or international scale. The experience of sustainability and other changes (such as local investments by multinational firms or new communications technology) and the choices that are made in adapting to change are influenced and mediated by the social processes that exist within that locality, and impact upon real people at this level. Before we can begin to discuss the interplay of the local and the global, and sustainable development at the local level, it is necessary to set out what is meant by locality. This is by no means an easy task!

Locality is one of the two concepts (the other is community) that have been used by social scientists to explain differences between places at different times (Day and Murdoch, 1993). 'Community' as a concept has been used in sociological literature for around 200 years to refer to place and the importance that it has in people's experience. However, community

has been strongly criticized for the normative and value-laden way studies have approached it (Bell and Newby, 1971; Day and Murdoch, 1993). In much of the literature on sustainable development, community is seen as the panacea of the sustainability transition (Holdgate, 1996). However, Evans (1994, p106) argues that the sustainability transition requires a deeper understanding of existing multiple local–social networks, rather than a harking back to the unobtainable and naive 'chimera of community'. This would enable policy-makers to gain a better idea of the social, economic, cultural and political needs of these local networks so that they become 'stable and self-regulating' in the long term.

Conceptualizing locality

For social scientists 'locality' has faced similar problems to community as a concept (Day and Murdoch, 1993, p86). The debate about the nature of locality has come to centre on whether any given locality has agency or causal force, and where its boundaries are. In addition, there have been methodological and conceptual problems with much locality-based research, where economic processes are perceived as the driving local force, and where political and cultural changes follow (Day and Murdoch, 1993). Margaret Stacey (Stacey 1969, pp138–39) argues for locality as a network of institutions: 'the locality is a context in which one can explore for hypotheses about the interrelations of institutions'. When looking at institutional adaptation to environmental change, it is clear that there are many definitions or approaches to the concept of an institution. A wide stance on the definition of an institution, following Jordan and O'Riordan (1996), should be taken. This would cover formal and informal institutions, ranging from social mores and cultural patterns of behaviour, to organizations and rules as set out in law.

Stacey's perception of locality can be very useful in looking at the sustainability transition as mediated through local institutions. She introduced the concept of a local–social system to describe the ideal network of institutions against which we can measure real case studies. Institutions in this context can also be described as 'communities of interest'. Only a small number of the various possible institutions will occur in one specific place for any one person. But it is possible to show that for a given locality, its inhabitants are engaged in social relationships that form a local–social system; this network provides the basis of social–local identity.

The institutional concept of locality is expanded by the understanding that a local–social system would reside within larger society and therefore would have vertical links to that society. As an approach, it is useful in that it allows us to address how social relations are embedded in place, it moves away from favouring one type of institution over another, and it makes no assumptions about homogeneity and internal coherence. This is so because there are large differences between social actors and institutions with regard to what sustainability means. Furthermore, it allows us to see how institutional networks can extend internally and externally so that

wider social, economic, political and environmental forces are not ignored. Their effects are generally mediated through local bases such as family, work and voluntary groups, so the local focus is relevant. We can see with Stacey's approach:

> *. . . how the institutions in which people are enmeshed structure, and are themselves structured by, the experience of 'locality' . . . and also how these institutions are implicated in wider networks of relationships. It is through their participation in certain key institutions that actors are able to effect or resist change . . . we must be prepared to give due weight to the part played by locally integrated institutional networks in securing particular economic, social and political outcomes in given places at given times* (Day and Murdoch, 1993, p93).

The point of this discussion is that it is necessary to look at how change affects local–social actors and how this change is affected by the locality within which it is experienced. To do this, an institutional approach avoids both the normative or purely descriptive conceptions of locality, allowing us to look at the factors driving social and economic change, while taking into account cultural factors, such as a sense of belonging or how change is understood. As demonstrated by Massey (1994), it also allows us to move towards an integration of the concepts of globality and locality. This is important because it moves away from the intangibility of community towards something more real, observable and achievable. It therefore continues to situate such identities within 'place', allowing for an incredible diversity of social process.

Summary of locality

What does the above discussion mean in terms of looking at the locality?

- Community and locality are essentially contested concepts that are difficult to define in practice.
- Individuals cannot be looked at in isolation to their locality, or the local–social system within which they are actors, since both influence their experience of change.
- An institutional network approach uses a wide definition of institutions, allowing us to look at differing perceptions of change and vulnerability to that change, and to ascertain the economic, social, cultural and political resources that are available to people within the locality. It also allows us to focus on adaptive processes or their potential.

There are relative winners and losers in any change, and the sustainable transition is no different. It is at the local level, in a specific time and place, where conflict between needs is most obvious and keenly felt. Using an institutional network approach, it is possible to conceptualize this inter-action on a number of levels: as policy change and response; as behavioural

and cultural change; as political bargaining and the exercise of power; as resource distribution. In effect, it allows for interdisciplinarity to occur by looking at how institutions adapt and interact and, as such, is a very dynamic concept.

GLOBALITY, GLOCALITY AND LOCALITY

If we wish to understand the local character of our lives, the changing nature of the places in which we live, we have to grasp both the wider, global context of which we are part and what it is that makes us distinctively local . . . [W]e are part of more than one world. We live local *versions of the world and in so doing we have to locate ourselves within the wider* global *context* (Allen and Massey, 1995).

This quote sets out explicitly how the global and the local are linked. It is at the local level that change is experienced, but that can only be understood with reference to what is happening elsewhere in the world. Giddens (1990; 1991) has also pointed out the reflexive relationship between the local and the global. For Ismail Serageldin (in de Borchgrave, 1996, pp160–161) the emphasis is on the local, which occurs throughout the world as people face greater insecurity about their futures than ever before. As a result, people feel the need to embed themselves within the familiar, the safe past that they had, the place that they call home: 'Localities, if you will; something they can relate to; tightening the circle in which they feel secure'. This could be seen as localism, the promotion of the local over any other level of social interaction. Or it can be seen as the relation of global processes to the 'local' context as a way of gaining understanding about them. Theorists have viewed the phenomenon of localization as part of wider globalizing processes. Local transformation, for Giddens, is not counter-globalization but a consequence of the global spread of institutions of national self-determination and democratization; this therefore illustrates the process of globalization.

Definitions of the terms local, locality, localism and localization, all refer to place and the distinctiveness of that place. This may seem to run counter to globalization in reaffirming boundaries. Although political boundaries or territories may be becoming more permeable, cultural boundaries are being strengthened as localities of place are defined in relation to other localities across the globe. Therefore, the spatial dimension cannot be ignored by discourses of globalization. It is possible to see a locality as a dynamic arrangement of institutional networks and social and cultural constructs. These combinations will be different for every individual but there will be some areas of commonality – such as language, landscape and religion.

