

GLOBALISATION, PLACE AND INDIVIDUAL: THROUGH THE LENS OF GLOBAL CRISES

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Abstract

Today few would consider SARS, bomb attacks, even tsunami as events that are strictly local; in many ways their global impact can be seen as telling evidence for the concept of "world as one". However the same impact has also harbored a deep sense of insecurity and mistrust-fears that call for disconnectedness and time-space decompression. These and the mushrooming antiglobalization movements had pointed to a missing link in the current globalization debate: the individuals. There can be no global world without global individuals; but how global are individuals? Will the world continue to globalize—both in scale and scope— when individuals begin to feel threatened by it? Will globalization breed its own ending? Through observation of crisis situations this chapter re-examines the nature of globalization and its many interacting layers and dimensions by going all the way down to the level of the individual.

Abstrak

Hari ini tidak ramai yang menganggap SARS, serangan bom, malahan Tsunami sebagai peristiwa tempatan semata; dan dalam banyak perkara impak global peristiwa ini terbukti memperlihatkan konsep 'dunia ini satu'. Namun begitu, impak yang sama telah melabuhkan rasa tidak selamat dan tidak percaya yang memerlukan pemisahan dan kompresi ruang-masa. Ini, berserta perkembangan pergerakan anti-globalisasi telah menyatakan jurang pemisah dalam debat semasa globalisasi: iaitu individu. Tidak mungkin akan wujud dunia global jika tiada individu global, namun sejauhmanakah global individu tersebut? Adakah dunia akan terus global apabila individu merasa terancam - dalam skala dan skop? Adakah globalisasi akan melahirkan penamatannya sendiri? Melalui pemerhatian terhadap situasi krisis, kerta kerja ini menilai semula apakah globalisasi serta lapisan interaksi dan dimensi dengan melihat semula ke tahap individu.

Keywords: Globalisation, global crises, space, place, individual

Introduction

There are three stages to the globalization debate according to Giddens (Rantanen, 2005, P. 74, 2005): "whether globalization existed"

as its first stage, "what were its consequences" the second, and now we are entering the third one: "how to respond to its negative outcome". Will the answer to this last question take us to a fourth stage, back to an earlier stage, or a new theory? Some could not wait to ask, "What's next"; as they believe that the average life span of a social theory is no more than 30 years; while others had conjectured a trend of reversal—either in economic or communicative interdependence.

Indeed the anti-globalization movements-itself also transnational-does give the impression that we are faced with a reversal trend; nation-states reasserting their powers, racial and religious tension simmering, and even WTO, the symbol and stronghold of economic globalization, has been faced with challenges from allied labor union forces (Stiglitz, 2003). The antiglobalization movement, however, is by no means the only factor that needs to take into consideration if the future is our concern.

Since the 911 attack and SARS break-out, the way people-as individuals or a collective whole—reacted in crisis situations has received a great deal of attention, yet few had looked into its significance within the globalization context. Does globalization have anything to do with crises? If yes, what is the nature of this link—are crises the product of, or the barrier to, globalization? What are the implications of the behavior people exhibited under the circumstances? Crises denote a state of abnormalcy, something unusual, unexpected, often disastrous and temporary, hence seldom become the focus of attention for theoretical debate. However such unusual situations also provide a rare opportunity for deep-seated values and well-camouflaged sentiments to reveal themselves. At this stage of the globalization debate there is at least as much significance attached to these questions as the protests and rallies organized by angry, unemployed workers or frustrated farmers.

Through observation of crisis situations this paper re-examines the issues of global crises, time-space distanciation/compression, and the significance of "place" and "self vs. others" by going to the level of the individual. It was argued that the individual perspective is essential to our understanding of the nature and also the limitations of globalization, a point which will hopefully shed some light on the next stage of the debate.

Globalisation: A safer world?

Safety has never been the driving forces of globalization, yet it is undeniably one of the most fundamental needs of all human beings, at all times. Many—at least at the onset of the debate—believed that globalization contributes to our well-being, but does it also help to satisfy the need for safety—or does it bring the contrary?

