Diasporas and Their Communication Networks: Exploring the Broader Context of Transnational Narrowcasting

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Introduction

The emergence of the study of diasporas is fairly recent, and the specific examination of the uses of media by diasporas dates back only to the mid-1990s even though the phenomenon of inter-continental diasporic communication has existed for centuries. [1] Scattered, inter-continental communities have maintained links though various means such as mail, telegraph, telephone, and fax. Recordings on audio and videotape have also enabled the maintenance of transnational ties. Film and television programming have circulated in some diasporic groups such as those with origins in India, China, the Middle East and Latin America. Direct Broadcasting Satellites (DBS) have enhanced the possibilities for narrowcasting to clusters of community groupings spread around the planet. The global spread of the Internet has added significantly to such ability to sustain diasporic linkages. The Internet is a medium that is particularly suited to the needs of diasporas since it is relatively inexpensive, provides for lateral, point-to-point contacts around the world, and enables almost instant interactive communication.

The structure of global communications has long been characterized by the facilitation as well as control of cross-border contacts by governments. The first multilateral treaty to address international communication, the International Telegraph Convention (1865), while affirming a universal right to use international telegraphy also stipulated states' right to stop transmissions considered dangerous for state security or in violation of national laws, public order or morals. There have been similar attempts to balance state control with individual rights, especially privacy

and the freedom of expression tendencies in the use of other communications technologies. However, the Internet has posed particular problems for governments. Some countries have passed laws to limit strictly the kinds of online content, especially that considered to be of seditious or pornographic nature or to contain hate propaganda; use of communications technologies for the purposes of crime is, of course, universally prohibited. However, the nature of this medium makes it difficult to monitor or control.

The suspected transmission of encrypted messages as well as unregistered transfers of funds through the Internet by the terrorists who carried out attacks on September 11 has brought to attention the general use of this technology by members of diasporas. The relative novelty of the Internet and lack of sufficient understanding about its applications by various types of users adds to suspicions about it as a medium that promotes delinquent usage. Criminal uses of this technology obviously need to be viewed within the larger contexts of its general applications.

Due to the still emerging recognition of the significant global role that diasporas play in the world of nation-states, there appears to be little understanding of their inter-continental networks. It comes as a surprise to some that diasporic individuals are able to use new communication technologies in sophisticated manners. In order to examine how communication is carried out within these transnational communities, this paper begins by exploring the broad historical and anthropological context of the relationship between diasporas and the world of states. It then reviews some of the debates on the current understanding of diasporas and their place in processes of globalization. This is followed by a review of the application of various communications technologies by transnational communities. The study then looks specifically at their use of the Internet. It concludes by briefly discussing some issues arising from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

An Ancient Conflict?

Before diasporas there were nomads. Even though the migrations of many diasporas are temporary and only in one direction, the very act of taking one's belongings and moving to another place of dwelling is an expression of nomadism. The latter may be interspersed with short or long periods of sedentarism in the lives of individuals and groups. The lifespan of some members of diasporas are marked by continual movements, often back and forth for differing lengths of time between the old and new homes. Of course, such peripatetic travels are not limited merely to diasporas but seem to be a feature of the increasingly mobile contemporary world (Clifford, 1997: 1-13) – like nomads looking for better pastures, we move in search of more promising career opportunities.

Nomadism and sedentarism are key mechanics in the human demarcation of space; most importantly, these two modes of life determine how we make home. Archeological and historical evidence tells us of early transcontinental migrations including those from the Caucasus to Europe and to central and southern Asia, from northern Africa to central and southern parts of the continent, from north-eastern Asia over the ancient ice bridge traversing the Baring Strait into north and later into south America or alternatively by small sea vessels across the Pacific Ocean. Indeed, human history is punctuated with a series of migrations.

As human civilization has become increasingly sedentary over time, the clashes between two modes of life have grown. There appears to be a structural conflict between those who have chosen sedentary lifestyles and those who continue to be nomads. The former is manifested in the building of villages, towns and cities as well as in the cultivation of crops and the appropriation of territory for other aspects of the sedentary economy. It is a culture of boundaries and of land and bodies of water as property. Nomadic peoples need large spaces to traverse — they peregrinate with their animals between summer and winter pastures, often cutting across property lines marked by settled peoples and occasionally trampling their crop fields. If we were to apply a political economic

analysis to the fight between the Biblical and Quranic figures of Cain and Abel, the first two sons of Adam and Eve, we would possibly find the archetype for this fundamental human conflict. The Book of Genesis says that “Abel became a herder of flocks and Cain a tiller of the soil” (4:2). Cain killed his brother, committing the first murder.

There have been innumerable conflicts between sedentary and nomadic peoples in human history: for example, the Indo-European migrants into the South Asia pushed southwards the Dravidians who had built an advanced civilization in the Indus River valley 4,500 years ago; the Huns overran most of Europe in the fourth century; Arab bedouins defeated the mighty forces of the Byzantine and Sassanid empires; the Mongols destroyed the cities of Muslim civilizations in the 13th century; the governments of the United States and Canada marked out borders in the path of the buffalo hunts of the plains Indians, eventually destroying their way of life; the history of Texas is marked by conflict between ranchers and farmers; the cattle-herding Masai in Kenya were driven out of the fertile Laikipia plateau by the politically dominant Kikuyu in the early 20th century.

Governments strive to maintain control over human movement within and across their borders. It is more difficult to extract taxes from people who are constantly on the move. Prior to the emergence of the nation-state over the last few centuries, frontiers were frequently shifting and were rarely the hard markers between territories that they are in the present. Human migration is now much more controlled with passports, visas, and border checks. Traditional nomadic life is an anomaly in the global sedentary civilization. There remain pockets of nomadism among tribal groups in southern continents that continue to move with their herds from mountains to valleys and back with the change of seasons, but they are coming under increasing pressure to settle down. The Roma (i.e. “Gypsies”) in Europe have faced enormous opposition for centuries against their tendencies to keep moving from place to place. Governmental systems have resisted the accommodation of people without fixed addresses, denying them the assistance available to all other citizens. Our societies have often not been kind to “hobos” and the homeless; even traveling salesmen and other itinerants have long been the objects of jokes. Even though their lives may be romanticized from time to time, they are usually marginalized from the mainstream of contemporary society and viewed as deviants. The state is structured primarily to meet the needs of settled people and looks upon the nomadic life with suspicion, at best. At worst, the Roma and Jews — also viewed as wanderers — faced mass execution under the Third Reich.