Social relations make places, make local worlds . . . The social relations that constitute a place – a place that almost by definition is unique – are not all confined to that place . . . This complex geography of social

> *relations is dynamic, constantly developing as social relations ebb and*
> *flow and new relations are constructed. And it is the combination*
> *over time of local and wider social relations that gives places their*
> *distinctiveness* (Meegan, 1995, p55).

There are attempts to bring together analyses of global and local processes, particularly in the area of human geography, although the emphasis is often on local economic responses. Local-level response to globalization is a process of adaptation that can run counter to the objectives of sustainable development. Peck and Tickell (1994) show that competition between localities over the slice of global economic activity through the establishment of science parks and inward investment agencies is, in the long term, not beneficial to the locality. These are beggar-thy-neighbour strategies that do little to effect real change at the local level, and as such do not further the long-term pursuit of sustainable development in meeting either environmental or social goals. It is in work like this that the term 'glocalization' has been coined to describe how the global and local levels interact in the current intense period of capitalist restructuring. They are viewed as a single process but are made up of two often contradictory forces which affects how space is perceived in economic and social interaction (see also Swyngedow, 1992).

For Meegan (1995) the representation of place is often structured around opposition to others, but here more than economic factors are taken into account – for example, competition with another city for economic resources or for cultural identity, or a marginalized position in Europe, or a fight for political control with national or regional government. Liverpool is the example used to illustrate that local worlds can be produced within global worlds. A place is not homogenous but is characterized by gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class, housing type, etc. Such social and spatial segregation can produce a 'localism' in which sharp distinctions are drawn between insiders and outsiders, shaping responses to local issues. Countering the claims of increasing cultural homogeneity, the local music scene in the city shows that instead there is a process of cultural exchange, indicating that it is impossible to separate the local from the global.

Massey (1994, p151) argues that what is required is a progressive sense of place that takes into account its multiple identities, not a single sense of place as a manifestation of 'reactionary nationalisms, competitive localisms or introverted obsessions with "heritage"'. She sees a place as being the construct of a 'particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus' (1994, pp154–156):

> *Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around,*
> *they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks or social*
> *relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those*
> *relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far*
> *larger scale that what we happen to define for that moment as the place*
> *itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent. And*
> *this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes*

> *a consciousness of its links with the wider worlds, which integrates in*
> *a positive way the global and the local . . . Globalization of social*
> *relations is yet another source of (the reproduction of) geographical*
> *uneven development, and thus of the uniqueness of place.*

The local cannot be described or understood without reference to the global, or rather the wider context of the local. Places are formed out of particular sets of social relations that interlock and interact at particular points in space and time. Indeed, globalization can create a locality.

The environment and sustainable development

Discourses on the global environment reflect the theories of globalization set out above in the way they analyse the causes and solutions to environmental degradation. As Milton (1996) points out, the concepts of the world-system model can be seen in the work of many environmental commentators. They perceive environmental problems as the result of economic and development polices, pursued by nation states, and often talk of a centre and periphery, a 'North' and a 'South'. This view has informed many critiques of this system, which argue for continued development that would enable Southern countries to emerge from environmental and economic problems. It is also argued that modernity, and the institutions of modernity and their overweening desire for progress, have routinely caused environmental degradation on a global scale. Modern technology produces degradation anywhere, and in fact is intensified by the transportation of products to the markets of the world. Seeing globalization as a consequence of modernity has meant that it is far harder to prevent environmental degradation. This is because tracing the causes is difficult, with polluters often far from the site of pollution or environmental degradation. Responsibility is difficult to apportion and methods of prevention are difficult to apply.

Culture is the 'principle mechanism' through which human–environment interaction can occur (Milton, 1996, p215). An analysis that puts culture at the centre, as Robertson's model attempts, enables us to look at how addressing contemporary environmental problems is synonymous with an awareness of the global level, in terms of a global ecosystem or a global human community. Milton breaks down global environmental change discourses into two types: globalizing and deglobalizing. For proponents of the first view, globalization is the best way to protect the environment for human use by adopting common standards, goals and resources that are managed on a global scale. Opponents to this view see globalization, particularly as manifested in the global economy, as the biggest cause of environment degradation. Instead, we should deconstruct global institutions and local communities should have self-determination and control over their own resources.

These two views have implications for sustainable development in terms of democracy and cultural diversity. Sustainable development falls into both

camps as demonstrated by the phrase, 'think global, act local'. It requires a global awareness of the interconnectedness of processes, places and people as well as their relationship to each other. This will change attitudes and behaviour at a local level; as such it is a globalizing phenomena. It is about both global cooperation to prevent further environmental degradation, and local communities making decisions about how they are going to implement sustainability principles. As briefly discussed in the locality section, 'community' is a concept with a lot of idealistic baggage. But both views allude to it: globalists see democracy as community participation in decision-making; anti-globalists see democracy as self-determination by the community. Ignoring questions about the existence of 'community', there are problems with globalist and anti-globalist approaches.

The goals of sustainable development have been defined by international agencies in meetings such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). However, local people can participate only in the implementation. As indicated by the locality–localization discussion, LA21 could be a forum where more than participation occurs. Rather, interpretation and transformation of these goals into objectives and actions that are meaningful to people at a local level can take place, but local self-determination is not mandated explicitly. The anti-globalist perspective would seem to encourage this. However, self-determination could mean decisions to carry on environmentally degrading behaviour, or to act in ways outside of the goals of sustainable development. How can such locally decided unsustainability be reconciled? There is an assumption in the global environmental discourse that people, grouped into local communities (because of the idealistic way these are perceived), will not act contrary to sustainable development. This is the myth of a 'primitive ecological wisdom', and is the reason why environmentalists in both camps support the maintenance of cultural diversity, but only within the context of sustainable development or behaviour that does not degrade the environment (Milton, 1996). What is exposed here by a focus on discourses and culture is that there are contradictions in how sustainable development is viewed. For these contradictions to be resolved, there is a need to appreciate how people understand the environment. It is also important to move away from the ideals of community to a more realistic appreciation of what locality is, how power operates and how it deals with its relationship to the global and globalizing concepts.

