

**Communities Across Borders under Globalising Conditions:  
New Immigrants and Transnational Cultures.**

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Cultural diasporas..... are no longer confined to the rich. In dress, in religious or political orientation, in music, people in the poorest ghettos link themselves to transnational 'communities of taste' in an active way (Giddens, 1994: 188).

This paper tries to extend the frontiers of our understanding concerning the increasing significance of transnationalism in national and global life. Most of the literature on transnationalism to date has concentrated on the experience of new immigrants. These experiences suggest that their ethnic, religious or national diasporic relations and connections span national borders, thereby establishing the claim that such relations represent a qualitatively new phenomenon. As important and interesting as this rapidly expanding literature is, it cannot encompass - nor does it claim to do so - the actual range of transnational communities increasingly shaping the everyday lives of people across the world. While lip service is often paid to the need to widen our explorations of transnational communities beyond migrants and diasporas little research of this kind has so far been conducted (for an important exception, see Sklair, 1995 and 2001).

Our contribution to this on-going debate on the meaning, definition, nature, and basic features of transnational communities, rests on our claim that transnational communities and cultures need to be understood as constituting a much wider and more commonplace phenomenon than the existing research might lead us to suppose. We argue that transnational relationships have to be understood as manifestations of broader social trends that are not confined to the experience of immigrants; rather, and under globalising conditions, they are extending into and shaping the lives of people engaged in many other kinds of associations, clubs and informal networks as well as into cultural life at large. Therefore, our discussion tries to explore some background ideas or a general theoretical and conceptual framework. We shall begin by discussing

the current state of affairs in the related literature on transnationalism, globalisation and diaspora. Our overview is meant to highlight the achievements as well as the contested points in recent research and to lay out the fundamentals of our approach toward the topic. Next, we shall turn to the concepts of 'community' and 'culture' and critically examine the manner in which the de-coupling of locality from territory has caused important transformations in the meaning and nature of these two central sociological concepts. Then, we proceed to outline our classification of the new transnational and global communities, including the reasons for drawing a distinction between the two, as well the reasons the two should be considered within the same broad category.

### **Transnationalism, Globalisation, & Diaspora**

Despite important contributions focused specifically on enhancing our understanding of transnationalism in a broader and deeper sense (Hannerz, 1992, 1996; Giddens, 1990,1994; Appadurai, 1990, 1991, 1995; Beck, 2000; Lash, 1994), the theorisation of the transnational experience (and its ties to globalisation) remains incomplete. The strong leaning of the literature has been directed towards research mainly concerned with migrants, diasporas and transnational nation-state building (Danforth, 1995; Basch et al. 1994; Smith and Guarnizo, 1998; Cohen, 1997). This tends unwittingly to accentuate the special significance of such communities in world culture and politics while downplaying the contribution of other equally important non-ethnic/national communities in the global arena. There are also important terminological issues, which remain unresolved. Namely, some (mainly US based) researchers have used the term 'transnationalism' to designate the experience of post-1945 new immigrants into the US. In contrast, others (predominately British) researchers have opted for the term

‘diaspora’, a word that has expanded its reach to include new groups of expatriates, refugees, and immigrants (including such cases as the Kurds, Palestinians, Armenians, and so on) (Van Hear, 1998; Anthias, 1998; Safran, 1991).

The arguments about transnationalism have reflected the general tenor of the debate between proponents and opponents of globalisation (Held et al. 1999). That is, the assertion that transnationalism is a novel phenomenon, intimately connected to the social, economic, and cultural transformations of our Global Age (Albrow, 1997) has been criticised by researchers who have pointed out that the transnational experience pre-dates the post-modern world of e-mail, faxes, and instant wireless electronic services (Danforth, 2000; Roudometof, 2001; Mintz, 1998; Van Hear, 1998: 241-56; Dominguez, 1998; Hanagan, 1998). Historically, transnational connections, cultures and communities were the “normal” state of affairs. This ubiquitous quality was temporarily concealed during the relatively recent age of the modernising nation-state. Affiliations and supranational organisations based on religion, ethnic diasporas and trans-regional trading associations were among the many transnational collectivities that preceded the modern nation. Alongside numerous local and sub-national identities, such collectivities were suppressed, submerged and rendered deviant as against the myth of a single, national people asserted by the ascendant modern nation state (Vertovec and Cohen, 1999; McNeill, 1985). In any case, it was the rise of the nation-state that accelerated and massively deepened the processes associated with globalisation (Held et al. 1999; Mayall, 1990). Moreover, the global formation of an international society of nation-states compelled many ancient diasporas to seek and to assert a new ‘national’ relationship to their homelands, in many instances marginalising yet other ethnic minorities and other sub-groups so that they were driven to seek security by migrating elsewhere (Roudometof 1999).

In this regard, Anderson's (1983, 1993) work on modern national community is of direct relevance to our argument. Anderson (1983: 6) suggests that 'all communities larger than "primordial" villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.' It follows, therefore, that even vast entities such as nations are communities based on imagined bonds. Indeed this is the only way a nation can experience commonality, shared goals and a boundary; namely, as imagined community constructed around the idea of a 'deep, horizontal comradeship' (1983: 7). Of central significance for nation-state building was the arrival of the printed word in the vernacular, harnessed to market capitalism. Through the development of a mass market for books and newspapers - boosted eventually by state-sponsored mass education programmes - it became increasingly possible for the members of a national community to experience the 'simultaneity' (Anderson, 1983: 39) of their shared experiences with numerous others far beyond the immediacy of the small face-to-face community.

As Hannerz (1996: 20-21) reminds us, Anderson's insights convincingly demonstrate how 'the leap out of the local' was made possible by the ability of people to engage in a 'common intelligibility' through developments in media technology. However, he goes on to point out that while writing binds together those of the same language it also creates discontinuities between nations and peoples who employ different languages. On the other hand, the new symbolic codes associated with the advances achieved in, and the dissemination of, the visual media technologies of the last hundred years have proved to be far less bounded and restrictive (Castells, 1998). In Anderson's (1993) view, mass migration and mobility - stimulated by the technological advances of the last decades - lead to pervasive feelings of nostalgia for the homeland. Such feelings permeate immigrant communities, thereby giving birth to

the 'long distance nationalism' of ethnic diasporas, refugees, Gastarbeiter, or illegal immigrants. This interpretation flows from Anderson's (1983) earlier work - with the important difference that now place of residence and locality have become disjoined.

Obviously, none of the above is meant to refute the fact that many transnational communities have been borne out of the experience of social injustices, global inequalities and chronic insecurities. Global economic restructuring, the post-1989 capitalist boom, and the ascendancy of neo-liberal economic policies have further accentuated such experiences. Migrant encounters with radicalised social exclusion in host countries have further intensified the exposure of people everywhere, but especially in poor countries, to conditions of great economic and social uncertainty (Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Goldring 1998). Thus, as Glick Schiller et al. (1992: x) remark, 'transnational migration is shaped by .... the encompassing global capitalist system' and 'is becoming increasingly a global phenomenon as populations in capital-dependent countries are everywhere forced to migrate to centres of capital in order to live'.