Friedman saw globalization as an inevitable trend, and argued that the world is safer as it globalizes. In his view, economic interdependence and international division of labor has never reached the same level in history; this is supply chaining "collaborating horizontally" among suppliers, retailers, and customers to "create value". This interdependence makes war costlier for nations, and hence less likely. Friedman argued that the India-Pakistan crisis of 2002 was dampened by global capitalism, and that "Globalization 3.0" rewards inter-ethnic tolerance and punishes tribalism in a similar way (Wright, 2005; Friedman, 2000, 2005).

The logic works, but only under certain conditions and to a certain extent. First, obviously not all calamities are the works of man. Globalization may facilitate disaster relief and reconstruction works after major earthquakes, Tsunami attacks or flooding, yet it obviously can neither reduce the likelihood of these from happening nor their scale of impact. Secondly misfortunes caused by men may have very little to do with capital gains; they were certainly not the highest on terrorist attackers' agenda. Thirdly, even if they are, it is doubtful to what extent can such considerations serve to minimize violent confrontations, as the world has yet achieved the level of interdependence that is needed for what Friedman had envisioned to happen, and there is no guarantee that it ever will.

The global financial system that enables massive capital to dash in and out of markets in split second, has been prized as a dazzling gem on the globalization crown. Yet after 9/11, the American government found itself scrambling to find ways to stop large sums of money from getting channeled through to the leaders of the terrorist groups to fund their activities. To the surprise and frustration of the US intelligence personnel, the system that has been used by such groups is totally foreign—and also closed—to the rest of the world. This example does not deny the existence of a global financial system nor the power it harbors, yet it showed that there not only exist more than one transnational systems, but that they may not necessarily be connected in any ways. The world is thus still far from becoming a single entity, nor is the interconnection and interdependence among systems anywhere close to being seamless, as alerted by Hirst and Thompson (1999).

Globalization therefore does little to eliminate or reduce risks; to some others, it has in fact brought dangers that were not there before. According to Beck (1992), there are fundamental differences between the risks of today and that of pre-modern days:

It is ... true that risks are not an invention of modernity... But these were *personal* (italics original) risks, not global dangers ... In that earlier period, the

word "risk" had a note of bravery and adventure, not the threat of self-destruction of all life on earth.

To Beck, today risks, implicit consequences of industrialization, are global in nature and are "systematically intensified as it becomes global" that threaten our civilization (1992, P. 21). What escaped Beck's analyses, is that the impact of globalization has begun to show on dangers that have little or even nothing to do with modernity or industrialization: in fact we can easily see it on any crisis-be it terrorist attack or natural disaster.

911, SARS, and Tsunami: Products of globalisation

Given their scale and scope of impact, today few would consider SARS, terrorist attacks, and tsunami as strictly "local" matters. Aside from coming under their often profound economic and political impact, few of us can escape from directly witnessing what has happened—as communication and information media turned the world into a nearly seamless television network. Since the 911 attack even those living in the most remote comers of the world could not have missed seeing pictures of the collapsing twin towers. In case journalists and news media miss out the first few shots of a disaster, photos, video footages and bloggers can flood the cyber space in a matter of days, or even hours. Increasingly we are captive witnesses to such misfortunes, regardless of where they take place.

Media certainly are not the only key factor to globalizing the impact of a crisis. Appadurai (1990. P. 297-8), in proposing a framework for exploring disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics, had delineated five dimensions of global cultural flow: mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes, and also ethnoscapes. In each dimension we can easily identify cases where the impact of crises has cut across national borders.

Normally ethnoscape—"the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live" does not appear to have a close connection with global crises, but the way SARS spread through the world proved this impression wrong. On Feb. 21, a Chinese Professor went to Hong Kong to visit his relatives, unaware of the fact that he has already contracted the disease. Within six weeks the disease was spread to 18 countries (1) in four continents, following the footsteps of global travelers (Lee, 2004).

Without question the spread of the disease would not have come close to this speed and scope if not for the conveniences of modern transportation systems and the size of the population moving about the globe. It is estimated that in 1975 (Sparks, 2004), there were a total of 200 million international tourists, in 2000, the number had jumped to 750 million, scoring a growth of 2.75 times.