Any examination of sustainable development at the local level is likely to demonstrate that there can be no standardization of the transition to sustainability. It is unique to that locality and is defined as a place or a local institutional network. Thus we expect to find that the principles of sustainability are interpreted and adapted to local circumstances, just as are other processes of globalization. Taking culture into account therefore by highlighting people's understandings of globalizing processes and the actions that these produce should provide a key to analysing local sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights a number of points and issues for discussion:

- Both globalization and locality are contested.
- Globalization and localization are not competing processes; instead, local identity is a manifestation of globalization or greater interconnectedness.
- Globalization has a number of characteristics that are neither negative nor positive. It is not about the destruction of the locality in favour of greater homogeneity. Rather, it is about the greater interconnection and relativism between localities, economies, polities and cultures. Localization is an adaptation to these processes, a reaffirmation of what is local in the face of other localities. Therefore, it is not a struggle to counter globalization, but the restatement of identity within multiple identities.
- Globalism and localism are negative terms referring to attitudes which dominate at the expense of all else; they are exclusionist.
- The conceptualization of globalization so far does not have much utility in addressing sustainable development at the local level unless culture is put at the centre. However, there is still room for progress in looking at how this can occur.
- How can Europe be characterized as a result of the discussion in this chapter? It is a manifestation of globalization, illustrating increasing interconnectedness along economic, political and cultural dimensions to varying extents. It can also be seen as a pan-nationalism. It may also be a locality defining itself in relation to other localities, such as Asia or America, and not just in an economic sense.
- Globalization may only be of relevance at the local level in terms of some specific effects, such as employment, rather than the whole of the globalization debate. It is at this level that policy responses to change can be seen. It is suggested that only at a local level does globalization have policy relevance, since it is only here that a particular effect is perceived. Nevertheless, the actual complexity of globalization may not be realized, only one facet or dimension of it.

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3 MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITION

Uno Svedin, Tim O'Riordan and Andrew Jordan

FROM GOVERNMENT TO MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE

The transition to sustainability in Europe will have to take place through a complicated and ever-shifting set of governing structures. These structures underwent a slow but nonetheless radical transformation in the latter part of the last century, as government was increasingly replaced by governance. According to Stoker (1998, p17), the word 'government' refers to activities undertaken primarily or wholly by states bodies, particularly those 'which operate at the level of the nation state to maintain public order and facilitate collective action'. Typically these latter functions were performed by the state within its own territory via different parts of the public sector. The term 'governance', on the other hand, refers to the emergence of new styles of governing in which the boundaries between public and private sector, national and international, have become blurred. For Stoker, then, 'the essence of governance is its focus on governing mechanisms which do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government'. Under a system of governance, more services are supplied by the market, with the state retaining control over core functions such as law and order, regulation and civil defence. Because of policies pursued by many industrialized states such as privatization, new public management and cutting the size of the civil service, the operations of the central state have in many countries become gradually more reduced, with more and more services provided by government agencies and the private sectors. In consequence, governance also involves a search for new means of steering and controlling activities through more indirect mechanisms such as financial control and incentives.

The shift from government to governance is also bound up with the trend towards more internationalized patterns of policy-making, in which important decisions are increasingly being made across a range of different administrative tiers or levels (Rosenau, 1997; Svedin, 1997). These stretch

from the supranational down through the sub-national to the local. The term 'multilevel' governance is popularly used to describe the increasingly dense set of interconnections between actors who operate at these different levels of governance, sometimes channelled through states, but very often bypassing them. Again, there is no commonly agreed definition of this term and interpretations seem to be numerous and varied (see Hix, 1998). According to Gary Marks and his colleagues, multilevel governance in Europe has the following essential characteristics (Hooghe and Marks, 1996, pp23–24):

- The state no longer monopolizes policy-making at the European level. Decision-making is shared by actors at different levels, including supranational bodies such as the EC and the European Court.
- Increasingly, collective decision-making among states involves a significant loss of control for individual states as they are forced to accept decisions adopted by the majority.
- Levels of governance are interconnected rather than nested: national and sub-national actors (both public and private) act directly at all levels, by-passing the normal channels of interstate negotiation. For example, many local authorities in Europe have their own offices in Brussels so that they can lobby directly at the European level.

On the basis of these trends, Marks et al reach strikingly similar conclusions to Rhodes in relation to the contemporary challenges confronting state leaders:

> . . . [s]tates are an integral and powerful part of the EU, but they no longer provide the sole interface between supranational and sub-national arenas, and they share, rather than monopolize, control over many activities that take place in their respective territories (Marks, Hooghe and Blank, 1996, p347).

Rhodes (1996, p652) accepts that the term 'governance' is popular but imprecise. Within that constraint he argues that it represents 'a new way of governing' (Rhodes, 1997, p15). Instead of direct government control, he identifies a series of interorganizational and self-managing policy networks that complement markets and regulatory structures. The key to Rhodes's analysis is the shift from central state-led government to a system of governance based upon poly-centric linkages between the public and private sectors. This, he argues, is helping to produce a more differentiated or 'hollowed out' state as more and more governmental functions are shifted either down to alternative, market-based delivery systems, or up to supranational actors such as the EU. Public–private partnerships in the design and construction of major infrastructure projects are but part of the modern manifestation of all this. So, too, are the interesting relationships of regulatory agencies, public organizations and private enterprise that implement policy at any level of action.

Kooiman (1993, p4) summarizes this set of relationships as follows:

> *These interactions are based on the recognition of interdependencies. No single actor, public or private, has all knowledge and information required to solve complex, dynamic and diversified problems; no actor has sufficient overview to make the application of particular instruments effective; no single actor has sufficient action potential to dominate unilaterally in a particular governing model.*

Rhodes (1996, p660) helpfully summarizes four features of governance:

- interdependence between organizations: governance is broader than government, covering non-state actors with shifting boundaries between public, private and voluntary sectors in a series of networks;
- continuing interactions between and within these networks, caused by the need to exchange resources and negotiate shared purposes;
- game-like interactions, rooted in familiarity, trust and shared commitments to legitimacy;
- a significant degree of autonomy from the state, which seeks to steer the networks to achieve its policy goals, but cannot fully control them.

This chapter accepts that governance is a series of evolving relationships across space and interests. Another feature is the tendency for more decentralized arrangements to self-organize, that is, to develop their own sense of autonomy and self-interest. This in turn makes the centre's traditional job of coordinating policy within and across different sectors and levels of activity – now demanded by the sustainability agenda – ever more difficult. The rise of voluntary, or negotiated, agreements in environmental management is but one manifestation of this. The state sets the aims to be achieved, but important aspects of the implementation process are let to non-state actors. Another is the inevitable tendency for sustainability issues to span a range of different government departments and agencies. The resulting mismatch between institutional form and the inherently interconnected nature of sustainability problems generates 'policy messes' (Rhodes, 1985). These occur in situations when policy problems demand a coordinated response involving several agencies and levels of government activity, but for a variety of political and bureaucratic reasons do not receive it. Another example of the new governance-setting is the increasingly quasi-corporatist pattern of consultative and advisory bodies, commissions of investigation, and lay-professional membership in safety and public-health bodies found in European states. What we are witnessing here is the emergence of a more policy-centred policy process within changed organizational structures.