Indeed, membership and participation in such migrant or diasporic communities have long provided strategies of escape from poverty, discrimination and oppression both for individuals and their families - even if many kin remain behind in the home village (for example, Chan 1997 and Smith 1998). Migrant communities have often offered a way of vitiating the worst aspects of poverty and oppression experienced by entire regions, countries or peoples (for example, Cohen 1997). In Portes' (1997, 2000) formulation, the transnational communities of the new immigrants represent a process of empowerment for the underprivileged groups - or what he calls 'globalisation from below' to be sharply contrasted with 'globalisation

from above', that is, global financial integration and the spread of capitalism world wide.

As we will suggest later on, however, transnationalism is not only an escape mechanism or a mode of coping with global capitalist transformations adopted by immigrants. It may be equally valuable to other disadvantaged groups of non-migrant origins living permanently within the heartlands of many nations. Consider for example the cases of discriminated and disadvantaged groups (such as women or stateless and tribal peoples) whose demands for land rights, regional and cultural autonomy or independent statehood have been persistently ignored or marginalised. Such groups have often striven to seek the attention and support of global human rights, environmental or development groups in an attempt to strengthen their national or local demands (Boli, Loya and Loftin: 1999: 75-6). At the same time many such underprivileged communities (like the Kurds or Palestinians) are involved in a variety of activities that display a global frame of reference. Such groups simultaneously might demand independent statehood (in their appeals in global forums) while orchestrating transnational political solidarity as well as cementing cultural ties built around family networks spread across a number of nations.

Nor are some Third World governments averse to taking a leading role in cultivating transnational connections (Basch et al. 1994; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; and Smith 1998). The motive for adopting a strong state presence lies in the desire to exploit the economic benefits- that is, foreign exchange earnings from remittances, investment flows into impoverished villages and regions, and the export of home products to satisfy the needs of nationals living abroad. 'In the face of the neo-liberal storm' (Smith and Guarnizo 1998: 7) these goals have assumed a new significance during the last two decades. Alongside this state-fostered economic transnationalism,

certain Third World governments (such as Mexico, for example), also seem intent on promoting the status and presence of their national culture in the world as a whole. Referred to by Smith (1998: 228) as the 'global nation', this image consists of a world wide community of nationals with their shared cultural meanings and identities. In Mexico's case, this is accompanied by all the signifiers which denote "Mexicaness" - and which are always and immediately recognisable as instances of 'the Mexican global nation' (Smith, 1998: 229).

In this regard, the constitution of transnational national communities provides an excellent example of what Robertson (1992) has referred to as the global construction of locality; that is, the construction of local identity drawing upon, and in specific reference to globality. While the construction of national identity provides a solid example of this process, we should point out that the conceptual opposition between globalisation and the nation-state obscures the foundational role played by the nation-state in the institutionalisation of key political, economic, and cultural features of contemporary globalisation. Furthermore, confining one's attention to the nation-state and the transnational flows of peoples detracts attention from the equally important flows of cultural practices ranging from popular music or ethnic food to types of social movements.

Thus, our approach toward the entire genre of transnational studies aims to rectify the strong emphasis of the US-based literature on 'new immigration'. We aim to accomplish this goal by taking account of certain groups traditionally not included under the definition of transnationalism, either because they were conceived of as 'older' more established ethnic communities or because they are residing outside the US (in Canada, Australia, or the UK). Second, we try to open up the theoretical space in order to allow for the examination of additional transnational groups that do not fall

within the category of ‘new immigrants’. Such groups have not been traditionally included in the study of transnationalism. Here, our purpose in thinking about both immigrant and non-immigrant groups is to emphasise the strong similarities that exist between all kinds of transnational and global communities irrespective of their migrant or non-migrant origins and experiences. Until now, we believe, much of the existing literature has ignored or played-down these important shared characteristics and experiences and here we hope to move towards remedying this deficiency. We begin by discussing the nature of community and how it is that communities remain valid and viable in late modern societies.

### **Community in an Age of Globalisation**

Communities are units of belonging whose members perceive that they share moral, aesthetic/expressive or cognitive meanings, thereby gaining a sense of personal as well as group identity. In turn, this identity demarcates the boundary between members and non-members. Communities therefore are constructed symbolically through an engagement with rituals, signs and meanings; they provide a container within which individual members negotiate meanings and construct and re-construct different kinds of social relationships over time (Cohen, 1985: 15-20).<sup>1</sup>

The classical sociological tradition stressed the “withering away” of community under the forces of modernisation. Following Ferdinand Tönnies’ *Community and Society* (1887), the division between *Gemeinschaft* “communal” relations and *Gesellschaft* “modern” social relations provided the backdrop for the theorisation of community (for a discussion, see Featherstone, 1997). The conceptual opposition between the two types of relations was particularly popular in the first half of the 20th century. In the second half of the 20th century, a more nuanced

perspective gradually evolved, stressing the inter-penetration of “tradition” and “modernity” and suggesting that the use of these concepts as ideal-types should not degenerate into them turning into caricatures or stereotypes (Bendix, 1967). Sociologists like Talcott Parsons argued that communal relations remain important for contemporary social actors. Indeed, modern units like the nation provide for ‘societal communities’ that serve the same function as the older, more ‘traditional’ pre-modern communities.

The new transnational connections enshrined by globalisation bring about further important changes in the nature, orientation, and character of communal relations. Indeed, not only are there are important differences between pre-modern and early modern communities and the communities of late-modern (or post-modern) societies but only by clarifying these differences can we hope to understand how and why communities are able to flourish in global social space.

Firstly, the communities of pre-modern and early modern societies were mostly based on what Beck (2000) - with intended irony - calls ‘natural’ relations of narrowly defined allegiances. These relations might be compulsory (Beck, 2000: 164) but might also involve a strong sense of inclusiveness based on ‘natural’ criteria. Such criteria included blood lines or descent (kinship), locality and residence (neighbourhood) and - once modernity was firmly underway - the nation and its association with what Beck calls ‘state-organised citizens’ solidarity’ (Beck: 2000: 155 & 163).

Secondly, in pre-modern and early modern societies, communal relations were basically relations of locality, thereby allowing for the construction and maintenance of all-embracing, multi-purpose and intertwining relationships based on direct, face-to-face contacts. Thus, territory and social propinquity in everyday life coincided.