However, not all travelers are treated in the same manner. Pilgrimage has long been a much-revered activity. Tourism is encouraged, as it is conceived as being important to the health of national and global economies. Cultural and educational travel is also seen as beneficial. Migrant labor, however, tends to be treated more ambiguously. Whereas workers from other abroad have been invited for centuries to perform tasks for which there is a short supply of domestic labor, the host society’s reception to them has not been uniformly hospitable. Whether as temporary workers or as immigrants, there are myriad social and legal obstacles to their integration. All migrant workers are not treated in similar manners: there are usually better receptions for those with skills in occupations currently considered vital to the economy. Holders of passports from western countries tend to move easily around the world. People with darker skin and non-European features seem to face many challenges. Petra Weyland (1997) illustrates the differential global spaces occupied respectively by the mostly Euro-origin male managerial class, their dependent wives who travel with them to various postings around the world, and the migrant Filipina domestic maids who serve them. The interest of powerful countries and major corporations in globalization resides more in the elimination of national barriers to goods and services rather than people to facilitate the free movement of people.

What are diasporas?

The term “diaspora” is derived from the Greek *diaspeirein*, which suggests the scattering of seeds. It has traditionally referred to the Jewish dispersal outside Israel but is now applied to a growing list of migratory groups. Research on diaspora is conducted from numerous perspectives including anthropology, sociology, human geography, migration, culture, race, multiculturalism, post-colonialism, political economy, and communication. An ongoing debate about what “diaspora” should denote has accompanied the increasing attention to this topic. Whereas some scholars have argued in favour of identifying a closed set of characteristics in order to develop social scientific parameters for the study of diasporas (e.g. Cohen 1997), others have acknowledged its use in a broader range of human dispersals (Tˆlˆyan 1996; Cunningham and Sinclair 2000). James Clifford cautions that “we should be wary of constructing our working definition of a term like *diaspora* by recourse to an‘ideal type’” (1994: 306). All diasporas do not have homeland myths at the centre of their consciousness, contrary to William Safran’s suggestion (1991). The term is frequently conceptualised as being limited to powerless transnational ethnic communities; but the “black Atlantic” (Gilroy 1993), includes politically marginalised communities in North America and Britain as well as the ruling elites in many Caribbean states. Often viewed through the lens of migration from the southern to the western hemisphere, “diaspora” tends to be limited to “non-white” peoples who remain distinct as minorities in their countries of residence. But even though some European immigrants like the Irish may find it relatively easy to assimilate into “white” host countries, their cultural identity frequently remains resilient -- especially in music and dance forms. Asian, African and Latin American postcoloniality as exclusive markers of diasporic status are challenged by the presentation of Macedonians, Greeks and white Rhodesians as diasporas by contributors to a book that I am presently editing.

A transnational group’s non-dominant position in *global* cultural contexts generally remains a key indicator of its status as a diaspora: the global English or French are usually not treated as diasporas since their languages and cultures have privileged places in the transnational media and other mechanisms of globalisation-from-above. Similarly, the pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Church’s hierarchy have relatively easy access to the purveyors of global discourses like CNN and Reuters. But those of primary Muslim institutions do not enjoy equal visibility; hence the conceptualization of the multi-ethnic, worldwide Muslim *umma* (community) in diasporic terms by Peter Mandaville (2001). Valerie Alia (forthcoming) presents the circumpolar settlements of the Inuit as constituting a diaspora; she also extends the term to the dispersal of indigenous peoples from their traditional homelands but who remain *within* the borders of specific countries. These nuances underline the present prematurity in setting hard boundaries to the definition of diaspora.

Diasporas are frequently described as “imagined communities.” Borrowing from Benedict Anderson (1983), this characterization underlines, on the one hand, the improbability of experiencing first-hand contact with the entire group and, on the other, the adherence of its members to similar beliefs, symbols and myths. Anthony King (forthcoming) points out that Anderson’s work was limited to that of nation-state; however, a number of other diaspora scholars apply the notion of “imagined community” to emphasises the diasporic connections facilitated by various media and the simultaneous consumption of the same content by members of a transnational group (see Karim, forthcoming).

Diasporas are often viewed as deterritorialised “nations.” The concept of nation has long been linked to a singular ethnic group’s placement within a particular geographic location. This notion is integral to the mythical lore of many groups, establishing strong emotional links to a particular landscape that serve to exclude others’ overlapping territorial claims. Forced or voluntary migrations diminish the physical links of those who leave the homeland; but they take with them the mythical and linguistic allusions to the ancestral territory, which they invoke in nostalgic reminiscences. Some hold on to a hope of eventual return. This creates the demand for cultural

products that maintain and ritually celebrate the links of the diaspora with the homeland. The dispersed settlements of transnations. [2] also exchange symbolic goods and services, including media content, among each other, thus sustaining global networks. Homeland politics forms a major topic for the media of some diasporas, especially those consisting largely of first generation migrants. Ties to the former country remain strong in these cases and individuals seek out the most current information, especially in times of crisis. Events in the news are passionately debated by Rhodesians living around the world, as King discusses (forthcoming). Amir Hassanpour (1998) and Michael Santianni (forthcoming) show how media are used to mobilize support for the homeland causes of the Kurds and Tibetans, respectively. The increasing ease of air travel around the world is encouraging peripatetic tendencies among diasporics, some of whom frequently travel back and forth returning with video recordings of travels in the old country – which are watched in ritualised ways by the migrant community (Kolar-Panov, 1996).

The diasporic migrations of the last few centuries were largely influenced by colonization and trading connections as well as by the steady improvements in transportation and communications. There also appears to have been a connection between the economic involvement of northern countries in southern ones and the more recent human flows from the latter to the former. Saskia Sassen (1996) indicates that economic links ranging from 'off-shoring' of production, foreign investment into export-oriented agriculture, and the power of multinationals in the consumer markets of developing countries has often resulted in the mass movement of people. Organized recruitment of workers by governments or employers has also stimulated emigration.

Ethnic links established between communities of origin and destination, typically by transnational households or broader kinship structures, are crucial after a flow has begun, and ensure its persistence. These recruitment and ethnic links tend to operate within the broader transnational spaces created by neocolonial processes and/or economic internationalization. (Sassen 1996: 77)

The mass migrations of the 1700s and 1800s led to new economic growth in the countries of the 'New World' (while simultaneously displacing indigenous economies). These included movements of slaves from Africa, indentured labourers from Asia, and settlers from Europe. Following the lifting of restrictions on race-based immigration in the 1950s and 1960s, Asians and Africans began to emigrate in larger numbers to North America, Australasia, and Europe. There has also been substantial migration from Latin America into the United States. These movements of people of various origins to different parts of the world have created diasporas that are layered by periods of immigration, the extent of integration into receiving societies, and the maintenance of links with the land of origin as well as with other parts of the transnational group. This layering has resulted in the wide variations of connections and attachments that such worldwide communities have to each other. Retention of ancestral customs, language and religion, marriage patterns, and particularly the ease of communication between various parts of the transnational group help determine its characteristics.