The new frame also rests on the implicit premise that there is some kind of shared responsibility to make this creative and participatory pattern of decision-making work and to be responsive to new demands. These demands, in turn, are being encouraged by pluralistic pressures arising from the social, economic and environmental conditions of sustainability. For all its ambiguities and contradictions, sustainability as a norm is creating a sense of a common objectives among a varied set of actors by caring for

threatened natural resources, for vulnerable and potentially disrupted populations, and for reliable wealth creation that encourages entrepreneurs to flourish while still looking after the good of the planet.

Along with all this comes a fresh sense of civic participation. In a world that is both globalizing and fragmenting into more and more governmental units, people are adapting in order to cope. According to Rosenau (1992, p291):

> *Given a world where governance is increasingly operative without government, where lines of authority are increasingly more informal than formal, where legitimacy is increasingly marked by ambiguity, citizens are increasingly capable of holding their own by knowing what, where and how to engage in collective action.*

This is the basis of Chapter 4. Empowerment comes, in part, through identity and self-esteem. Patterns of multilevel governance can provide a promoting context to such an aim, but the outcome is not necessarily automatic. It is important to heed Rhodes's (1996) warning that without proper systems of democratic control and oversight, governance risks being less, not more, accountable than government if more and more decisions are taken outside the traditional governmental system.

MICRO–MACRO LAYERING

When we try to understand local sustainability issues in the context of a more multilevelled system of governance, we have to address as a central issue the relationship between the macro- and the micro-levels. This has to do with the distribution of functions over a range of governmental levels, of the causal relationships that exist among the phenomena appearing at various levels, and the political dynamics connected to policy integration and international cooperation. This could be called intergovernmental 'layering'. We need to reflect upon the roles of the specific layers and their relationships.

The 'layering' topics are not covered by the micro–macro relations along ladders of phenomena at various scales within the sphere of nature alone, or through corresponding relations within the socio-economic cultural sphere. There is a need to connect these spheres of vertically structured different 'maps', which reflect different natural resource availability and social realities including patterns of actor networks.

An example from the land use–land cover domain helps to clarify the issues raised here (see Figure 3.1, and the report by Pritchard, 1998). On the right vertical side we find the various phenomena that could be related to different levels in the natural world from a farm field via a sub-region to an ecological watershed area (in this case, at the top). At the left-hand vertical side are the social phenomena at corresponding levels. One has to be very careful about the word 'corresponding' since there is no given

relationship between the two vertical 'layers'. The relationship between them is sometimes referred to as 'the fit', which is a key 'layering' issue when we are discussing sustainability problems.
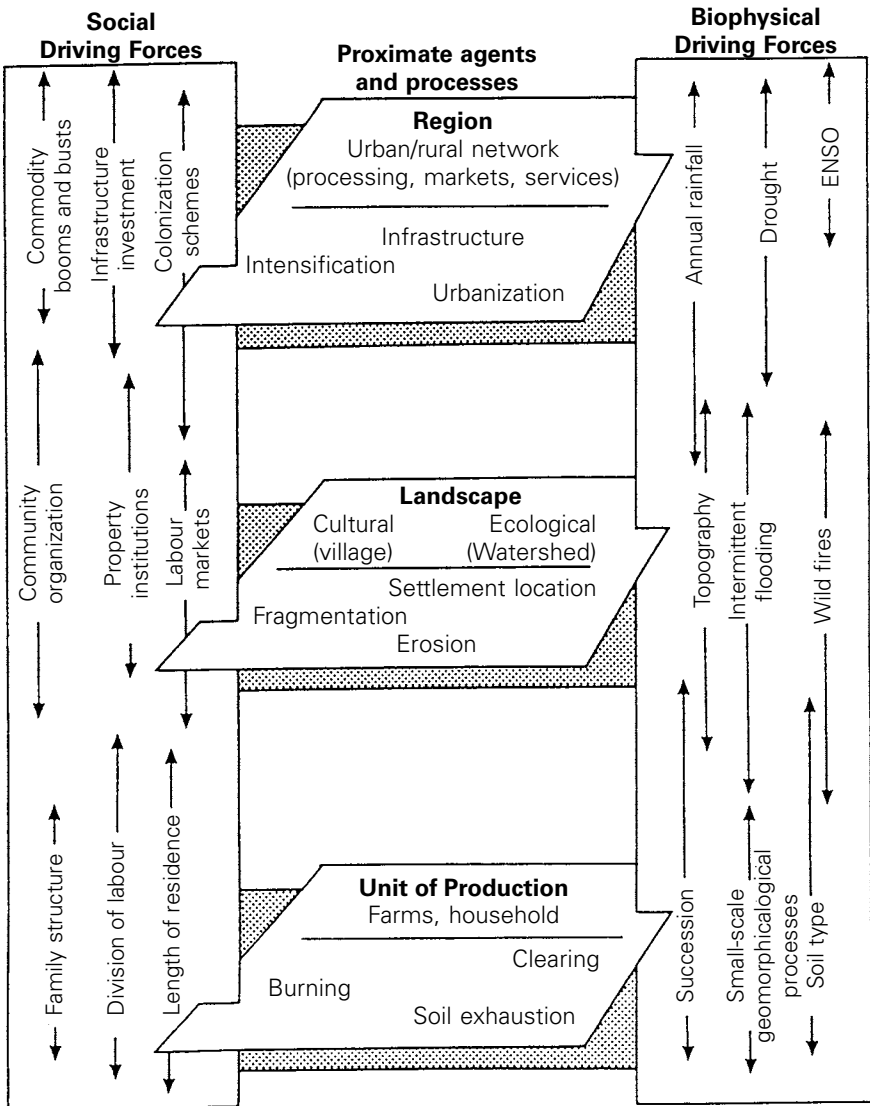
Note: Multiple scales of driving forces and proximate agents of change. One example of multigovernance is the river catchment. Its role is to integrate influences of various kinds, at different times and over various spatial scales. The natural connectedness of the catchment means that management regimes based on operations on separate layers will not work. Instead, there is a need to create inclusive policy structures that integrate policy analysis, decision-taking and implementation.