Likewise in 1980, there were 8.4 million refugees, and in 2000 the number increased by 42 percent to 12 million.

Aside from the greater chances for diseases to be carried across national borders, another inevitable outcome of this large number of people moving about or residing "away from home" is an increasingly complex ethnic mix in any given locale: more places are entertaining a larger number of non-locals, and a growing number of individuals are having family, friends, or fellow workers who are regular travelers or diasporas, linking people with foreign places through interpersonal networks. Except for the poorest of the world population, anyone can be anywhere in this global era. Consequently an attack on any city, town or village will likely affect the lives and the opportunities of not only those who reside in the stricken area, but also those who are thousands miles away from it. After the 2004 Tsunami attack, the photo of a Caucasian girl treated in a hospital in Thailand was circulated on the web, seeking assistance in finding her family. Nothing about her—the appearance, the language—and the accent of the language—she spoke, or the places, things and people she talked about could give a clue to where she was from.

A third by-product of this emerging population landscape is growing tension among different groups of people. According to Riggins (1997; Huang and Leung, 2004), the concept of "others" is essential for the development of self-identity; it helps to make the world "more manageable". To the "Self", the "Others" are perceived as "different", and hence are justifiably treated differently (Frederick, 1993).

This is not the first time "different treatment" against those perceived as "outsiders" is analyzed; numerous studies on ethnocentrism and in media studies—notably Afghanistanism—in the earlier decades had made similar observations. Yet in a less interconnected world discriminatory treatments are less problematic and the tension is rarely so high when the "Self" and the "We" are kept at a safe geographic or social distance from the "Others" and the "They". Unfortunately today what was observed in ethnoscape shows that the "Others", as tourists, businessmen or migrant workers, have come in "our" home territory and become part of "our" day-to-day life, minimizing the physical distance—and the buffer zone—among different ethnic and religious groups.

There is no denial that as the world "becomes one", the chances and frequencies for the global community to be affected by crises, and also for crises to become global, had increased. Crises, in this sense, have become products of globalization.

Crises as barriers to further globalisation

Crises are product of globalization, but in turn they can also pose limitations to globalization-if the fundamental needs of average individual beings are threatened. In the aftermath of global crises and disasters, we witnessed a massive retreat of individuals to their local haven and cries for distance-keeping.

When SARS broke out in Asia, shopping malls, movie theaters, and airports were empty for weeks, if not months. Those who ventured to travel out of the infected region were either requested to remain in voluntary solitary confinement until cleared of the disease or declined entry altogether. At the height of the epidemic outbreak, visitors from Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Singapore, and Vietnam were barred from entering countries including Saudi Arabia, Panama and Malaysia. Hong Kong exhibitors were banned from taking business at a Zurich trade fair, Chinese were refused by hotels in Italy, and across North America, Chinese restaurants scarcely had any business (Lee, 2004). With the threat of more powerful and disastrous epidemics continuing to loom over the horizon, it is difficult to tell when and to what extent the SARS scenario will once again dominate our life.

Similar demonstration of the need to revive, or keep space and distance were observed after terrorist attacks. After the 911 attack airline passengers and sports fans virtually disappeared across US. The Western world was again shocked when it found several of the suicide bombers to be "home grown"-minorities who were educated, and lived almost all of their life, in countries such as Germany or U.S. This revelation poses a serious question on the "globalization homogenizes world cultures" thesis: if acculturation can fail under almost perfectly favorable conditions at home, what are the chances of it succeeding at a global level?

The same discovery sends another perhaps more troubling message to everyone: in this global era many of us can no longer be sure if their next door neighbor, their fellow workers, or those riding in the same subway train are potentially dangerous "Others" in disguise. The issue complicates when national borders no longer serve the same functions as before. According to Burgazzoli (2002, p. 45), in a "universal world" territorial borders become cognitive boundaries, and the redefinition of identities requires "internal enemies" who must be kept away and persecuted, and this process often takes place against the weaker members of society, e.g., migrants. The killing of Jean Charles de Menezes, a Brazilian electrician by London Police on July 22, 2005 after the London terrorist bombing, was but an illustration of this uneasiness under extreme circumstances. American government's actions against those suspected of terrorist activities, and tightened immigration policies

in many Western countries, can be seen as part of the effort to "clean up" the mixture of peoples brought by globalization and realign cognitive boundaries with physical borders.