Complex historical, social, and cultural dynamics within specific groups and in their relationships with other groups that help shape identities within diasporas. Mandaville (forthcoming) views these communities as being continually 'constructed, debated and re-imagined'. The routes followed by diasporas are often non-linear; they include life-histories that involve frequent back-tracking and returning to specific locations around the world in sequences that vary between families and individuals. Not only are there multiple types of linkages between the homeland and the diaspora, settlements of particular communities residing in various parts of the world develop intricate networks among themselves. The identities that emerge from these variant circumstances are therefore also polyvalent. In an essay on the Chicano diaspora, Angie Chabram Dernersesian notes that these identities will be encountered from particular social and historical locations, from situated

knowledges, from ethnographic experiences of rupture and continuity, and from a complex web of political negotiations with which people inscribe their social and historical experiences and deliver their self-styled counter narratives. (1994: 286)

Diasporas are often viewed as forming alternatives to the structures of worldwide capitalism; but in many instances they are participants in transnational economic activity. From the banking network of the Rothschilds, originating in 18th century Europe, to the more recent global businesses like the Hinduja Group, diasporic families have been leading players in global transactions. At 450 billion dollars, the annual economic output in the early 1990s of the 55 million overseas Chinese was estimated to be roughly equal to that of the 1.2 billion people in China itself (Seagrave 1995). Indeed, Joel Kotkin writes that "global tribes" will "increasingly shape the economic destiny of mankind" (1992: 4). Thomas Sowell (1996) asserts that similar patterns of economic achievement of some ethnic groups in Australia, the United States, Asia, and South America points to the importance of the cultural capital that they bring to these lands. However, studies that focus primarily on the capitalist characteristics of certain diasporas tend to de-emphasize the vast disparities in wealth, education, and social status within these communities. Ray (2000) underlines the social disjunctures between the Fiji Indian immigrants to Australia and some of those who arrive directly from India.

Commentators writing from cultural studies and postcolonial perspectives have tended to view diasporas as ranged against global and national structures of dominance -- of the empire striking back. Jon Stratton and Ien Ang suggest that for the postcolonial immigrant to Britain "what the diasporic position opens up is the possibility of developing a post-imperial British identity, one based explicitly on an acknowledgement and vindication of the 'coming home' of the colonized Other" (1996: 383-4). The diasporic site becomes the cultural border between the country of origin and the country of residence - Homi Bhabha's "third space" (1994). This is the zone of intense, cutting-edge creativity born out of the existential angst of the immigrant who is neither here nor there. She is Abdul JanMohammed's "specular border intellectual" who, caught between two cultures ... subjects the cultures to analytic scrutiny rather than combining them" (1992: 97). Guillermo GÛmez-PeÒa seeks to oppose "the sinister cartography of the New World Order with the conceptual map of the New World Border - a great trans- and intercontinental border zone, a place in which no centers remain" (1996).

While the globally dominant Eurocentric cultural structures, particularly media conglomerates, are being vastly strengthened, there has emerged over the last few decades a variety of voices from the South and from diasporas that attempt to present other worldviews. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam have explored a "constellation of oppositional strategies, which taken together have the potential of revolutionizing audio-visual production and pedagogy" (1994: 10). They refer to the aesthetics of resistance in the New Cinemas of Cuba, Brazil, Senegal, and India as well as to diasporic films made in Canada, the United States, and England. Just within the South Asian diaspora, one finds a list of accomplished authors that includes Hanif Kureishi (England), Salman Rushdie (India/England), V.S. Naipaul (Trinidad/England), Bharati Mukerjee (India/Canada/United States), Jhumpa Lahiri (England/United States), Michael Ondaatje (Sri Lanka/Canada), Shyam Selvadurai (Sri Lanka/Canada), Moez Vassanji (Kenya/Tanzania/Canada), Rohinton Mistry (India/Canada), Anita Desai (India/Canada), Anita Rau Badami (India/Canada), and Cyril Dabydeen (Guyana/Canada). Such diasporic artists appear to be at the cutting edge of modernity and cultural life in their countries of settlement. But whereas they do provide other ways of viewing the world, they do not all present a stance that actively resists dominant global discourses.

Diasporas as makers of alternative global spaces

It is appropriate to locate the diasporic phenomenon within the context of globalization processes of

the last few centuries. As discussed above, the major human migration patterns over the last few centuries have been determined by colonization and by trading connections. But in recent decades, the transnational migration of people has grown exponentially apart from the expansion in the global movement of goods. The increasing ease and speed of transportation has facilitated travel over long distances, which is a key feature of globalization.

Richard Falk has distinguished between “globalization-from-above” and “globalization-from-below.” He identifies the former as reflecting “the collaboration between leading states and the main agents of capital formation” (1993: 39). At the inter-governmental tier, international policy and legislation that governs other forms of transnational communication is shaped and policed. Bodies such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the International Telecommunications Union, and the World Intellectual Property Organization operate at this level. Transnational corporations are also major players in the globalization of communication. They include communications companies such as global news agencies, giant advertising corporations, AOL Time-Warner, News Corp, CNN, Disney, MTV, and Bertelsmann and telecommunications corporations like AT&T, Microsoft, Nortel and Cisco as well as non-communications global corporations that are engaged in massive transnational information flows. The latter, like Coca Cola, Nike and Exxon, carry out massive amounts of advertising around the world and transfer significant amounts of data through computers and other means.

“Globalization-from-below” is carried out mainly by organizations that do not have strong links with governments or large corporations. Organizations such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace are transnational civil society groups that monitor the performance of governments on human rights and environmental protection, respectively. Others like the International Committee for the Red Cross and MÈdecins Sans FrontiËres act as relief agencies around the world. Academic and professional associations, religious organizations, diasporic groups etc. also participate in “globalization-from-below” by developing lateral communication links between members in various parts of the world. They may not necessarily challenge international governmental activities or transnational corporations, but they are nevertheless distinct from them. [3]

The concept of space is key to the study of diaspora. Doreen Massey views it as ‘the simultaneous co-existence of social interrelations at all geographical scales, from the intimacy of the household to the wide spaces of transglobal connections’ (1994: 168). The debates around the issues of globalisation, cultural identity, and the use of new communication technologies have significantly influenced the study of human geography (see Mitchell 2000). Anthony Giddens (1990) suggests that new media have succeeded in ‘emptying’ time and space, allowing social relations to be ‘disembedded’ from their locations and to be carried out at long distance. Manuel Castells (1989) distinguishes the ‘space of places’ from the new ‘space of flows’ that occur in global networks. Arjun Appadurai (1996) sees the global cultural economy as characterized by fundamental disjunctures between what he identifies as five dimensions or ‘scapes’ of ‘global cultural flow’: ethnoscapes (people), mediascapes (media content), technoscapes (technology), finanscapes (capital) and ideoscapes (ideologies).