Source: Pritchard et al (1998, p12)

Figure 3.1 *Governing at different scales for catchment management*

The issue of 'fit' may be exemplified by the ecological phenomena occurring on an island in the sea. For many natural phenomena the systems boundary in moving from the sea to the island dry land is quite clear. Most species of flora or fauna belong to the one or the other realm. A fish is normally not found walking in the forest and a flower is seldom found at the bottom of the sea. Some species, however, move across the border (across the systems boundary), which for many is an unsurpassable barrier.

If however, we disregard some of these border-transcending life forms, the seashore between the water and the island soil is a reasonably useful delineation of systems. For some aspects in the socio-economical realm, this border may also serve as a systems boundary for management institutions. Perhaps the island is an administrative region with certain specific institutional arrangements associated with it. However, the administrative border may not be drawn at the waterline but at a distance out at sea (for instance, national sovereignty borders and economic zones).

So the fit between the natural and the socio-economic worlds of phenomena may be more or less congenial depending upon circumstances. Sometimes watershed-management institutional boundaries correspond to the physical watershed supplying a river with all of its water – sometimes not. The degree to which the 'fit' is a good one also varies depending upon the factual level between the micro and the macro. The global planetary climate system may fit the worldwide political–administrative realm of the United Nations (UN). But then there is the issue of what is meant by UN responsibility in relation to climate change and the connection to other domains of political influence – for example, the nation states or aggregates of such entities as the EU. Potential discrepancies between formal responsibilities and the factual capacities to act are important to consider.

The basic observation (as seen from 'below', from the micro, and 'above' the ladder of governing scales) is that small local systems appear to be embedded in somewhat larger systems, which in turn are embedded in even still larger ones. This holds especially true when we look at local ecosystems (such as a lake) located in a watershed region, again connected to spatially still larger-scale water management regions, such as cross-border river basin systems. If we disregard the exact nature of the causal relationships between these 'Chinese boxes' in 'Chinese boxes' in 'Chinese boxes' and do not examine too hard what really constitutes 'a system', the image of a hierarchically ordering scale-ladder of systems appears. The larger frame sets the boundary conditions for whatever can appear at the lower level.

Newtonian natural science has put great emphasis on 'compartmentalizing' and 'localizing' phenomena, trying to explain complex systems by explaining their parts and essentially defining all system performances as the outcome of the sum of the performances of the consisting sub-systems. This approach has been tremendously successful as far as 'machines' in the more physical sense are concerned. Technology has accumulated this approach for the better part of its rise to stardom in human society. Machines are, in fact, the most ideal natural science systems; they consist of well-defined, single-task parts that add up to a complex system. The beauty of

engineering work is to correctly define the tasks, construct the parts optimally with regards to the tasks and to keep the interactions between the parts simple.

This approach has also, to some extent, influenced thinking about the form and structure of human society. The hierarchical, functional form of any modern society seems to be influenced by a form of thinking that corresponds to the worldview of Newton. There are usually hidden underlying assumptions behind this paradigm that has helped to create a sense of solid foundation. One of them relates to the local characters of causal influences. Locality means that entities in any system can only be influenced by causes that are effective in the nearby spatial domain. In other terms, this usually means that 'local' causes have direct local effects, and that 'distant' causes have indirect effects only – for example, by providing the effects through the sequence of intermediary systems entities. There is no 'direct' link between spatially distant systems.

Today's gradual breakdown of hierarchies is most visible in the socio-economic cultural realm. We may talk about a sequence of administrative–political frames corresponding to ever-increasing spatial scales, such as a municipality, a region and a nation. Although there may be some hier-archical traits in such sequences, there are many feedback loops. A national parliament may set the rules for the municipalities, but the actors at the municipality level may have a strong influence through various political mechanisms on the rule-setting processes in the parliament. If we include a 'new' level as the EU level for countries that voluntarily have agreed to be part of such a structure, it is even more evident that the arrows of influence go both ways: both upwards and downwards among the instit-utional layers.

If you have a 'local' concern as a starting point, this erosion of hierarchy is important. The local level seems politically so strongly and hierarchically embedded in the decision-framing from a sequence of higher-level activities that the freedom to act seems restricted. It may even be argued from such a perspective that a sustainable development future is not possible to design and implement at the local level, as all important influences that frame the outcomes – be it the national economic policy or the EU support funds for agricultural purposes – seem to come from 'outside' (top-down). On the other hand, any implementation of a move towards sustainability must be based on vigorous and wise actions at the local level.

The entire issue about 'layering' now shifts from a stereotyped hierarchic ordering of functions, from top to bottom, to an issue of mutually reinforcing phenomena in feedback loops over sequences of scaling layers. The 'layer-ing' issue turns out to be the issue of understanding the causal relations in the total system. Here we have to address issues of what the dominant lines of influences may be. For certain phenomena these may well be top-down in character. The strong role of the nation state in countries such as France and Sweden are examples of this. The constitutional limitations of a unit directional line of political influence in more federalistic countries such as Austria and Germany modifies such images. The degree to which certain types of collective responsibilities are incorporated within the

societal design in different countries may also influence the perspective, as a comparison between the UK and Sweden shows, where the different conceptions of the state's role is the key to understanding the variations of 'layering' connections. There is a great importance in understanding the 'local' political culture, which provide these governance preconditions.

It is not only the different styles of sequencing of political–administrative layers in a comparative European perspective that are interesting. Equally important are the changing organizational dynamics of the factors involved. The influence from the implicit direct coupling between the EU-level and sub-regions within a nation state illustrates the mechanism where the nation-state level is undermined. The deliberate joint venture by several neighbouring municipalities to arrange a watershed management scheme collectively 'from below' may severely compete with sub-national, regional, institutional top-down types of solutions for the same type of problems.

One key mechanism is the earlier mentioned feedbacks between layers. Another is the influence at the 'same hierarchical level' of different nodes in a network, creating a situation of mutual adaptation. Such intersystem couplings may be more or less local in character, the simpler schemes emerging when one node directly influences the neighbours. However, non-local feedbacks have to be considered, especially in a globalized world of instant and ubiquitous financial markets.