Thirdly, as Hannerz (1996: 26) suggests, such locally circumscribed communities were likely to endure. They could offer their members 'broadly inclusive long-term relationships', highly charged emotional relations and mutual understandings. In addition, they might typically involve 'close surveillance' of members and highly effective mechanisms of social control. In other words, there was a broad symmetry in terms of the scale and directionality of interaction flows taking place among members (Hannerz 1996: 96-7). Lastly, because locality could more or less guarantee that any community was endowed with a 'clearly demarcated system of communication' it also generated understanding, security and common experiences (Beck 2000a: 155-6).

It is therefore clear that physical proximity, defined by locality and residence, was central in the conventional understanding of community. Of course, it was far from the only structural constraint. Other constraints were also important. These included the restrictions on people's rights to move (including kinship, religious, customary and positional loyalties and obligations); the limited range of economic opportunities elsewhere against the immediate availability or prospect of land, employment, mutual assistance, protection or charity; and the impediments of cost, danger, risk and inconvenience associated with physical mobility and communications. To a considerable extent most, if not all, of these constraints have declined in significance for the majority of people across the world.

Unlike the era of the first state-led drive to modernity, with its scientific certainties, neat territorial containment of society, economy and nation, continuing compromise with the traditional structures of class, gender and family and the unquestioned assumption that nature could be bent in the service of human need in perpetuity, we are now in transition to a new, more 'open, risk-filled modernity

characterised by general insecurity' (Beck, 2000: 19). This second or reflexive modernity must confront an entire array of new phenomena including the information revolution with all its repercussions, a revolution in gender relations, the rise of widespread environmental threats, the reconfiguration of state sovereignty and a growing trend toward post-national citizenship (Beck, 1992 and 2000; Castells, 1996; Soysal, 1994; Sassen, 1996; 1998).

These multiple challenges and the risks associated with them both compel and allow us to pursue a path of individualisation; constructing our life paths and identities more and more free from traditional structural constraints. However, although risks must be partly tackled individually, there is also considerable scope for, and perhaps many potential advantages to be gained from, engaging in new types of 'community-bonding through the sharing of risks' (Beck, 2000: 163-4). Constructed as bulwarks against the collapse of family support, the end of secure employment, the loss of national identity or the growing threat of environmental catastrophes, Beck (2000) argues that the new communities are founded on a shared cultural outlook and values. They are fundamentally political in intent and likely to be increasingly transnational in scope and power. In the light of these changes, in what ways are communities different in the era of reflexive modernity and globalisation?

Firstly, community today is actively generated by its members in much the same way that trust in social relations has to be 'energetically treated and sustained' (Giddens, 1994:186). Neither the emergence nor the continuity of community can be taken for granted by its members. Secondly, the reflexivity of communal connections is revealed in the voluntary involvement of individuals who choose to set-up a community or to seek membership in it (Lash 1994: 161). This reflexivity stands in sharp contrast with the more 'traditional' communities where membership was

allocated according to fixed criteria ascribed by birth and social position. Following on from this voluntarism, participation in communal relations is neither a once-and-for-all decision nor is continuity assured or inevitable. Instead, participation is likely to engender a conscious re-consideration of the nature and purpose of a community, perhaps leading to a process of 'constant re-invention'.

Thirdly, there is a relative shift from material resources and ends toward symbolic, informational and cultural resources and goals (Lash 1994: 161). Fourth, reflexive communities are no longer all embracing. They do not provide a totalising life programme or schema designed to cover all events and purposes and they may overlap with other communities (Beck 2000:164). Nor are they necessarily permanent or even long lasting and intensely emotional. Finally, underlying the above mentioned features lie deeper and more important shifts in the connections among space and community. In order to gain a better and deeper understanding of these shifts, we need to take into account the transformation of the other main corollary of 'community', that is, the notion of 'culture'.

### **Re-thinking culture, locality, and community**

Over the last twenty years or so, the increasingly obvious exposure of societies, economies, cultures and peoples to each others' practices, needs and meanings has led to extensive revisions of the social scientific discourse on the connections among locality, culture and community. Within anthropological discourse in particular, this revision has led to the open questioning of the connection between culture and locality.<sup>2</sup> In the new revisions, anthropologists have raised a two-fold argument. First, they have argued that the traditional anthropological notion of 'culture' - as essentially localised and moored to a particular place while existing as a self-

contained, internally coherent, all-inclusive package with clearly defined borders - is misguided. Second, the idea of 'culture' as fixed through childhood socialisation - to be later reinforced by unchanging and uncontested external social pressures- fails to take into account the social actor's reflexivity.

On the first issue, Rapport and Dawson (1998: 4) claim that the 'localising image of separate and self-sufficient worlds' found in much anthropological analysis was 'never more than a useful ideology that served the interests of (some) anthropologists'. According to Clifford (1988, 1992), earlier ethnographers tended to construct and represent the cultures they were studying in spatial terms so that villages were seen as 'bounded sites' (1992: 98). This tendency to localise cultures - to tie them to concrete places - yielded a view in which the natives appeared to be imprisoned or confined 'through a process of representational essentialising'(1992: 100). Ethnographers overlooked that fact that it was actually their own methodological needs and strategies which generated this result, for example, the use of the village as a manageable unit for purposes of eliciting information and for providing a convenient focal point from which to construct a picture of an entire culture. At the same time, anthropologists forgot that they were only able to function at all because numerous external influences and changes had previously prepared the ground so making their travel and sojourn possible while many of their key informants were only able to play their roles because they had already acquired a sufficiently cosmopolitan outlook. In all this the true existential character of cultures as simultaneously sites both of travel and dwelling and subject to multiple anchorages - always exposed to numerous external influences and the movement of people in and out, often sites of negotiation whose members were engaged in continuous encounters with other cultures - became largely hidden from view or side-lined.

On the second issue, namely the supposedly fixed, internally coherent and externally imposed, non-negotiable nature of culture various writers have challenged such conceptualisations. Thus, for example, Swidler (1986: 273) argues that culture needs to be seen as providing a “toolkit” of symbols, stories, rituals and world views, which people may use in varying configurations in order to solve different kinds of problems’. Similarly, Hoben and Hefner (1991: 18) argue that ‘tradition’ is too often understood as a set of meanings, which provide fixed standards against which all changes have to be measured and justified. But, what tradition actually requires is to be renewed, modified and remade in each generation.

This re-thinking of the traditional notion of ‘culture’ suggests that cultures may never have possessed the degree of solidity and firm attachment to localities attributed to them by many social scientists. Moreover, there seems little doubt that they have become even less coherent than formally and much of this is because cultures are being ‘de-localised’ - lifted from particular and familiar places and thrown into the ‘global post-modern’ maelstrom (Hall, 1992: 302). As Featherstone and Lash declare (1999: 1) in their introduction to an excellent collection of essays on contemporary cultural experience, the declining viability of the notion that cultures possess a degree of coherence sufficient to guarantee stable identities is due to globalisation.