It is perhaps by no accident that what we had observed in and after crisis situations are in direct conflict with what was described as the features of modern life: time-space distanciation, and popular trust in disembedding mechanisms.

The separation, distanciation or compression (2) of time and space have often been noted as closely associated with the dynamism of modernity and/or capitalism, as they call for faster pace and overcoming spatial barriers (Giddens, 1990; Harvey, 1990). In Giddens' view (1990, P. 20-21), possibilities of change will not be opened up unless social activity is free from the restraints of local habits and practices, and its 'embedding' in the particularities of context of presence is cut. Hence this "emptying" of time and space serves to extend, and is in turn depended by, disembedded social institutions-which are also sources of dynamic modernity.

The widespread application of inventions such as the mechanical clock or monetary system has been used as examples to show how the emptying of time and space has been achieved. But perhaps none could more vividly illustrate the meaning of time-space compression than the experiences that information and communication technologies have managed to bring about. As Harvey (1990, p. 293) had noted,

"The whole world can watch the Olympics Games, the World Cup ... We have ... witnessed another fierce round in that process of annihilation of space through time."

With space 'emptied' through time, the audiences no longer just 'viewed' a program, but in fact were taken to the very location where the event took place to experience the same feelings of shock, pain, and fear with all those that were there at the scene. Through this experience the viewers were 'lifted out' of their socio-cultural milieu and placed in a global context.

In addition to time-space compression, trust was seen as fundamentally involved with the institutions of modernity. According to Giddens (1990, P. 26), all disembedding mechanisms depend upon trust—"a form of faith" in probable outcomes (3). It is vested in abstract capacities such as symbolic token and expert system; not in individuals: "anyone who uses monetary tokens does so on the presumption that others, *whom he or she never meets* (italics added), honour their value." It is with this trust in disembedding mechanisms that a "collapsing of the world inwardly upon us"

(Harvey, 1990) becomes acceptable, sometimes even desirable as it helps to cut cost, offers greater choices and opportunities.

“Space” and “Place” reconsidered

Until this day, few challenged the above features of our modern life. Yet people's reactions during global crises produced massive evidence to the contrary. Trust in the disembedding mechanisms, as described by Giddens, is shown to be conditional. If the preconditions that the system can work and that the reliability of the faceless, anonymous “others” involved in the expert system or symbolic tokens are suspected, trust may quickly collapse. In fact the increasing dependence on precautions to ensure our safety in the global world has marked the erosion of trust we have in the very system that connects us. Today updating virus-detection mechanism has already become the routine job of any Internet users. Tight security measures in Western nations and body temperature check points in Asian airports are also keenly felt forms of protection as we stay closely interconnected. In government labs screening out problematic imports has become the major challenge as both the volume and the types of goods traded across national borders multiplied.

Yet the fact remains that even the most effective of protective measures cannot provide full proof. When people found themselves exposed to dangers, their most felt response was immediately not only local but intensely individual, as insecurity-what Beck suggested had come with modernity—*anxiety, mistrust, withdrawal and isolation* prevail. Without trust, interconnectedness and interdependence easily lead to unrest, even panic at a massive scale. When SARS broke out in China, the Guangdong Mobile Communication Corporation's mobile phone service was jammed by SMS (short messaging system) messages when very little information was made available from official sources.

This need for disconnectedness, time-space decompression, and disengagement from the network that spreads danger has called for a reconsideration of the meaning of space, and the issues surrounding it.