These newer ways of conceptualising the relationship of people with landscapes have challenged normative notions in which human identity and community have tended to be linked to the territory ‘originally’ occupied by a group. The naming of an ethnic group is usually based on such a homeland; and its members will often continue to be linked to this ancestral location even after centuries of living in diaspora. But the dynamics of travel involves a shaping and re-shaping of cultural space and the relationship that people have with it (Clifford 1997). Not only do governments strive to control such cross-border traffic and the activities of foreign nationals within their borders, they generally tend to discourage the links of immigrants with their homelands or with other parts of diasporas.

Notwithstanding the predictions of the declining influence of borders under pressures of globalisation (e.g. Appadurai 1996), the spaces of nation-states largely continue to remain exclusive. Nevertheless, diasporas present a significant challenge to this territoriality by seeking to produce their own transnational spaces.

The roots of the contemporary political map of the globe are to be found in colonialism. European space was extended to cover the planet: the sway of Spanish, Portuguese, British, French, German, Italian, Dutch, and Russian expansion was imprinted on the world not only through territorial appropriation but, more significantly, through the symbolic re-naming of places with nomenclature drawn from the colonizer's culture. The system of nation-states, which has origins in seventeenth-century Europe, was stretched across other continents, replicating European forms of governance around the world. This included the separation of related peoples' national identities and relationships by marking out fixed (although not completely immutable or impermeable) national borders, which were to be maintained even after independence. European cartography symbolised the hegemony of Europe: the continent was placed at the centre of the upper half of the world map. Colonial educational systems helped ensure that this global arrangement was accepted by all peoples as 'natural' (Blaut 1993).

Transnational media's emergence in the nineteenth century, in the form of news agencies, occurred within the colonial context. The British Reuters, the French Havas and the German Wolff agencies divided the world among themselves by operating a news cartel, which involved exclusive presence in the respective spheres of colonial influence. Transnational telegraph, telephone and transportation links to colonies were constructed to serve the colonial metropolises. Formal telecommunications linkages between neighbouring countries in Africa or Asia ruled by rival colonizing powers were rare; direct connections between southern continents were almost non-existent. Media content in the form of news and entertainment materials flowed largely from North to South, further reinforcing northern worldviews.

The colonial arrangements of global space were therefore linked to the configuration and the exercise of power. Much of this spatialisation was engendered by what Edward Said (1978) calls the 'imaginative geography' of European Orientalist science that supported the imperialist enterprise; it presented justifications for the conquest and colonisation of non-European territories. The academic discourses were complemented by travellers' literature (Said 1978; Egerer 2001). Media materials produced in North America and Europe further reinforced Orientalist worldviews. Even though the influence of this cultural imperialism did not produce a completely monolithic global culture that was devoid of local colourings (Tomlinson 1991), it did disseminate the products of northern cultures extensively and intensively in the South. Western, particularly the materials of the Anglo-American cultural axis, have wide distribution even in other parts of the North.

The cultural power of British colonialism has been such that African and Asian children being educated in many former colonies tend to know more about the fauna and flora of England than that of their own countries. They are steeped in the details of British history. The old imperial capital of London remains central and the rest peripheral in many minds around the Commonwealth. But this imaginative geography is being increasingly challenged in the contemporary cultural production of diasporas. Claudia Egerer gives the example of the writing of Hanif Kureishi, who is of Pakistani origins and lives in England:

… Kureishi's London is a city in which the geography of the colonial past is superimposed on the modern English capital, producing its postcolonial present. This London is a hybrid city where the local and the global co-exist uneasily, a locality saturated with contradictory meanings that escape easy appropriation and which as such may well serve to 'produce new forms of knowledge, new modes of differentiation, new sites of power'.[4] This London – no longer the metropolis of imperial

England and not yet a postnational, global city – may serve as a metaphor for the power of transformation engendered by the population movements ultimately set in motion by colonialism. (Egerer 2001: 16)

Whether diasporic cultural workers are involved in the complete re-arrangement of dominant cultural mappings is debatable since Eurocentric worldviews still remain globally hegemonic. But whereas diasporas' imaginings of space do not necessarily displace the dominant geography, what emerges is the co-existence of a multiplicity of cultural cartographies supported by vibrant bodies of literature and other intellectual and artistic forms.

The contemporary 'New World' is also the site of diasporic re-imaginings. Stuart Hall presents another way in which colonial space is transformed in the 'territory' of the Caribbean 'Third (New World) cinema'.

The Third, 'New World' presence, is not so much power, as ground, place, territory. It is the juncture-point where the many cultural tributaries meet, the 'empty' land (the European colonizers emptied it) where strangers from every other part of the globe collided. None of the people who now occupy the islands – black, brown, white, African, European, American, Spanish, French, East Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, Jew, Dutch – originally 'belonged' there. It is the space where creolizations and assimilations and syncreticisms were negotiated. (Hall 2000: 30)

Caribbean film, reflecting and itself being a site of hybridity, is here a cultural engine that re-maps the spaces previously marked out by imperialism. Hall emphasizes that the heterogeneity expressed here speaks not only against colonialism's hierarchical and essentialist human geography but also stands in contrast to that notion of diaspora which necessarily includes a return to the 'original' homeland, a dream that usually involves the displacement of other peoples (31). Sychotric

Instead of dwelling on physically reversing historical migrations, much of the cultural production of diasporas involves the creation of imaginative space alongside existing mappings. In the face of the homogenizing forces of globalization, diasporas, as deterritorialised nations, are seeking ways of "reterritorialising" and "re-embedding" their identities in other imaginings of space (Lull 1995: 159). Displaced from their homelands, they find that "Ethnicity is the necessary place or space" (Hall 1997: 184) from which they can speak to counteract dominant discourses. Hall views this process as operating "on the terrain of 'the global postmodern" (184), which "is an extremely contradictory space" (187): whereas he acknowledges the danger of extreme nationalism in ethnic assertion he also identifies the immense opportunities for the empowerment of the local, in contrast to the polarized scenario of Benjamin Barber's "jihad vs. McWorld" (1995).