In this context, it is important to draw a distinction between older periods of globalisation versus the increased contact among peoples, cultures, economies, and regions of our Information Age. First of all, in the pre-1500 period, globalisation was a gradual, uneven, and highly contested process that did not, for the most part, penetrate deep into societies and cultures. Then, following 1492, the pace of globalisation gathered considerable force, culminating in the modern period of

globalisation (1840-1945) (Held et al., 1999; see also Robertson, 1992). In the post-1945 period, this process culminated in the construction of a truly global economy. During this period, Castells (1998:1) argues, the world produced the technological infrastructure required for a truly global economy to function as a single planetary unit - that is, information systems, telecommunications, microelectronic-based manufacturing and processing, information-based air transportation, container cargo transport, high speed trains, and international business services located around the world. This global economy is an economy whose core activities work as a unit in real time on a planetary scale – as the case of capital markets aptly illustrates.

Fuelled by the Information Revolution (Castells, 1996) of the last thirty years, the rapidly accelerated pace of contemporary globalisation has generated ‘new spaces’ where cultures clash and mix both across and within nations.<sup>3</sup> Communication technologies are a crucial causal agent involved in this radical de-localisation of culture. The power of the mass media in the global arena - especially the extraordinary intensity and reach of the visual media of television, film and video - have massively enhanced the influence that imagination can exert over the everyday lives of ordinary people everywhere (Appadurai, 1991). Because of the mass media’s global penetration into all cultures and societies, we can no longer easily continue to inhabit entirely localised worlds even if we wish to do so. Simultaneously, the media facilitates the social production of fantasy, whereby the line between simulated reality and the ‘real world’ is erased (Baudrillard, 1983). Thus, even those trapped in the most demeaning and impoverished circumstances no longer experience reality as a ‘given’. For example, the image of the ‘global city’, broadcast around the world (including the most impoverished nations), acts as an incentive facilitating actual migration in search of one or other imagined alternative.<sup>4</sup>

According to Welsch (1999), so profound have been the changes inflicted on cultural experience, both at the macro/societal-level and the micro-level where individuals grapple with problems of personal identity, that we need an entirely new way of understanding it. Clearly the traditional notion of single, entirely separate and homogeneous cultures embedded in an ethnic or folk core is now completely unacceptable. But, Welsch (1999: 197) also rejects the idea of interculturality and multiculturalism since both continue to presume that we live in a world made up of separate, distinctive and internally coherent cultural 'islands or spheres' where social actors are nevertheless engaged in exercises designed to achieve mutual understanding, peaceful coexistence and a degree of inter-learning. Instead, he suggests that the reality of living today with cultural conditions 'largely characterised by mixes and permeations' (1999: 197) demands an alternative conceptualisation, namely the idea of transculturality. Thus, ours is a world of complexity and difference produced by endless amounts of cultural 'inter-penetration' - while at the same time, cultures increasingly overlap and interconnect with one another through 'external networking'. Accordingly, '[l]ifestyles no longer end at the border of national cultures ... (and) .... are found in the same way in other cultures' (Welsch, 1999: 197-98).

We have already alluded to the changing nature of communities in our Global Age. Thus, communities today are consciously constructed and continuously reinvented; their membership is voluntary and may be impermanent so that continuity is not guaranteed. Material goals and resources remain important but the balance is likely to tilt more towards the informational and cultural concerns of members. That is, the advancing technologies of transport and communication transform the nature of social interactions among community members. Membership no longer needs to be only or even mainly based on direct, face to face interactions.<sup>5</sup>

We want to further suggest that communities today are further influenced by the shifting nature of 'culture' or to put it more precisely, by the de-linking between locality and culture. The production of locality, of 'neighbourhood' and the *Gemeinschaft* social relations it engenders, has never been easy - even in pre-modern societies (Appadurai, 1995; Elias and Scotson, 1965). Ceremonies and rituals concerned with multiple boundary demarcations, with protecting resources, with trying to ensure loyalty and continuity and prevent fission, and much else besides, were frequent and important.

Under globalised conditions, locality, no longer necessarily rooted in particular places, has become highly problematic. The traditional unifier of the modern era, the nation-state, is now under siege by two other forces: first, by the de-spatialisation of social relations (i.e. the fact that subjectivity, territory and social relations no longer necessarily need to directly coincide); and, second, by what Appadurai (1995: 213) calls the separation of 'spatial and visual neighbourhoods'. De-spatialisation is the inevitable outcome of numerous migrations and increased global mobility at large (Bauman, 1998: 6-26, 77-102). Both factors have dispersed, displaced, mixed and brought into conjunction, whether in harmony or conflict, disparate cultures and peoples across cities, regions, countries and continents.

Beyond mere physical mobility, it is the electronic mass media that have completed this process by enabling small, dispersed communities to communicate as groups through film, theatre and other forums. In this process of producing 'spatial and visual neighbourhoods' lie immense opportunities for effective inter-personal, micro-level communication and collaboration - operating independently of states and corporations. Such opportunities extend through access to homemade video, cassette and camera or through the fax and electronic mail to more and more individuals and

families. As the incidence of virtual neighbourhoods across the world grows it will be increasingly possible for their members to 'create more effective national and global strategies of self-representation and cultural survival' (Appadurai, 1995: 218). Such processes of de-localisation create numerous uncertainties as well as possible permutations in terms of different kinds of social relationships. Thus, as Beck vividly suggests (2000: 29), people may live in local isolation with respect to some groups - 'as if they existed on different planets' - but they may enjoy social nearness and closeness to others living thousands of miles away so merging 'into a single social space'.

The range of possible situations and ways of coping with de-localisation, social fragmentation and the pluralisation of meanings brought by globalisation has been explored by the contributors to the research project carried out on London as a global city in the mid-1990s (Eade, 1997). Some white residents found themselves increasingly isolated, alone and unable to adapt when faced with the settlement of large-scale migrant communities from other countries and the death or exodus of older natives like themselves. They tended to resent life in a multicultural society. Others who had been born in the locality made some approaches to the newcomers, kept in touch with other elderly white residents through local amenities while participating in national and global friendship networks through letter, phone and holiday visits abroad. Some, mostly younger, white locals embraced migrant social life as a result of shared experiences based on school, youth or other common connections. Some individuals, on the other hand, knew hardly any one at all, whether white natives or migrants, but felt no resentment because to them the locality was simply a site of temporary accommodation while their important relationships were scattered across many other locations elsewhere (Durr Schmidt 1999). A similarly

wide range of variations with respect to local and global affiliations was equally apparent among the migrants (Eade 1997).