THE INSTITUTIONAL PARADOXES OF SUSTAINABILITY

In dealing with these tendencies, within the context of sustainability, different paradoxical insights are brought into light. The local level of political administration seems to be locked within a web of stronger and stronger influences from above, creating strong impressions of conditions about what can be done at the local level. The addition of 'new' governing levels, such as the EU, may indicate even more remoteness to influence and power. The decisions taken in more and more multinational corporate boardrooms, at more and more remote and 'higher' hierarchical levels of decision, follow in the same direction. A Volvo sub-contractor in a small Swedish village is now dependent on decisions made by Ford in the US and not any longer by decisions made by the 'nationally minded' Volvo headquarters in Gothenburg. Yet, at the same time the hierarchical eroding forces are also there: new technologies in the information sector provide the capacity to be more local; new networking arrangements and new alliances of political corporation add to the impression of a quickly changing governance.

Some of the factors of change that lie behind this transformation include:

- technology change – for example, in terms of entirely new communication solutions but also in terms of other types of high-tech innovations in entirely different fields;

- organizational change – for example, in terms of new networks and strategies based on approaches that use networks rather than hierarchical arrangements;
- new modes of generating knowledge.

Equally important are the changes in perception about such factors among a wide variety of actors. This highlights the importance of the 'trust' factor in the political dynamics towards sustainability. These issues arise in the Swedish analysis of Linköping and Åtvidaberg (see Chapter 6), as well as in the Norwich case of Mile Cross (see Chapter 10). In both instances, social–local identity is limited by criss-crossing governmental arrangements that are insufficiently connected to create suitable conditions for sustainability. Local municipalities must attempt to overcome administrative hindrances by formulating and implementing policies that are based not only on local conditions, but also reflect the objectives of municipalities and regional governments. Such changed views may help to create 'leap-frogging' approaches for those who have the capacity to use the dynamics of the new situations. This is very much the case in Feldbach (see Chapter 7) and may well be emerging in Vale do Ave (see Chapter 8).

FROM LAYERS WITHIN NATIONS TO LAYERS IN THE EU

Traditionally, there have been three levels of government and public administration in most European countries. The relative importance of these different levels has, however, varied considerably between countries and over time. The first level is the central national level. All member states of the EU are now considered democratic, although a number of them have experienced non-democratic forms of government during the 20th century, some as late as the 1970s. Each member state has a parliament, some have a president, and others are monarchies. The strength of the central government is dependent upon a number of factors among which tradition, the election system and the country's constitution are the most important. The second level is the regional level. The importance of this level differs between countries. There are considerable differences between, for example, the power of the German Länder and the power of the new devolved country governments of the UK. The third level is the local scale. Again, a country's constitution and tradition combine to create varying degrees of autonomy for local government in the different member states of the EU. The *Kommun*, or municipalities, of Sweden have, for example, the right to collect income tax from their inhabitants and to determine how funds are utilized within a reasonably loose framework laid down by the central government. Municipalities in the UK, on the other hand, lost much of their autonomy during the 1970s and 1980s, and despite the political rhetoric of New Labour, still have to gain much of this back.

With the development of the EU, however, a fourth layer of governance has been added. Individual nation states have given up part of their

sovereignty to a new actor – the EC. The rationale for this process is at the core of the paradox of political power. In order to gain political power, political power must be relinquished. The globalization of the political and economic systems has led to the erosion of the power of national governments in favour of a more multilevel pattern of institutional arrangements. In order to regain some of that power, national governments have attempted to pool some of their political resources in the institutions of the European Communities, and through these institutions, regain some of the political power that they have lost.

While the creation of the EU has provided national governments with a new political platform, it has also initiated a new layer of governance that has provided sub-central authorities with channels of influence that enable them to by-pass central government. Local authorities in France, Italy and Spain can work together to develop regional interests. Swedish municipalities cooperate with local authorities in Latvia and Estonia and help them to prepare for EU membership. Projects of this kind are often part-financed by the EU, which encourages cooperation between sub-central governmental agencies.

During recent years, sub-central governments in Europe have developed closer relations with the EU and its commission. These networks of actors have increased in importance to create the processes of 'layering' and 'delayering'. Three types of networks can be identified. These are lobbying and exchange networks, policy networks and intergovernmental relations networks.

Pressure groups, organizations, businesses or sub-central government form lobbying and exchange networks. Their aim is usually to lobby EU institutions or to facilitate the exchange of information among network participants. Four categories of networks can be determined: namely, peak, spatial, thematic and sectoral:

- Peak groups include pan-European umbrella networks, such as the Council for European Regions and Municipalities (CEMR), which aim to coordinate local and regional governmental influence in Europe.
- Spatial networks are networks between regions with specific spatial or geographical characteristics. These networks attempt to advance regional interests and may be initiated by the EU. The INTERREG initiative, aimed at improving relations between richer and poorer parts of Europe, is an example of this kind of network.
- Thematic networks are created to lobby EU political institutions and may be formed in response to a specific EU policy programme.
- Sectoral networks are initiated by regions with comparable economic attributes and aim to support economic growth in similar economic sectors, or to alleviate the effects of changing economic conditions through EU aid.

In recognition of these historical transformations, Marks and his colleagues (1996, pp343–346) identify two contending theories of governance in the EU. One is that *state-centric* government through nations pools sovereignty

in international organizations, as well as devolves power downwards to regional and local authorities. Marks et al contend that the overall direction of policy is that of a national government's political needs. Typically, state-centric government relies upon unanimous voting for key policy issues in the EU. This ensures that no member state needs to be committed beyond what it is willing to tolerate. The core claim of the state-centric model is that 'policy-making in the EU is determined primarily by state executives constrained by political interests nested within autonomous state arenas that connect sub-national groups to European affairs' (Marks et al, 1996, p345).

The second theory framework offered by Marks et al (1996, pp346–350) is, as we discussed above, *multilevel governance*. Here, the state is not autonomous: decision-making is shared explicitly by actors, and not monopolized by state executives. Super-national EU institutions such as the EC and the European Court of Justice have power in their collective right. Decision-making typically becomes more multilevel when decisions are taken by qualified majority voting in the EC Council of Ministers. Crucially, this inevitably involves loss of autonomy by national executives. Therefore multilevel governance is interconnected, not nested, and integration takes place through a huge variety of organizational and policy structures. As a result, state level ministers agree to share power and to delegate authority to multilevel structures, thus shielding themselves from the political fall out of unpopular EU-wide policies (such as the CAP and the CFP that figure so largely in the case studies that follow).

SUBSIDIARITY AND MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE IN THE EU

If governance in the EU is, as we and others contend, becoming more multilevel, then an obvious question which arises is: what is the best level to address a particular set of issues or policy problems – the supranational, the national or the local? This may seem an entirely abstract, theoretical matter, but it has hugely important implications in terms of addressing the sustainability agenda, and in terms of the basic democratic accountability of any resulting actions. Clearly, some environmental issues such as climate change are better addressed at the supranational level; however, mechanisms need to be found that make appropriate trade-offs with economic and social concerns at successively lower levels, while ensuring an appropriate level of democratic accountability. The further one moves problem-solving up and away from the local, the more elongated the channels of democratic representation become.