Migrant communities endeavour to make homes (even if "temporarily") in milieus that are away from the home(land). John Wise (2000) asserts that the marking out of a space as one's home involves the infusion of that place with one's own rhythms. (Re)territorialisation occurs through sounds and movement – cadencies and action. The languages, accents and rituals spoken and performed in a space establish its cultural connections to its occupants and give it an identity. Diasporas (re)create home by instilling such resonance into the spaces they find themselves in: they do it with their languages, customs, art forms, arrangement of objects, and ideas. Their media, especially electronic media, reterritorialise the diaspora through the resonance of electromagnetic frequencies. However, the milieus that diasporas seek to create are not bounded by the borders of nation-states – their rhythms resonate transnationally to mark out non-terrestrial spaces that stretch out inter-continentally.

The 'supraterritoriality' (Scholte 1996) of diaspora is created and sustained by transforming a milieu: it is not a physical place but an existential location dependent continually on the resonance of

cultural practices. Diasporas account for space as an existential location as they seek to redefine and transform their existence from under the historical conditions of colonialism and/or the contemporary exigencies of globalization-from-above. These dynamics of spatialisation are imaginative; they usually do not necessarily involve the appropriation of territory but they necessarily engage in the rethinking of dominant cartographies. The diaspora exists virtually in the relationships maintained in a transnational milieu, held together by and in the intercontinental "'space of flows' – in mass media, telecommunications, computer connections and the like – [which] is a realm where religions, nations, classes, genders, races, sexualities, generations and so on continuously overlap and interrelate to produce complex and shifting identities and affiliations" (Scholte 1996: 597).

But diasporic space is not monologic. Watching live television from the homeland does not automatically suspend time and space, as Asu Aksoy and Kevin Robins (forthcoming) demonstrate. Diasporic media networks hardly negate the day-to-day existence in a location where one also interacts with other cultures and consumes local media content. Santianni (forthcoming) explores how diasporic Tibetan Buddhist media deliberately seek to create solidarity outside the ethnic community. Hybridity, in its multifarious forms, constantly challenges the notions of essentialism and exclusivity that often tend to accompany the traditional conceptualisation of diaspora. We also need to recognise that the mere existence of diasporic media also does not mean that all of a group's members, or even a majority of them, have access to them. William Ackah and James Newman (forthcoming) point to the differential and contradictory uses of new media in a Ghanaian transnational community.

Ethnic Media as Transnational Media

The use of the Internet and other computer-based media by diasporas should be viewed as part of a continuum that includes the mail, telephone, fax, print media, audio and video tape, film, radio and television (see Karim, forthcoming). The role of ethnic media in global communication flows is steadily growing in importance: the transnational ethnic-based commercial broadcasting infrastructure is integral to the increasingly global ethnic economy. Advertising on ethnic radio and television is viewed by niche marketers as a way to reach growing minority populations in a time of fragmenting audiences. The largest Spanish-language US network, UnivisiÛn "owns 11 stations and has 19 affiliates, [it] is also carried on 740 cable systems and is seen by 92 percent of Hispanic households in 162 markets across the United States" (Collins, 1996: C6; also see D·vila 2001). Sociologists and communication scholars have viewed ethnic media as serving two primary purposes - to contribute to ethnic cohesion and cultural maintenance as well as to help members of minorities integrate into the larger society (Riggins, 1992: 4). Charles Husband asserts that "we need autonomous ethnic minority media which can speak for, and to, their own community; ethnic minority media which can generate a dialogue between ethnic minority communities; and between these and dominant ethnic community audiences" (1994: 15). However, obtaining sufficient space for the ethnic broadcast media on the electromagnetic spectrum has involved a continual struggle with national regulators.[5] For example, France's main broadcast authority, the Conseil SupÈrieur de l'Audiovisuel, was actively encouraged by a centre-right government to exclude Arabic stations from licensed cable networks. The response of a significant number of Maghrebi immigrant families was to subscribe to DBS services which provide them programming from Arab countries from across the Mediterranean Sea.

In the autumn of 1995, a survey conducted for the European satellite company Eutelsat indicated that 21 percent of Arabic-speaking households in France had invested in satellite receivers, compared with 4 percent of the general population. A year later, the number of Arabic-speaking households with satellite dishes was believed to have doubled. (Hargreaves and Mahdjoub, 1997:

461)

With the availability of new communication technologies, diasporas are able to obtain cultural materials with growing ease from other parts of the world. Governments are finding it increasingly difficult to compel them to assimilate minorities into the dominant national culture in the face of globalization-from-below.

A number of ethnic television broadcasters export their programming to other parts of the diaspora; for example the weekly Vision TV programs “West Indians United” produced by a group of South Asian diasporics in Toronto, are being regularly rebroadcast in Guyana and the US. On a much broader scale, either UnivisiÛn and Telemundo, the two largest Spanish-language networks in the US is available on almost every cable system in Latin America. “And in smaller, poorer countries, local television stations often simply tape stories from UnivisiÛn or Telemundo’s nightly newscasts for their own use, which gives these American networks a degree of credibility and visibility unusual in the region” (Rohter, 1996: 4/6). The picture that Latin Americans see of American society in these North-South news flows is very different from that presented by mainstream US television like the CNN and by global TV news agencies like the World Television Network and Reuters Television. UnivisiÛn and Telemundo adhere to Latin American news values that favour greater analysis than that offered by mainstream American television. The Spanish-language networks also seek out Hispanic perspectives on national news stories.

The relatively small and widely scattered nature of communities they serve have encouraged diasporic media to seek out the most efficient and cost-effective means of communication. Technologies that allow for narrowcasting to target specific audiences rather than those that provide the means for mass communication have generally been favoured. Ethnic media have frequently been at the leading edge of technology adoption due to the particular challenges they face in reaching their audiences. Marie Gillespie notes about the Indian community in Southhall, England, that many families obtained VCRs as early as 1978 “well before most households in Britain” (1995: 79). In Mexico, the arrival of videotape became the means to enhance vastly its television program exports. Later, satellite technology was used to interconnect the various Spanish-language TV stations which Televisa controlled for many years throughout the US, thus establishing a national network for Mexican-originated programs and creating a national audience of “Hispanics.”