In the globalization debate, space is considered something that can be easily crossed, to the extent that it is compressed and annihilated. With distance and space disappearing, the groundwork for a single-whether imagined or real—world was laid. We were reminded (Harvey, 1990, P. 240) that ‘compression’ should be understood as ‘relative to any preceding state of affairs’, e.g., that observed in a feudal society vs. that in Renaissance, and are mostly convinced that the changes that we witness today are so revolutionary that they warrant new labels and new visions of the

future. Strangely, the same visions over total cross-cultural understanding not only appeared before, but seemed to have prevailed *every time* a piece of technology is deemed to have triumphed over time and distance (Marvin, 1988). As early as the late nineteenth century, Julian Hawthorne had predicted a world in it the inhabitants were "rapidly approximating to the state of a homogeneous people", closely united as "the members of a family". The marvelous technologies that have brought these wonders were not even close to being cutting edge today: flights (with turbo engine airplanes), telephones, and telegraphs (Marvin, 1988, p. 201). As Marvin (2002, 195) concluded, "[O]nly physical barriers between cultures were acknowledged".

The persistent tendencies to confuse physical distance with that of social and cultural obviously overlooked the close connections between them, hence the equation of overcoming of geographic barriers with a global society-or a global village. Armed with supersonic jets and cutting-edge communication and information technologies, today an average person is allowed to cut across physical space as he/she has never been before. Yet what is achieved with the speed and conveniences in traveling and sending messages have seldom been matched in depth and scope in other areas of life. As Massey (1999) noted, space is a product of intricate and complex "interlockings and non-interlockings, or relations from the unimaginably cosmic to the intimately tiny". The meaning of space is not limited to the geographical sense; it has to do with collective and individual memories, identities, history, and every aspect of the social life. Following the same logic the concept of disembedding as a precondition for change has also overlooked the intricate links between individuals and the place(s) they relate to.

Since the beginning of the grand debate localization has been noted as the other dimension of the globalization processes. "Glocalization", a word that came from "dochakuka," a term used by Japanese economists in the late 1980s (Robertson, 1997), has encapsulated the co-presence of universalizing and particularizing tendencies. Local needs, taboos, and values are recognized, and carefully weighed and examined when global market strategies were planned-a tactic that has been cleverly captured in Sony's motto: "Think Globally, Act Locally" (Freidman, 1994). As indicated by Harvey (1989, P. 293), the significance of space is kept because competition makes it necessary for global traders to pay attention to relative "locational" advantages.

The origin of "glocalization" concept, however, has also underscored the way "local" is treated in the globalization debate: it is not only examined from a global perspective, but is seen as part of the globalizing strategy of transnational corporations. It is only more recently that the concept of "place" has begun to receive

attention in the literature, yet the "local" and "localization" have continued to be overlooked.

According to Norberg-Hodge (1999, p. 215), the word "local" comes from "locus", meaning "place" in Latin. "Localization", therefore, is about *place*:

... it is about living and producing locally ... It is about knowing and understanding your local area and community .. , And it is about a *sense* of place—that ... makes human beings feel that they genuinely *belong*.

The "local worlds" as noted by Rosenau (2003, p. 88), are characterized by the "local ties" and "local habit of mind" that people have. They tend to be deep-seated, and not easily undone—unlike their global counterparts. However he also noted that the local worlds are not constant; it changes as "globalizing dynamics impinge upon their processes and structures" (2003, p. 87). What then would the changes be and how do they take place?

Have time, and especially space, once compressed, stopped to function in the process of transnationalization as a significant factor concerning things "local"? What is left of "local" habits, practices and context once their ties with social institutions and individuals are "lifted out" and ceased to be "embedded", but free to "disembed", and "re-embed"? If time and space are compressed/annihilated, how does "local" remain "local"? Will "local" become a faceless dimension with a mish-mesh of free-flowing cultural and social elements, or a collection of defunct norms, practices and rituals that exist only in museums and history books? If this is the case, can it help to sustain globalization as envisioned?

The contradiction lies in our recognition of "local advantages" in global trades and global media strategies. By accepting glocalization as a shrewd business strategy for the transnational corporations, we have also accepted the idea that the local has still maintained certain uniqueness in a global era; that it is still distinctly "recognizable" even *if its* ties with the individuals and social institutions have loosened.