The EU has been trying to resolve complicated governance issues such as these since its inception in the 1950s, but it was not really until the 1990s that the need for a more systematic political response became apparent. The focus for this debate is the concept of subsidiarity. Although it entered popular discourse in the immediate aftermath of the Maastricht Treaty

negotiations in 1991, subsidiarity has always been a well-established Euro-federalist principle. It is conventionally understood to mean that decisions in a political system should be taken at the lowest level consistent with effective action. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as 'the principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level'. Subsidiarity therefore provides a strong presumption in favour of *decentralization*. However, in the EU, subsidiarity has taken on a meaning which is sufficiently open-ended to satisfy both advocates and opponents of decentralization (Teasdale, 1993). Thus, the British saw subsidiarity as a means of reserving power for national government against the EU.

In German eyes subsidiarity, defined as action at the lowest effective level, coupled with the creation of a Committee of the Regions, promised to safeguard its federal system of government (involving the federal state and the regional Länder) from excessive European intervention. Arguably, Article 3b of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) tries to reconcile these two very different visions of a future Europe: one based around a strong network of independent nation states, the other involving a constitutionally enshrined allocation of powers across multiple levels of government – in a word, federalism. However, the links between subsidiarity and democratic accountability were clearly in the minds of negotiators long before the Danish voted 'no' to the Maastricht Treaty in a national referendum. The opening article (A) of the TEU talks of 'creating an ever closer union among the people of Europe, in which *decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity*' (our emphasis). As the depth of public opposition to deeper integration became clearer in the aftermath of Maastricht, the EC sought to emphasize that '[t]he aim of the subsidiarity principle is to see to it that decisions are taken as close as possible to the citizen' (CEC, 1993, p1). Significantly, the 1999 Amsterdam Treaty requires decisions to be taken '*as openly* and as closely as possible to the citizen' (our emphasis).

The events of the early 1990s provided an ideal opportunity for the sort of searching constitutional discussion of the overall assignment of tasks between and within different administrative levels in the EU that political elites had long shied from. But for various reasons it was spurned. Instead, subsidiarity has emerged from the post-Maastricht debate as a technocratic process of review and reform termed 'better law-making' rather than as a tool for reallocating existing responsibilities (Jordan, 1999a,b; Jeppesen and Jordan, 2000). Politicians have, in effect, stepped back from instigating a potentially open-ended debate about the democratic implications of bringing EU policy-making 'closer' to the citizen.

The episode usefully reveals the tensions between advocates of the two models of European governance introduced above: state-centric and multilevel. The former is consistent with a nationalistic perspective which searches for a state-centrist position. The latter fits a more federalist position arguing for the integrity of sub-national governmental structures that enjoy a high degree of autonomy. It may eventually be that the more federalist

line prevails. But, as we have seen, the early indications are that states are struggling successfully to retain their dominant role. For the purposes of this book, the debate over subsidiarity reflects the struggle between polis and demos, and the huge suspicions that lie between economic and political notions over the future shape of European governance. The trend is towards a looser form of governance, but the desire to control from the centre, whatever that means, remains as powerful as ever. The results are important inconsistencies in policy-making, with every sign that local-level vulnerabilities will increase in the tracking of sustainability.

These trends result in harsh pressures on local authorities in all parts of Europe. Earlier, the national government or parliament could be approached with regard to the design of regional or national economic policies. Today, other levels of power above the national have added complexity to the situation and the seats of 'real power' have become remote. Decisions are strongly influenced by central banks in other countries and by remote economic actors such as transnationals and investment companies that invest pension funds in whatever country is deemed most suitable. The multinational character of big business, increasingly remote from local settings, lies behind the 'branch-plant phenomenon' whereby commercial decisions taken at company headquarters may have life and death consequences for an entire local community.

One example from the Nordic scene is drawn from the electricity domain. In the earlier parts of the century Åtvidaberg had its own hydro-power company. In the last decade, this company (Forskraft AB) was sold to the nationally operating power company Vattenfall AB. This company is expanding to cover the whole of northern Europe. Global-reach companies come down to the doorstep of the individual who is supposed to make electricity purchase choices locally in terms of a world energy market.

These processes are not exclusively disadvantageous for local communities. While governmental networks have become, in many cases, more obscure and remote, the shift from more hierarchically sequenced 'vertical' paths of decision-making has also opened up new possibilities for local authorities. New forms of relations have been created that allow patterns of power to leap across traditional, strictly hierarchical, structures. Within this context, a London suburb or a Swedish rural municipality may obtain a grant for developing a community initiative directly from the EU, without too much interference from intervening levels of government. Business opportunities for private companies in small municipalities can be opened up due to direct contacts with world markets and support from the EU's programmes for small- and medium-sized industries, for rural development or for old industrial centres. A company in the semi-rural area of Åtvidaberg in Sweden can specialize in fibreglass masts for leisure sailing boats, and companies in Norwich can be at the forefront of the global biotechnology industry. These and many others can conduct business directly with their customers thousands of miles away. These developments enable some local communities to preserve a satisfactory taxation base and provide service for their inhabitants. We can find new types of drivers not only for economic

local prosperity but also for sustainability. For example, the eco-city of Graz or the high-tech city of Linköping are using EU, national and local funds, along with private-sector participants, to promote clean technology for the new round of economic enterprise.

GREEN POLITICAL THEORY AND MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE

Subsidiarity therefore raises the question of what is the most appropriate level of action in a multilevel system. However, the principle itself provides no clear answers. Economists give primacy to efficiency arguments in deciding how to allocate tasks between and within different administrative levels. Economic theories of federalism strongly suggest that the EU should act only when there are significant economies of scale to be gained by addressing policy problems at the supranational level, and when there are significant 'cross-border' (spillover) implications (Peterson, 1994, p130). Following the principle of fiscal equivalence, the government unit responsible for a particular task should therefore include within its jurisdiction everybody likely to be affected by its decisions. Only then can the full costs of actions be properly internalized. However, the problem with such an approach is that in reality policy competences to determine sustainability policies are already shared messily between levels, making it difficult to identify and assign costs and benefits to acting at particular levels. Arguably, it is difficult to compare meaningfully the economies of scale obtained by taking decisions at higher levels, with the deep-seated desire to bring decision-making as close as possible to the citizen.