As a final point to the argument advanced in the preceding paragraphs and in order to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations of our thesis, we need to add three important qualifications. Firstly, our argument obviously does not imply a negation of the significance of the physical locale. Everyone continues to inhabit one or more locale at any one point in time in the obvious sense that we all need a place to eat, sleep, store our possessions, find shelter and pursue our interests and needs for leisure and recreation. Moreover, most of us also participate in a place of work. Though for many types of employment this may not necessitate confinement to any one particular location but may instead involve fairly continuous travel, work normally requires places of residence and rest within easy reach- however, temporary such places might be.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, the declining dependence of more and more people on their immediate locale as their only or main source of direct, inter-personal relationships does not mean that we do not continue to romanticise the local. Indeed, its traditions seem to exist in 'limitless supply' and while the global often appears to be rather 'shallow' the local retains depth and substance - at least in our imagination (Hannerz, 1996: 28). Thirdly, it is necessary to highlight the sociological significance of the distinction between locality (in the sense of 'place' or physical proximity) and territory (or what might be referred to as 'soil' or 'homeland' or ancestral birthplace). For the de-localisation of many communities does not imply a loss of significance for territory. For example, diaspora communities continue to be primarily defined and organised around ethnic or national affiliations and maintain a strong sense of

attachment to their homelands. Indeed, the histories of these groups are deeply grounded in particular territories (see, Danforth, 2000).

### **Communities Across Borders: People and Cultures**

In our Global Age, communities have become liberated from dependence upon direct inter-personal relations and, like cultures, from the need to operate primarily within the limits set by particular physical locations. Locality is no longer the only or even the primary vehicle for sustaining community. The subversion of physical locality and its re-constitution in a de-territorialised fashion is a task carried out by the migration of people and cultures across borders.

The 'new immigrants' of the Global Age, variously defined as 'transmigrants' or 'transnational' peoples have provided the traditional research site for the study of transnational connections (Portes, 2000; Smith and Guarnizo, 1998; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Basch et al. 1994). Many observers (for example, Vertovec and Cohen, 1999; Smith and Guarnizo, 1998; Vertovec, 1999; Portes et al. 1999) have argued that the new forms of communications technology and mass transport are giving rise to unparalleled opportunities for the members of migrant national communities to opt for the perpetuation of active transnational linkages between homeland and host country in preference to assimilation because such technologies have placed the power to create a simultaneity of experience and feeling right in to the hands of migrants themselves (Smith 1998: 213). Moreover, second- third- or fourth-generation migrants might be empowered to reinvent and re-vitalise their former national cultural identities long after it had seemed that they had moved firmly in the direction of host-society assimilation (for example, Schein 1998).

However, just like people, cultures can and do migrate, increasingly assisted by electronic communications and the mass media in addition to being carried through inter-personal social exchanges. Transnational cultures lead to the formation of communities of 'taste', shared beliefs, or economic interests - to list a few of the factors that work on a global scale. This mobility of cultures, people, economic resources and much else besides necessarily both requires and creates de-territorialisation - an increasing number of situations in which social interactions take place across, beyond, outside and frequently without any reference to particular nations, borders and identities (Appadurai 1990; 1991). In effect, transnationalism is necessary, unavoidable and advantageous. It has become a built-in feature of the cultural, social, political and economic lives of many people everywhere.

Appadurai's (1990;1991) concept of 'ethnoscapes' has meant to provide a vehicle for conceptualising the de-territorised 'spaces' occupied by multitudes of transnational or diasporic migrants as well as tourists, professionals and experts, entertainers and cosmopolitans along with the members of corporations, associations, interest groups and political movements. Accompanying and following these ethnoscapes - and often independently of them - are numerous mobile flows (Urry, 2000) consisting of meanings, ideas, images and information but also goods, finance, informal and organisational arrangements and all the other baggage which human beings both need and generate as a result of their local and world wide interactions.

Our thematisation of the transnational experience consists of classifying the de-localised, de-territorialised communities of our Global Age into two groups: the new immigrant groups of the post-1945 migrants; and the groups organised around transnational cultures. We should stress that traditional or "old" diasporas or ethnic communities should, at least in our view, be considered examples of transnational

cultures. Hence, the second- or third- generation ethnics of many immigrant nations provide examples of transnational culture. Our recommendation aims to provide a general framework capable of allowing the examination of de-localised culture in addition to the experience of recent immigrants. Moreover, the persistence and inter-generational reproduction of ethnic difference should not be viewed as a phenomenon of the last twenty years since a rich literature does exist pointing out the long history of this phenomenon (see, for example, Jacobson, 1995; Hanagan, 1998; Morawska and Spohn, 1997; Roudometof, 2001).

It is tempting to suggest that the first group consists of the new 'local' or transnational national communities; while the second group consists of truly 'global' communities - at least in the sense of them not being tied to a 'national' community, but rather being organised around a different set of orientations that explicitly transcend the national divide.<sup>7</sup> Such an interpretation would be dangerously close to a false opposition between the local and the global; for the two are mutually dependent upon each other, and therefore, to view them in isolation is misleading at best. In our view such a distinction is unhelpful and misleading. But there are several additional reasons for avoiding this dichotomy.

Firstly, it may be possible to distinguish between transnational links across and between two or more countries that are constructed primarily around specific ethnic or national loyalties, affiliations and concerns - defined by ties of blood, territorial origins and citizenship - and yet others that not defined in strictly ethnic or national terms at all but rather which are shaped according to ties and affiliations determined by sport, leisure, lifestyle, business and so on. Very little research has been conducted on the latter but that does not mean that such transnational associations do not flourish. Indeed, it is our contention that such ties do exist but they

are rarely taken into account in the literature – with the rather obvious exception of the Americanisation debate (cf. Epitropoulos and Roudometof, 1998).

Secondly, as our own case studies demonstrate, migrant and diasporic communities are extremely heterogeneous both with respect to each other and in terms of internal differences among their members. Class, education, occupation, generational cohort, or even the particular leanings towards varying religious preferences are factors likely to generate considerable heterogeneity within any particular ethnic or national group over time. Such differences may ultimately create a situation where sub-groups within an ethnic community share a lifestyle and personal aspirations which bear a stronger resemblance to those evinced by members of the “dominant” host society than to the members of their own migrant group. At the very least, such individuals are likely to ‘accept that identity is subject to the play of history, politics, representation and difference ‘ (Hall 1992: 309) and learn to live within the fragmented, ever-changing and plural realities of a multicultural - or transcultural (Welsch 2000) - existence shaped by multiple identities and affiliations.