Perhaps the thesis of time-space compression is worthy of closer examination. Take the collapse of the twin towers at the World Trade Center as an example; those who saw it on television were not any less shocked than those at the scene, their heart sank as well when television cameras captured people falling off from top floors of the sky scrapers. But let us imagine this scenario: if at the moment we saw it happening on the television screen, the phone or door bell rang, or the coffee cup was knocked down by cat, would we not answer the phone, open the door, or pick up the cup and clean up

the mess? This shows that our experience in 'experiencing' the event is categorically different from those people who were at the spot; the event may have been made global, but the context that audiences experienced it happening remains distinctly *local*. Comfortably set in their living room/office, the audiences may worry about the safety of their family and friends living in New York City, but they did not have to seek shelter from the thick dust falling from the sky, battle with the fear of not knowing what will happen in the next moment, and face up the challenge of getting back home safely when the City's transportation system was paralyzed. The experiences television viewers acquired through time-space compression is fundamentally and qualitatively different from someone who was physically "there".

What is demonstrated in the above example is the life of an individual is primarily *local*, and so is the individual himself/herself. It is by no accident that most international news are on conflicts and disasters, and rated highest on box office list are thrillers and adventures; these are the content that require least "cultural literacy", hence easier for "local" audiences to comprehend and appreciate.

Individuals: The missing link

With few exceptions, individual are seen as largely irrelevant in the discussion of a huge, all-encompassing issue such as globalization. Collectively they were regarded as voters, consumers, audiences, or public with special preferences, needs, and rights, but individually—either as individual individuals or collective individuals—they have seldom been considered as a key element in the globalization processes.

When tackling the issue of "globalization and me", Sreberny (2002, p. 293) noted that the typical responses to such topic of study were "as if it was a joke" or a "mad attempt to juggle the impossible". The study of individual vis a vis globalization, however, was a highly relevant one in the discourse as it cuts through levels of connectivity and identification such as "national" or the "local".

Indeed there can be no global world without global individuals. Hannerz (1990, P. 238) contributed much of the coherence in the global world today to a large group of people he described as "cosmopolitans": businessmen, bureaucrats, politicians, journalists and diplomats—people who move about in the world. They constitute the backbone of the "ethnoscape" as described by Appadurai (1990), having to "systematically and directly involve with more than one culture". "Educating the Global Child", the mural advertisement of a kindergarten in Hong Kong said it all.

Yet how global can individuals become? Hannerz reckoned that it is a very personal character trait for someone to readily seize the opportunity of using the transnational cultures as bridgeheads to enter into other territorial cultures, and build this experience into one's personal perspective (1990, P. 246). More importantly, even cosmopolitans are "at home"-

"a comfortable *place* of familiar faces, where one's competence is undisputed and where one does not have to prove it to either oneself or others, .. "
(P. 248).

This "home" of cosmopolitans may be more open, whereas for diasporas sometimes imagined or virtual, none-the-less it gives "a sense of place", which is a "fundamental human experience" (Allen, 1990, P. 1). This "place" forms the local contours in which individuals choose to carry their daily lives in the way and with those they know or are acquainted with. There is a familiarity with the surroundings and the people, a sense of its past, present, and to a large extent, its future that an individual can easily follow and relate to. It is within this same local framework that individuals get to know the world, reach out, and return to. The place is a base that supports the individuals to venture out, but also provide a safe haven for them when needed.

In the past decades the face, the nature and structure of relationships and also the way life is conducted in the "place" have undergone significant changes, as modernity calls for disassociation of the individual from the familiar and the close-by. To reach greater efficiency and effectiveness roles that have been played by familiar faces are taken up by professionals and experts, and operations institutionalized and formalized-a process to produce what Giddens described as disembedded mechanism.

The result of this process is a place with much less continuity but greater changes, less familiarity, but greater effectiveness, and less depth but broader scope. Children buy their candy not from the man who sold candies to their parents or grandparents, but from chain stores that sell candies from all over the world. They can get what they need within a few minutes time so long as they pick their goods from the shelf and queue up to pay. There would be no questions asked nor unsolicited advice from the person behind the counter; and the young customer will not anticipate having to wait because the patron needed to talk to his neighbor who happened to stop by.