What can green political theory bring to the debate? Does it provide a means of balancing the democratic and economic elements of subsidiarity? The most well-known typology of green political values ranges from deep green through to very light green (see Figure 3.2). Typically, light greens have great faith in the ability of humans to *manage* nature and live in harmony through the application of science and technology. They believe that sustainable development requires only a judicious mix of regulations and market-based instruments such as green taxes to correct market failures and to ensure that the environment is fully considered in decision-making. Deep greens – or ecocentrists – on the other hand, see science and technology very much as part of the problem rather than the solution. They tend to view humans as one small part of nature rather than a superior resource 'manager'. Accordingly, humans need to find ways to live with nature, rather than 'over' it.

In contrast to legal approaches, green political theory is not afraid to engage with the more normative aspects of subsidiarity. Deep greens in particular openly celebrate local diversity (Dryzek, 1987, p217):

• Small-scale communities are seen to be more reliant on their local environment and therefore more responsive to local disruption.

Table 3.1 *Environmental worldviews and levels of governance*

	Light Green		Deep Greens	
	Cornucopian	*Accommodation*	*Communalist*	*Deep Ecologist*
Green label	Resource exploitative	Resource conservationist	Resource preservationist	Extreme preservationist
Type of Economy	Anti-green: unfettered markets	Green: markets guided by market instruments	Deep green: markets regulated by macro-standards	Very deep green: markets heavily regulated to reduce 'resource take'
Management strategy	Maximization of GNP: human-environmental resources infinite substitutable	Modified economic growth: preservation of 'critical' environmental resources	Zero economic growth	Smaller national economy: localized production (bio-regionalism)
Ethical position	Instrumental (man over nature)	Extension of moral considerability: inter- and intra- generational equity	Further extension of moral considerability to non-human entities (bio-ethics)	Ethical equality (man in nature)
Level of decision-making	Unspecified: depends on problem	Unspecified: depends on problem	Regional/local	Local
Sustainability label	Very weak sustainability	Weak sustainability	Strong sustainability	Very strong sustainability

Note: Various ways of comprehending governance according to ideology. The groups on the left tend to prefer decentralized market structures, with increasing degrees of state intervention. The groups on the right look for less hierarchical forms of governance, with more polycentric modes of division making. In essence, the two wings adopt very different positions in their vision of multilevel governance in a future Europe.

- Decision paths are therefore shorter, making it easier to respond to new challenges when they arise.
- Local action actively promotes the social responsibility and participation which is deemed necessary to achieve sustainable development.

According to deep-green ecocentrists 'decentralization' is a means of redressing the distrust people feel about national and supranational politics. Ecocentrists would argue, moreover, that local participation addresses the widespread feelings of powerlessness and fatalism held by people in the face of an increasingly globalized world (see also Dobson, 1990). These sentiments are captured in the phrases 'think global and act local', and 'small is beautiful'. Lighter greens, on the other hand, are much more agnostic with regard to the question of task assignment: they are happy to leave the matter to experts who will use technical, legal or scientific criteria – just the sort of project upon which the EU is currently engaged.

Does green political theory specify what is the most appropriate level at which to address environmental problems? The key dilemma here is between devolved democracy (which fits the main tenets of green thought but risks dissolving into conflict between localities, Nimbyism or a deregulatory 'race to the bottom') and state control (which is often the only realistic political level at which the competing demands of local, regional and international actors can properly be mediated). Having interrogated a range of positions and perspectives including socialism, Marxism, individualism and ecocentrism, Robyn Eckersley (1992, p182) concludes that a judicious mixture of international and local-level initiatives offers the best solution. Small, she argues, may not be beautiful if power is devolved to local communities that choose, or are forced, to adopt a development path which degrades the environment.

The EU has ample experience of this. It is worth remembering that one of the great strengths of EU environmental policy to date has been its ability to pull up the environmental standards of the so-called 'cohesion' member states to the level enjoyed in northern Europe. Moreover, completely localized systems of control do not necessarily address the externality problem: supraregional decision-making is still required to solve international problems (Eckersley, 1992, p174). For Eckersley (pp182–183), the best solution therefore includes:

- breaking down the economic and political power of states by revitalizing parliamentary democracy at the state-level;
- creating a 'multilevelled decision-making structure by breaking down state sovereignty and shifting power upwards to 'international democratic decision-making bodies' and downwards to local bodies (Eckersley, 1992, pp185, 183).

Some would argue that this vision is not far from where the EU currently stands.

The obvious difficulty with green political theory is that it does not really get us any closer to answering the practical question of how to allocate

specific tasks across different levels other than that 'global' problems should be addressed globally and vice versa. Indeed, there is a case for concluding that the multilevel arrangement of the EU is already partly, if not wholly, compatible with Eckersley's prescriptions. Therefore, while remaining unclear on the crucial questions relating to task assignment, green theory does develop an interpretation of subsidiarity which is diametrically opposed to that enshrined in Article 3b.

CONCLUSION

The adding of the EU-level above earlier local, sub-regional and national levels does not necessarily reinforce an old hierarchical layering of power. It may easily, through the added new combinations, erode 'the old system'. There are clear examples that this is happening right now. In addition, other eroding factors – for example, due to new technologies, new networking patterns of alliances, new mechanisms in the global economy – help to reinforce such tendencies. The question of who gains and who loses control thus cannot be answered in a simple fashion. It seems as if active actors, even at the most local levels, can move more easily and more dramatically in this new ambiguous setting than passive actors. Thus the globalization processes may deliver the paradoxical effects on local circumstances both to enhance and diminish vulnerabilities.

The way in which local communities – both in a formal institutional sense and in a broader informal sense – operate and how the cultural framing of democracy processes develop is thus of basic importance. The key to a locally-based sustainability, which also has to be understood in the same 'layering' terms, will thus be less dependent on a general recipe and instead will be seen as the outflow of a pattern of many interplaying factors. Many of these will depend upon the way in which local situations are handled. An interplay between a sufficiently forceful visionary capacity, its consolidation in everyday politics, and its acceptance in the population are all important factors in the case studies that follow.

These processes also quickly change in their connotations. What one day may be seen as a policy of mismatch versus real needs may soon turn out to be quite reasonable – and the reverse. Thus the time factor and timing aspects have to be more strongly taken into account when considering how to deal with the combinations of constantly changing factors. The aspect of path dependence in the movements towards a more sustainable develop-ment therefore grows in importance. The pressure on old rigid political systems to improve their capacities for flexible responses is also part of the reality to create a more sustainable future. The quickly changing landscape of new layering patterns and the erosion of old ones is part of this challenge.

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