Thirdly, given that participation in community has become much more open, flexible and subject to negotiation, it is perfectly possible for an individual to participate in more than one kind of community at the same time. By the same token the focus of a person’s allegiance between such communities may also shift over time, depending upon the specifics of individual biography (see Hedetoft 1999 for examples and further discussion). In other words, community allegiances contain diachronic and synchronic aspects, thereby demanding situational analysis. Thus, even the most loyal and passionate member of a de-territorialised ethnic or national community may nevertheless also offer strong support to a human rights, green, religious or other cause committed to solving global problems and to engaging in

global co-operation and campaigning strategies. Similarly, individuals with strong attachments to ethnic or national diasporas might also demonstrate powerful loyalties to a professional, scientific, political or business identity and ethos which has obvious cosmopolitan and universalistic leanings and implications.<sup>8</sup>

The reverse may also be possible. Thus, individuals whose primary loyalties and identities are defined by membership of a cosmopolitan professional ethos and whose families enjoy ancient non-diasporic roots to a single nation may develop a sudden and unexpected feeling of national pride - perhaps prompted by loneliness, or a sense of being overwhelmed by engulfment in a foreign society and culture during a period of employment abroad. Such feelings may give rise to the impulse to seek out local members of the expatriate national community, to openly declaim and reaffirm national origins and identities and to keep alive, revive or even intensify long-standing links to friends, family and others who have remained in the homeland. However, these strong tendencies towards transnationalism on the part of such individuals may prove to be short-lived - they disappear or fade once other friendships with non-nationals have had sufficient time to develop or with the prospect of a return to the home country. Moreover, they may prove to be perfectly compatible with an equal and parallel participation in a world-wide community of friendships constructed around earlier and continuing shared professional experiences. The range of possible situations and permutations, here, and the scope for individuals and groups to engage in multiple affiliations and to negotiate between several non-exclusive identities, is vast.

Lastly, as we pointed out earlier, many disadvantaged tribal or ethnic peoples and groups - lacking a homeland and/or independent statehood, some of whose members are dispersed across many countries - have been simultaneously engaged in

using global forums as one key vehicle for seeking world wide support while maintaining concrete cultural and kinship ties across several countries built primordial identities. Moreover, their involvement in global strategies has often brought such groups into close alliance with and dependence upon other non ethnic/national groups with an entirely global agenda such as human rights or the environmental such that the different causes become partly merged at times. Something like this synergy took place at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 but there are numerous other examples.

In summary, it appears that proposing or maintaining a clear and watertight distinction between 'truly' global as opposed to 'purely' transnational national communities is difficult, sometimes impossible and not very helpful. Moreover, both types of communities share specific experiences that, in our view, justify their inclusion into a single category. These include the following:

- 1. More or less equal exposure to global flows and processes.* All the individuals and groups participating in transnational communities and cultures are exposed to globalising forces from multiple and similar sources, including the following: a global economy; the mass media in all their forms; the particularistic cultural flows originating from many parts of the world; the vast movement of people as tourists, entertainers, commercial agents and so on ; and the influence exercised by goods, information, values/ideas, commercial temptations and much else besides. Migrants, of course, constitute part of these forces and expose host communities to their values and lifestyles. But the reverse is obviously also true even if migrants are prevented from assimilating or do not desire to do so fully or at all. Thus, global influences reach 'locals' who have never moved from their place of birth and those caught up in recent or earlier migrant flows in equal part while both constitute part of

those same global flows with respect to each other's experiences. 'Local-ness' has become relative.

2. *Bringing the local and the global into conjunction.* Everyone is compelled to live with, and negotiate the paradoxes and complexities arising from, the simultaneous exposure to local/national and global influences. Similarly, however cosmopolitan and mobile we may be - used to moving between and living and working within a series of temporary, short-lived social situations and locales - at any one moment in time we all nevertheless reside in a particular place insinuated with numerous meanings and interact with a given set of 'others'. Retaining a foothold at the local level while juggling with global forces and connections is a condition no one escapes.

3. *A universal frame of reference.* Who ever may be the subject of investigation - either migrants or permanent, long-established locals or globe-trotting middle class cosmopolitans - everyone shares common points of reference which lend some structure and meaning to their lives: a place and nation of birth, parentage and family ties; citizenship (whether, single, dual, uncertain, contested, unwanted or whatever); perhaps a preferred, ultimate or ideal homeland or place of destination; and a current locale where we seek a livelihood, a habitat and some degree of sociality, however temporary, superficial or undesirable (for further discussion, see Robertson, 1992).

4. *Technological advances offer new resources to everyone.* In recent times, the inter-personal and symbolic/ imagined exchanges involved in community life have

been transformed by the possibilities inherent in communications and transportation technology. It is important to remember, however, that everyone can benefit from recent advances in technology in terms of cementing ties and orientations over huge distances, forging or enlarging new attachments or enhancing the sense of shared meanings between those deemed to be members of the same community. Thus, technological empowerment may enable lower class youths experiencing class and political oppression and who have never experienced overseas migration to participate in and borrow from global popular culture while forging their own brands of punk or other rock music as a way of expressing in symbolic form their criticism and even rejection through music of conventional politics and social life. Alternatively, educated UK-based Iranians may join in a global sports event such as the World Cup, like billions of others - thereby temporarily neutralising their enforced loss of social status as non-citizens while becoming symbolically re-united with their countrymen. At the same time videos, photos, e-mails and all the rest enable far-flung middle class cosmopolitans to keep in daily touch with their families back 'home', their friendship clusters in several countries and their co-professional community sharing the same ethos across the world (Bauman, 1998). It is not just the lives and interactions of migrants engaged in maintaining transnational national communities, which are being transformed by advancing technology.

5. *Disadvantage stemming from common exposure to macro-forces.* Both migrant and non-migrant populations experience different degrees of oppression, deprivation, insecurity, marginalisation and inequality - whether this emanates chiefly from the national location where people are currently situated, from the global economy and polity or from both of these at the same time. Moreover, these

experiences may have historical links and continuities. We outlined some of these earlier: racial/ethnic prejudice from host society and/or state and the existence of obstacles to assimilation or citizenship participation; class discrimination and deprivation; a long history of communal exile, exploitation and imperialist oppression and denigration; increased exposure to global, hegemonic-political and/or economic controls and ideologies such as neo-liberalism which prevent or inhibit attempts to develop home economies or which inflict deprivation on migrants and non-migrants alike - especially, women, the unskilled, the rural landless peasants, those employed in traditional industries - across many countries.<sup>9</sup>

6. *The opportunities and resources generated by globalization.* The formation of new communities and the growing participation in established ones may provide key resources which enable disadvantaged groups to partly neutralise, resist or even reverse some of the forms of oppression to which they have been subjected. Thus, participation in such cultures and communities can be and frequently is empowering both for individuals and groups. Sometimes, what may begin as a desire to harness global community support for purely local goals and needs may culminate in a decision to pursue global goals and causes, seen as valid in their own right but also useful for the attainment of local aims. Such transnational mobilisation is going to be an important feature of organisational life in the 21st century. It may involve alliances of trade unions across the world with churches, environmental or women's non-governmental organisations or via human rights groups working with migrant communities, stateless peoples and the representatives of marginalised Third and First World groups. Again, the local and the global reveal a capacity to become merged and inseparable.