The weakening of ties of the individual with the place and among those living there, the dilution of uniqueness upon the arrival

of global institutions, and the increasing importance of what lies beyond the local are hard to miss out. However there is a *limit* to these changes. As Harvey (1989, p. 302) pointed out, in a shifting world we are in greater need for moorings; "if no one knows their *place* in this shifting collage world, then how can a secure social order be fashioned or sustained?"

Like risks the need for moorings or the attachment to a place existed long before the arrival of modern times. It is perhaps most visible when people, e.g., conquerors and colonizers, refugees and immigrants, have to settle in a place away from "the place". Ruins of Roman temples and palaces in Africa and Europe, China towns in all major cities in the world, and British street names in its former settlements are testimonies to this need for a "home away from home". It is no secret that satellite and Internet, the two most global communication media, may have—to a certain extent—homogenized cultures, but they have also helped retain differences by providing an effective means for diasporas to closely relate to their "place". The behavior of those who were offered the luxury of a borderless virtual universe, on the other hand, showed that they seldom establish links with those living beyond physical borders (Liu, C.C., et.al, 2002). In a study of Finnish Internet users, it was found that after the 2004 Tsunami attack their focus of attention in the disaster quickly turned from the overall situation in stricken areas to Finnish casualties (Kivikuru, 2005). This is but one more example to confirm the importance of local angle in global reporting, an important point for all journalist students to remember, just as those in marketing have to know the first rule about grasping consumer behavior: local taste. The above examples showed that the space is compressible, but only to a certain extent, and within a certain dimension. What globalization has brought about is the interaction between these different layers and dimensions, which in turn produces a generation of individuals who are "globally local". It is not likely that by the level and limited scope of time-space compression we can anticipate a "global village". As Hannerz (1996, P. 6) has said,

"Global village ... suggests not only interconnectedness, but.. a sense of greater togetherness, of immediacy and reciprocity in relationship, a very large scale idyll. The world is not much like that"

Conclusion: Individuals vs. the global world

Without doubt there is a certain degree of global qualities and drives in every individual; without these the world civilization would not have developed the way it has. However it is also important to note

that none of the break-aways from the past and the local as we have observed in times of great changes—including the arrival of modernity and industrialization—can be complete and total. No one can live without memories, just as no one can take anywhere his/her home, even nomads. Individuals are never totally local, but it is equally erroneous to overlook the fact that there is localness in the life of every individual being.

There is no point denying the changes brought by globalization to the individuals, whether they are negative or positive. It is also true that the meaning of “local” and “place” is now different from what they used to be decades ago. However it is difficult to tell whether these changes signify the “decline of the local worlds”, as suggested by Rosenau (2003). As the world population continues to be threatened by epidemics and violent conflicts, the perceived importance of different dimensions of social life will vary and the redefinition of “local” is likely to continue—just as it has before.

There can be no reversal of the world as what was there no longer exists. However through global crises we have come to see the limitations of what can happen to globalization once greater harm than good is perceived by individual members of the world community. We can predict an ever expanding globalizing system and deduct a global village or total destruction from it only if we can assume that the mode of individual action is always and completely dictated by the infrastructure. Individuals’ sense of place is but part of what globalization is about.

Notes

1. These countries include Sweden, France, United Kingdom, Romania, United States, Canada, Kuwait, Indonesia, Philippines and South Africa.
2. Compression, distanciation, or separation of time and space have been used interchangeably in the literature. The reason for Harvey (1989, P. 240) to use the word “compression” was because “a strong case can be made that the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seem to collapse inward upon us.” Giddens (Rantanen, 2005, P. 69), on the other hand, noted that what he meant by time-space distanciation is fundamentally not different from Harvey’s time-space compression.
3. Luhmann (1988a, 1988b; Giddens, 1990, P. 30) suggested that it be understood in relation to *risk*, a term that originated with the understanding that unanticipated results may be a consequence of our own doings, rather than that of the nature or Deite

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