Whereas governments in developing and developed countries have expressed fears that DBS would erode their sovereignty by transmitting foreign programming to their populations in unregulated manners, this technology is providing remarkable opportunities for diasporic communities. Ethnic broadcasters, previously having limited access to space on the electromagnetic spectrum in Northern countries, are finding much greater options opening up for them through DBS. Diasporic programming using this technology has grown exponentially in the last few years, well ahead of many mainstream broadcasters. Even as mainstream networks in Europe were making plans to introduce digital broadcasting, the Arab-owned and operated Orbit TV in Rome had begun by 1994 to providing extensive programming via DBS to Arab communities both in Europe and the Middle East. Arab Radio and Television (ART) has several channels that are broadcast to Arab countries, and one each to Europe and North America. One of the most fascinating uses of DBS technology in the Middle Eastern context is MED-TV, a Kurdish satellite television station (Hassanpour, 1998). This is a case of a diaspora within and without the divided homeland attempting to sustain itself and to counter forceful suppression with the use of communications technology. MED-TV faces resistance not only from governments of the various states straddling Kurdistan, but also from anti-terrorist police forces in the UK, Belgium and Germany.

Quite apart from the DBS television offered by global conglomerates like Rupert Murdoch’s Star TV, which beams programming to several Asian countries, there have emerged several diasporic DBS-

based networks serving Asian diasporas. The Chinese Television Network, headquartered in Hong Kong, has been broadcasting to East Asia, Australia, the Pacific Islands, and the United States since 1994. Hong Kong's Television Broadcasts International "reaches into several Asian markets and to Chinese communities just about everywhere" (Berfield, 1997: 31). The London-based Chinese Channel's programs are received in the UK and in continental Europe. India's state-run network Doordarshan has taken its International Channel to over 40 countries, and Zee TV has emerged as a very popular global Indian network in recent years (Thussu, 2000, 197-99).

Satellite networks in the US have realized the viability of ethnic channels and are making them an integral part of their services. DirectTV and DISH Network provide a wide variety. WMNB (Russian), Network Asia (India-oriented), Ukrainian Broadcasting Network, CiaoTV - The Italian Superchannel, Egyptian Satellite Channel, and Nile TV appear on DirectTV. The DISH Network's offerings include Fox Sports Americas, MTV Latino, and Telemundo, all in Spanish; Antenna in Greek and Croatian; ART in Arabic; TV5 and RFI in French; RTPi in Portuguese; and RAI in Italian. In January 1998, California-based Space TV launched five Chinese video channels, ten Chinese audio channels, one Thai video channel, one Filipino video channel, and an Asian Business News channel for North American subscribers.

Diasporas on the net

The new media seem especially suited to the needs of diasporic communities. Transnational communities are also making extensive use of on-line services like Email, Internet Relay Chat, Usenet, Listserv, and the World Wide Web. These global networks are allowing for relatively easy connections for members of communities residing in various continents. As opposed to the broadcast model of communication, which apart from offering limited access to minority groups, is linear, hierarchical, and capital intensive, on-line media allow easier access and are non-linear, largely non-hierarchical, and relatively cheap (Karim, Smeltzer and Loucheur, 1998). The ability to exchange messages with individuals on the other side of the planet and to have access to community information almost instantaneously changes the dynamics of diaspora, allowing for qualitatively and quantitatively enhanced linkages. As the number of language scripts and translation capabilities of on-line software grows, an increasing number of non-English speakers are drawn to the medium.

Post-colonial groups as well as older diasporas such as the Roma are communicating inter-continentally through on-line networks. The content of their messaging largely consists of cultural, heritage, genealogical, and religious information. In some cases, individuals from respective diasporas construct on-line resources on their cultures in collaboration with cross-cultural research teams. With access to greater technological resources, members of the diasporas who live in the west are producing CD-ROMs containing their religious scriptures. For example, CD-ROMs titled *Al-Quran al-Kareem*, containing the recitation of the Islamic holy book, and *Scriptures and the Heritage of the Sikhs* have both been published in the United States. The simultaneous availability of text, sound and graphics provide not only an excellent interactive reference but a superior learning tool for spiritual communities for whom the precise pronunciation of their scriptures is of vital importance.

Whereas significant percentages of the overall population have access to the Internet in the most technologically advanced countries, patterns of usage are dependent on factors including age, income, education, and proximity to urban areas. There are uneven patterns of on-line access among their minority communities - the average rate for Chinese-Canadians is higher than that for the Canadian population as a whole, but African-Americans have the lowest level in the United States. Availability of the technology in developing countries is lagging far behind industrialized ones. Consequently, members of diasporic groups in the west are the most active in producing cultural resources on the Web. A primary motivation on the part of immigrant communities seems to be

survival in the face of the overwhelming output of the dominant culture and the limitations of their own access to the cultural industries in the country of settlement.

A substantial amount of space on electronic networks is devoted to genealogy. It is of special interest to members of diasporas, especially those whose ancestors migrated several generations ago. They are finding the Internet to be a remarkable tool in their efforts to reconstruct their family trees. There are news groups organized according to family names, of origin and immigration, ethnic groups, and historical events (particularly wars). Although genealogical web-sites catering to people of European origins are the most numerous, it is possible for individuals of any background to add their personal home pages as links to sites which act as genealogical registries. Some commercial sites facilitate international searches for documentation using surnames as keywords. One Netherlands-based service offers assistance to people of mixed South Asian and European origins, providing access to records from churches, cemeteries, military regiments, and community associations.

Recent migrants separated from family and friends often put notices on news groups giving particulars of individuals with whom they want to re-establish contact. Diasporic web-sites frequently have global directories of community members. These are often organized according to alumni of institutions such as colleges. Diasporic directories of professionals and businesses are also being compiled on-line. An international conference of the Advanced Science and Technology Exchange with Thailand proposed the development of a “World Thai Expert Link.” This network would use information and communication technologies to mobilize the scientific and managerial elements of the Thai diaspora as a means of partially reversing the brain drain from the South-East Asian country.

In some cases, the creation of diasporic directories is a matter of life and death. The medical necessity to find human marrow donors from one’s own ancestral group for the treatment of more than sixty blood-related diseases has extended these searches into cyberspace. Under the aegis of the National Marrow Donor Program in the United States, community organizations of Americans of African, Asian, the Pacific Islander, and indigenous peoples are maintaining web sites to find suitable marrow donors for patients from their communities. Information on registries in home countries is also provided, although the potential of electronic networks to maintain global donor lists does not appear to have been fully exploited. Much can be done in the way of co-ordinating transnational databases with up-to-date information about potential donors.