*7. The local/national and global impact of transnational communities.*

Irrespective of their orientation and character at any one time, most transnational and global communities have a potential to shape nation-states and local economies as well as global political, social and economic life. Such communities have long been a formidable component of the global flows which increasingly connect peoples, cultures, economies and nations to one another and, again, the literature on migration, diasporas and the numerous examples of active transnational nationalism has led the way in exploring this issue. The interactions of people and meanings to which they contribute may have wider implications either for conflict or cohesion. Thus, long before the surge of cross-issue and multi-national political collaboration which crystallised strongly and unambiguously around the theme of global economic injustice at Seattle in December 1999 - and which has continued to impact on key world forums ever since - there had been numerous earlier campaigns over such issues as nuclear power and weapons, environmental issues, apartheid in South Africa and corporate irresponsibility. Although these were mainly aimed at national governments they also succeeded in attracting global support or had world-wide repercussions (for example, Hegedus, 1989, Scarce 1990, Clapp, 1997, Rodman, 1998 and Roseneil 1997). The Jubilee 2000 campaign against Third World debt, for example, formed in 1990, has clearly been very successful not only in orchestrating and synchronising numerous global organisations but in welding together an influential world-wide political community. By the end of the year 2000, it was able to muster a petition signed by 23 million people from affiliated groups spread across more than a hundred countries. Moreover, by harnessing the media influence exercised by several key celebrity figures - who are immensely influential in the

world of popular and youth culture - to the campaign, the organisers have demonstrated the huge potential for exploiting the vast reservoirs of untapped “political” support among ordinary people everywhere.

Numerous concrete instances demonstrating the immediate or potential impact of transnational communities on local and national life are both evident and possible and they are certainly not confined to transnational national communities. For example, they may take place through the world of art whereby the representatives of many disadvantaged and dispersed local peoples may come together and in the process they rediscover and re-invent both their separate and collective meanings and social identities as against a previous era where their cultures were denied through imperialistic practices. Here, too, a long earlier history of cross-hybridisation may be celebrated. Similarly, Third World professionals such as enterprise managers may benefit from their membership of a global business community created by and linked to corporate capital. Participation in this business ethos may enable them not only to improve their personal career structures but to become members of an increasingly confident cosmopolitan local elite who are empowered to adapt their acquired professional business skills, connections and experiences to the needs of national economic life thereby deepening their country's national industrial base and countering some aspects of regional underdevelopment.

### **Toward a Tentative Typology of globalised communities**

All contemporary globalised communities are inevitably different from their predecessors. Nevertheless, ignoring key differences would be just as counter productive as ignoring similarities and much of our discussion has loosely referred to - or has assumed the existence of - five major types of communities. These are

defined in terms of the primary concerns and orientations of their members. These types are the following:

- Transnational national communities of the kind discussed by Basch et al. (1994) and the contributors to the volume edited by Smith and Guarnizo (1998). Here, members are primarily concerned with the articulation and reproduction of common, ethnic and national interests, economic linkages and cultural similarities. The ties among community members connect those based in the homeland with those members dispersed across specific national host territories. Membership is mainly or perhaps entirely defined in terms of common ethnic or national origins.
- More widely dispersed and probably older national and ethnic migrant groups constituting a diaspora whose attachment to a homeland is more symbolic in nature and whose members have become assimilated to various degrees into one or more host societies.
- Communities (mostly but not entirely) of meaning cohering around shared lifestyle orientations and practices involving aesthetic, affective bonds and understandings such as sport, celebrity, musical and artistic followings and fanzines.
- Communities based on a political, moral, or ethical perception of local or global injustices and problems; where the search for solutions necessarily engenders and requires transnational collaborative action leading to the construction of a 'global' culture based on voluntary action and oriented toward problem-solving (Boli and Thomas 1999).
- Groups bonded by a shared professional or occupational ethos based on the notion of service to others and duty to clients, a set of mutually respected skills and exposure to a common set of organisational experiences and obligations which

empower them to cope well with mobility and to negotiate global cosmopolitan spaces with relative ease.

The first two types of community are constructed around the so-called 'natural' ties of blood, race, ethnicity and nationality. In this, they are obviously different from the rest of the communities in the above list. Here, indeed, migrant and diasporic communities do seem to exhibit a formidable cluster of features that mark them out from other kinds of transnational and global community and which go a long way towards explaining the attention they have received from researchers. Even so, there are several reasons for suggesting that we should not allow this to distract us from the need to place all types of globalised communities within a single theoretical frame.

Firstly, it is essential to bear in mind all those experiences, opportunities, potential impacts, a common frame of reference, the structural constraints, technological changes, and so on, which expose every type of community to essentially similar realities under globalised conditions and which we examined in detail earlier. Secondly, the situation with respect to cultural/aesthetic, professional/business and political/ethical communities may change dramatically in the future as the interconnectivities brought by globalization, including technological advance, rapidly intensify thereby increasing the need and the potential to build much more durable links and structures approximating more closely to those displayed by migrant and diasporic communities. Thirdly, a considerable and growing amount of heterogeneity is apparent both within and between different transnational migrant communities with respect to many aspects of migrant life; attitudes to religious affiliations and the ways in which these are expressed - for example, the manifestation of religious fundamentalism militancy - or the varying degrees of success and

determination with which migrants and their descendants seek assimilation and intermarriage with native people offer only two examples. Moreover, some members of national/ethnic communities seem to display cosmopolitan and professional leanings and attitudes which differentiate them sharply from their less well-educated and more nationalistic fellow members and such differences may be linked not just to the length of time spent in the host country or generation but also to the class and educational origins of the immigrants when they left their home country in the first instance.

Fourthly, there has long been an argument in the literature on transnational ethnic/national communities to the effect that migrants have always been confronted with two sets of alternatives. On the one hand, they could resist full assimilation into the host culture and retain a high degree of ethnic separatism or seek such assimilation in the long term. Alternatively, they could pursue a degree of absorption into the host society but alongside this maintain an attachment to their diaspora's history, its traditions, nostalgic longing for the homeland and some degree of continuing transnational connections to ethnic or national members dispersed across the world. However, this supposed bi-polarity between diasporic experiences versus the assimilation-ethnic separatist option has increasingly been challenged. Faist (1999), for example, attacks what he calls the 'container concept of culture' (31). Here, immigrant lifestyles and meanings tend to be seen as something forever being 'figuratively packed and unpacked, uprooted (assimilationists) and transplanted (cultural pluralists)', always existing either as a whole or in a state of dismemberment but never, apparently, surviving in multiple transnationalised forms in conjunction with other equally trans-local and hybridised cultures across many borders (32). Here, the work of Brah (1996) and Gilroy (1993) is highly suggestive since they claim

that what is really important to many individuals is not so much the need for a concrete homeland as the homing desire as such, and that the diasporic imagination often involves the search for routes as well as roots and the need to continuously negotiate and understand the state of being in-between place of origin and place of destination.