Although some diasporic web sites do carry scholarly and archival material, their particular strength is functioning as repositories and as means of disseminating cultural knowledge. In the light of the enormous production and export levels by the cultural industries of developed countries, on-line networks facilitate a global accessibility to Asian, Latin American and African views of the world. This becomes an important means to counter the effects of cultural imperialism and to foster a world-wide cultural diversity. Isolated members of diasporas who have access to on-line media can participate to a significant extent in the cultural give and take that usually takes place in a physical community. While a cyber network does not allow for the same level of interaction as a real community, it facilitates communication to a much greater extent than that has been previously possible for diasporic groups. Traditional lore, family trees, reunions, festivals, new publications, and world-wide locations of community institutions are included in the range of web sites contents. Current events and developments in the transnational group are regularly discussed on online news groups. All this forms the growing knowledge base of the diaspora as it interacts within itself and with others.

Newsgroups enable the participation of users with common interests, located around the world; these have been termed ‘virtual communities’ (Rheingold 1993). However, the notion of virtual or

electronic community seems more pertinent when speaking either of a freenet that networks a particular geographic locality or a diasporic group that is linked together by more than a single-issue, sharing a symbolic universe that includes a broad variety of cultural markers (Mitra 1997). Indeed, cyberspace is often conceived of as a 'place' where the users electronically reconstitute the relationships that existed before migration. Discussing the participation of Indian immigrants on soc.culture.india (sci), Ananda Mitra writes,

There is a presupposition that most members of the Indian community would access the network and would chance upon these general messages and thus re-establish contacts with people they might have known before. This signifies that the community produced by, and around, sci is a representation of the allegiances that existed before the diasporic experience occurred. For instance, when one encounters a message that refers back to a college in India there is an effort to find, in the virtual community, familiar relationships that have been severed by the process of geographic movement but can now be re-established in the virtual space of the Internet. (63)

There appears to be an attempt by diasporic participants in cyberspace to create a virtual community that supposedly eliminates the distances that separate them in the real world. The global dispersion from the home country over a period of several generations is also seemingly reversed by bringing together disparate members of the ethnic group to interact in an electronic "chat room." Time and space are erased in this scenario to reconstitute the community and to exchange cultural knowledge held in the diaspora. News groups such as soc.culture.sierraleone, soc.culture.jewish, and alt.religion.zoroastrianism allow for interested people, most of whom who tend to be of the particular national, cultural or religious backgrounds, to communicate from any place where they have access to Usenet. Discussions range on topics that include culture, literature, entertainment, politics, and current events in the countries of origin and settlement.

Whereas one is tempted to view the virtual re-assembling of global diasporas within electronic chat rooms, this conceit belies the reality of the vastly differing levels of access enjoyed by members of communities as well as the inability of the individual newsgroups to support the coherence of more than a handful of discussions. Ackah and Newman (forthcoming) draw our attention to the continued importance of travel and first-hand human contact in the lives of diasporas, criticizing the tendency to eliminate space completely and to locate transnational communities exclusively within cyberspace. Pilgrimage, the traditional mode of bringing together members from global religious communities, continues to retain an enormous vibrancy among Muslims, Hindus, Christians and followers of other religions in the age of the diasporic chat room, as witnessed in the periodic mass gatherings at holy places.

Diasporas are using the Internet to overcome restrictions imposed by borders and national regulations. Several on-line services catering to Sindhis, a South Asian ethnic group whose members were dispersed by the partition of colonial India and by migration patterns outside the sub-continent, are electronically recreating the community. A Hong Kong-based web-site covers Sindhi history, philosophy, spirituality, culture, language, literature, poetry, organizational structures, reunions, directories and even recipes. Information for Sindhis of Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Christian backgrounds is provided in other sites, some of which invite contributions from virtual visitors with the express intention of reuniting the diaspora in cyberspace. A web-site operated from Germany provides an extensive hypertext links to Iranians on the Internet. It brings together, virtually, individuals and institutions residing inside and outside Iran, including universities, research organizations, information resources, cultural industries, literature, art collections, media, sports groups, businesses, political and religious organizations (including those in exile), Iranian government agencies, and discussion groups. Similar websites were created by diasporas from Afghanistan, whose Taliban regime had banned the Internet (Allan, forthcoming)

Diasporic cybercommunities centred around very specific topics attempt to bring communal knowledge to bear on contemporary issues; for example, “Shams,” which enables discussion of issues relating to the rights of women in Muslim law, “Bol,” a Listserv for issues of gender, reproductive health and human rights in South Asia, and “KoreanQ,” serving lesbian and bisexual women of Korean heritage. Co-operative arrangements between students and professionals of recent Chinese origins working in high technology sectors in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom have led to the emergence of online magazines that express their particular concerns. These new arrivals felt that its information needs were not met by the thriving print and broadcast Chinese media controlled largely by older groups of immigrants from China (Qiu, forthcoming). Despite being separated by large distances and, in most cases, not having met each other, the virtual editorial teams regularly cover events happening in the homeland and in the Chinese diaspora.

Individual members of various diasporas are also participating in cross-cultural teams of virtual librarians to develop banks of on-line research resources. For example the Asian Studies WWW Virtual Library project includes expert contributors with origins in Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, East Timor, Eastern Turkestan, Hong Kong, Japan, Nepal, North Korea, the South Pacific region, South Korea, and Sri Lanka, who are living in western countries. Several others are linked from various developed and developing countries. The Australian-based project, which seeks to provide an authoritative, continuously updated hypertext guide and access tool to scholarly information on Asia, is aimed at meeting the needs of academics, librarians, journalists, and graduate students. The team of virtual librarians manages specialist information modules, and they offer access to thousands of Internet resources around the planet including archives, library catalogues, documents, bibliographies, electronic journal registers, and mailing lists. “Native Web” is another cross-cultural venture. Operated from the United States, it provides links to electronic resources on indigenous cultures in the Americas. It involves the participation of people of native and non-native backgrounds from South, Central and North America. Interactive on-line systems are also enhancing inter-cultural communication. Usenet is enabling news group discussion on a wide range of topics among members of diasporas and with those of other backgrounds. The use of the Internet Relay Chat and the Relay program on Bitnet, two asynchronous on-line systems which are in heavy use among university students in various parts of the world, are allowing for diasporic as well as inter-cultural communication.

A number of diasporic web sites are aimed as much at members of the group as at those outside it. Apart from materials on the history, culture and organization of the community, there will be pages devoted to correcting what are considered misperceptions by outsiders and to mobilize political support. Several sites of the transnational Roma, who have been vilified for centuries in a number of countries, function in this manner. Guillermo GÛmez-PeÒa, a Mexican commentator on issues of cultural hybridity has extended his postmodernist literary and artistic criticism to cyberspace in a deliberate effort to confront the hegemonic structures of knowledge production and to respond to their globally dominant images of Chicano identity. The Council on American-Islamic Relations runs a Listservs that provides updates on issues affecting Muslims primarily in the United States and Canada, and encourages subscribers to lobby relevant media, community and government organizations to redress what it views as unjust treatment. Some anti-government diaspora-based organizations have taken stronger action with the use of electronic networks. One hacker electronically disabled a web site of the Sri Lankan government, which was viewed as giving false information about its opponents. The simultaneous, world-wide demonstrations in March 1999 by Kurdish protestors, who reacted immediately to the capture of a guerilla leader, were due to the close links maintained by that diaspora over the Internet (Hassanpour, forthcoming).