Finally, and following on from the last point, there is the question of what importance diasporic members attach to the construction of their own ethnic or national community. More often than not this occurs without the need to imagine community as tied to a particular location. For example, this de-localisation may revolve around what are essentially “floating” cultural sites, often linked to shared religious rites, icons or temples and may be especially likely among people who had previously migrated several times between different countries and who may never have lived in their original “homeland” at all. Shared religious interactions, beliefs and ceremonies may also help to symbolise community and these may generate intense internal debates over how best to represent migrant identity through different versions of church or mosque culture. Alternatively, community can be created by relying on historical memories and the dissection of different claims concerning the nature of migratory experience or by engaging in the symbolic construction of community grounded in nostalgic yearnings for, and their idealisations of, an idyllic but now lost rural background in the home country. In all these cases we find that while “place” may remain intensely evocative and powerful it has become de-linked from territory; its defining power rests on the fact that it has now become a symbolic construct self-consciously used in order to represent a space of cultural distinctiveness rather than a geographical entity.

## Conclusions

The ways in which its members experience community today is different from the forms of community that flourished in pre-modern and early modern societies. Nevertheless, none of this undermines the capacity of 'community' to meet the needs of its members. In an age of globalisation, 'culture' and 'community' have become separated from locality. Indeed, the de-territorialisation of culture is in large part responsible for transforming people's notion of what a community is. Community now assumes a more fluid nature. This opens up opportunities for groups to re-constitute themselves around various kinds of shared identities despite their dispersal over considerable distances. In a global age, distance is no longer an impediment to community.

Indeed, far from globalisation jeopardising the possibility of viable communal life, it has probably given the latter a new lease of life. *Thus, transnational communities are almost destined to provide the most significant form of 'community' in the future.* It may be that most future communities will not only derive numerous advantages from operating with a transnational or global orientation but this will be increasingly necessary even inevitable if they are to fulfil the needs of their members adequately.

The fact that more and more communities are now transnational in intention and practice does not mean that 'locality' has ceased to be significant. For one thing, at any one moment in time everyone occupies a locale with its attendant life-world and no matter how much they travel or participate in multiple worldwide networks. However, it is also the case that globalisation compels the local to re-think itself; globalisation relativises and changes the local even as localisation not only presupposes but also, in turn, re-vitalises and informs the global (Robertson 1992).

Following from the last point, the continuing salience of territory is especially evident in the case of migrant, ethnic/diasporic transnational communities. However, in these instances locality is normally experienced symbolically; it consists of an imagined homeland or place understood through nostalgia, memory, history or constructed cultural sites and it is precisely this quality which enables such transnational communities to survive and remain viable for its members.

It seems to us that this de-linking of communal identity from specific places or territories by so many (migrant and non-migrant) groups provides powerful evidence in support of our claims concerning the increasing similarities between all types of globalised communities under globalising conditions. Thus, 'place' is replaced by an imagined or symbolic unity built around shared meanings. Locality does not evaporate. Rather, it is a purely symbolic notion of locality that becomes the focus of community formation. Although it is essential to identify and explore the crucial differences that exist between certain types of transnational communities, it is equally important to discuss the overarching similarities between. It is these similarities which in our view justify placing all kinds of transnational communities within the same theoretical frame.

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<sup>1</sup> This central significance of shared meaning is stressed in the literature. Hall (1998: 182) for example observes that the main ingredient for a national or any other kind of viable community is 'the idea we have of it ... the meanings we associate with it , the sense of community with others we carry inside us'. Similarly, for Lash (1994: 157), and in contradistinction to Giddens and Beck when - in the same book - they talk about the essentially cognitive knowledge of the world possessed by separate

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individuals under the condition of reflexive modernity, reflexivity in relation to community necessarily involves 'hermeneutic knowledge'. But 'the latter is only possible when the knower is in the same world as and "dwells among" the things and other human beings whose truth she seeks'. Thus, community is based in everyday habits, routine practices, shared understandings, tools, goals and emotions and is guided by some mutual acceptance of 'what is regarded as substantively good'.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Abu-Lughod (1991:139) is one of the authors who have argued strongly against earlier anthropological notions of culture claiming that these have outlived what ever explanatory usefulness they may have had. She suggests that as a discipline anthropology was 'built on the historically constructed divide between the West and the non-West'. While the West was unproblematic, the non-West consisted of largely powerless 'others' whose 'discovery' by the West required an investigation in order to chart and understand the nature of their different identities.

<sup>3</sup> As more 'voices demand to be heard' the assumption that national cultures are uniform 'begins to be seen as a myth'. Mass migration leads to a break-up of the traditional notion of culture, leading to the simultaneous coexistence of multiple cultures within a given territory. By the same token the intruding cultures then become multi-local, that is, based in several countries. Alternatively, other transnational cultures - especially those defined by a strongly professional, business, scientific, artistic or political ethos- are increasingly extending world-wide primarily through the avenues generated by global capitalism (Friese and Wagner 1999: 106).

<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, communication technologies permit people to send messages to each other without the need for physical contact. But more importantly, they make possible

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the self-conscious construction of the world as ‘one single field of persistent interaction and exchange’ (Hannerz, 1996: 19).

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, social closure has ceased to require or to depend upon geographical proximity. As Beck (2000: 156) suggests, ‘the persons we experience as significant others are no longer restricted to those we know from direct encounters within a local community’. Putting this another way, social life has been de-spatialised (Beck 2000: 24).

<sup>6</sup> Also, most individuals will tend to imbue even the most temporary and lonely locales with some degree of meaning and are likely to try to establish at least a minimum of relationships however shallow and fleeting while, for most of us, the locale we currently occupy will actually contain rather more than this in the way of meaning and social bonds.

<sup>7</sup> Before we proceed any further, we should point out that our classification is not meant to incorporate the entire range of possible transnational groups, but rather those groups that we deem most closely connected to the globalised notion of community. One rather obvious group of people associated with the transnational mode yet clearly not forming a ‘community’, as such, would be tourists.

<sup>8</sup> Other instances of such overlapping, alternating or shifting alliances and priorities as between the different levels pertaining to the local/national-transnational-global communities are not difficult to find and have been widely discussed in the literature (for example, Friberg and Hettne, 1988; Robertson, 1992: and Oommen, 1997a).

<sup>9</sup> When such systemic deprivation engulfs entire regions or countries, mass emigration in search of the economic opportunities in the advanced industrialised

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countries is likely to become endemic, giving rise to effective transnational national networks- such as those described by Basch et al. (1994) and Glick Schiller et al. (1992). Nevertheless, such inequalities of wealth and opportunities as well as social exclusion, persistent discrimination against religious or other minorities, unemployment and political repression shape the lives of millions of people living in an increasingly integrated global economy - irrespective of whether these people are migrants or non-migrants.

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