It is apparent that diasporic use of new media is gaining in significance. However, there presently is only sketchy data regarding the level of access to information and communication technologies

enjoyed by various countries' minority groups who make up transnational diasporas. The Canadian government's General Social Survey for 2000 asked questions on access to new media according to respondents' racial and national origins, and whether on-line services are used to keep in touch with one's ethnic group. It will be useful to track this at a world level. A global picture would also require other details such as the types of content that appears on various kinds of new media and the quantity of bytes devoted to each category and language, in order to make comparisons with the general digital content produced worldwide. Such categorization is necessary for understanding the nature of new media materials produced globally, and could be developed with transnational cooperation.

At the conceptual level, the nature of computer-mediated communication needs to be better understood in the context of diasporic groups. These are virtual communities who have a much more stable and authentic set of symbols, history and cultural relationships compared to single-issue communicators using online media. Their production and dissemination of cultural materials in a transnational context presents a unique alternative to the cultural industries of mega corporations. Indeed, the increasing commercialization of the new media is a factor that may have an immense impact on the evolution of diasporic content. Another development to watch is the regulation and control that governments exert over on-line networks.

Before and after WTC

It is seems ironic that diasporas have come into focus with the violent destruction of the World Trade Center since the story of the complex's construction also tells of enormous destruction and the presence of diasporas. Prior to the building of the Center, Lower Manhattan was a thriving part of New York city, many of whose residents were first, second and third-generation immigrants. Vincent Mosco, a colleague of mine at Carleton University who grew up in an immigrant Italian family in Lower Manhattan. He noted in a recent conference paper that that between 1959 and 1975 the government and corporate interests' vision of extending New York's downtown, including building the World Trade Center, required the razing of "over sixty acres of buildings, an area four times the site of the WTC attack … [that] eliminated 440,000 of 990,000 manufacturing jobs" (Mosco 2002).

This was not the first time that the interests of government and diasporas have been at cross-purposes, and it will not be the last. The suspected Middle-Eastern perpetrators of the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States are alleged to have used the Internet to coordinate their transnational terrorist network. Consequently, the inter-continental movements and links of diasporas are coming under growing suspicion by Western governments. This highlights a fundamental contradiction in the dominant discourses on globalisation, which have favoured the free movements of good and services but generally not of people – especially those with origins in southern countries. As governments seek to prevent terrorism by more tightly sealing national borders, transnational movement is becoming problematic for potential emigrants from non-Western states. Additionally, the loyalty of minority ethnic groups living in Western countries is becoming suspect and their transnational connections and relationships are coming under scrutiny. The multiple and hybrid identities of diasporic members are under renewed pressure to conform to the mythic notion of a monolithic populace of the traditional nation-state.

The long-term effect of such retrenchment of attitudes on the media of diasporas remains to be seen. Hassanpour (1998) describes the ongoing struggle that Kurdish satellite television has had with governments in Western Europe. The media of the transnational groups who are perceived rightly or wrongly as being linked to terrorist organizations will most likely find it even more difficult to operate. The only Internet service provider which supplied the Somali diaspora with online connections to the homeland was forced to close in November 2001 because the US government

suspected it of having links to terrorists.[6] Governments have frequently resisted the development of ethnic media, viewing them as obstacles to the integration of immigrants into the host society (e.g. Hargreaves and Mahdjoub 1997) even though ethnic newspapers carry significant amounts of material on civic issues relating to its public sphere (Karim forthcoming). However, diasporic media have increasingly become entrenched in the communications structures of various Western countries and it will be difficult to eliminate them without economic costs, especially to advertisers and to cable and satellite companies. There may even be costs for politicians who tend to use ethnic media to reach minority members of their constituencies more effectively.

Whereas governments have the necessary task of preventing terrorism, they also need to understand better the nature of diasporas and their mediascapes. The forces of globalisation and of technological development, to say nothing of human rights protocols, make it impossible to corral minority groups within borders of countries. Diasporic spaces overlap with other forms of transnational connections. The multiple layering of inter-continental communications networks appears to have become an intrinsic feature of globalisation; diasporic media using satellites and Internet connections are piggybacking on the structures established and maintained by governments and corporations. The 'global postmodern' is a contradictory space, as Hall (1997) notes: globalisation-from-above and globalisation-from-below do not always work in opposition.

The hybridity of technological and entrepreneurial innovations appears to parallel that of human identity. Transnational 'third spaces' are the luminal sites characterised by a significant degree of creativity. This zone of multiple borders is a frontier of modernity, where new ways of addressing the problems of contemporary social relations are sought at local and global levels. Ray (2000) draws our attention to the innovative modalities of interaction between India and the West in the film output of Mumbai (formerly Bombay), which is heavily influenced by the Indian diaspora. Santianni (forthcoming) explores how the Tibetan Buddhist diaspora draws on contemporary universal discourses in order to make alliances with North Americans and Europeans. One of the largest international non-governmental organizations, the Aga Khan Development Network, is a remarkable example of collaborations between a diaspora and the world of states. It appears that the diasporic space where deterritorialised nations are making their home has the possibility for becoming the location for a genuinely cosmopolitan citizenship that would seem to be a logical human outcome of globalisation.

Notes

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[1] Whereas there previous had been some literature on ethnic media, it was mainly limited to national rather than transnational contexts.

[2]. The concept of transnation is becoming more formalised in policies like those of the Indian government to give a legal status to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), thus creating forms of diasporic citizenships which albeit do not hold all the privileges (nor obligations) of full citizenship.

[3]. Falk tends to limit his conception of "globalization-from-below" to groups actively involved in countering the influence of governments and large corporations.

[4] Quotation from Homi Bhabha (1994: 120).

[5]. The major exception to this trend was the establishment of the national multicultural network called Special Broadcasting Services by the Australian government in 1980. It shared features of

both public service and community broadcasting (Patterson, 1990: 93-99).

[6] British Broadcasting Corporation 'US shuts down Somaliainternet' (November 23, 2001), http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/africa/newsid_1672000/1672220.stm.

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