PUBLIC WORLDS

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Series Editors

VOLUME 1

Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*

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Modernity at Large

Cultural Dimensions of Globalization

PUBLIC WORLDS, VOLUME 1
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS
MINNEAPOLIS LONDON

The Public Worlds series is a product of Public Works Publications, which includes Public Planet Books and the journal *Public Culture*.

Chapter 2 is reprinted in revised form from *Public Culture* 2.2 (1990): 1–24. Copyright 1990 Center for Transnational Cultural Studies. Chapter 3 is reprinted in revised form from *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard G. Fox. School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series, 191–210. Copyright 1991 School of American Research Press, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Chapter 4 is reprinted in revised form from *Stanford Literature Review* 10.1–2 (1993): 11–23. Copyright 1993 Arjun Appadurai. Chapter 5 is reprinted in revised form from *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 23–48. Copyright 1995 the Regents of the University of Minnesota. Chapter 6 is reprinted in revised form from *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 314–39. Copyright 1993 University of Pennsylvania Press. Chapter 8 is reprinted in revised form from *Public Culture* 5.3 (1993): 411–29. Copyright 1993 by The University of Chicago. Chapter 9 is reprinted in revised form from *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, ed. Richard Fardon (London and New York: Routledge, 1995). Copyright 1995 Arjun Appadurai.

Published by the University of Minnesota Press
111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290, Minneapolis, MN 55401-2520
Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

Second printing, 1997

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Appadurai, Arjun, 1949–
Modernity at large : cultural dimensions of globalization / Arjun Appadurai.
p. cm. — (Public worlds ; v. 1)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-8166-2792-4
ISBN 0-8166-2793-2 (pbk.)
1. Culture. 2. Civilization, Modern—1950– 3. Ethnicity. 4. Mass media—Social aspects. I. Title. II. Series.
HM101.A644 1996
306—dc20 96-9276

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For my son Alok,

My home in the world

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The Production of Locality

This chapter addresses related questions that have arisen in an ongoing series of writings about global cultural flows. I begin with three such questions. What is the place of locality in schemes about global cultural flow? Does anthropology retain any special rhetorical privilege in a world where locality seems to have lost its ontological moorings? Can the mutually constitutive relationship between anthropology and locality survive in a dramatically delocalized world? My argument does not stem directly from concern with either the production of space (Lefebvre 1991) or the disciplinary anxieties of anthropology as such, although they broadly inform my response to these questions. Rather, it engages a continuing debate about the future of the nation-state (chap. 8). My concern is with what locality might mean in a situation where the nation-state faces particular sorts of transnational destabilization.

I view locality as primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar or spatial. I see it as a complex phenomenological quality, constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts. This phenomenological quality, which expresses itself in certain kinds of agency, sociality, and reproducibility, is the main predicate of locality as a category (or subject) that I seek to explore. In contrast, I use the term *neighborhood* to refer

to the actually existing social forms in which locality, as a dimension or value, is variably realized. Neighborhoods, in this usage, are situated communities characterized by their actuality, whether spatial or virtual, and their potential for social reproduction.[1]

As part of this exploration, I address two further questions. How does *locality*, as an aspect of social life, relate to *neighborhoods* as substantive social forms? Is the relationship of locality to neighborhoods substantially altered by recent history, especially by the global crisis of the nation-state? A simpler way to characterize these multiple goals is through this question: What can locality mean in a world where spatial localization, quotidian interaction, and social scale are not always isomorphic?

Locating the Subject

It is one of the grand clichés of social theory (going back to Toennies, Weber, and Durkheim) that locality as a property or diacritic of social life comes under siege in modern societies. But locality is an inherently fragile social achievement. Even in the most intimate, spatially confined, geographically isolated situations, locality must be maintained carefully against various kinds of odds. These odds have at various times and places been conceptualized differently. In many societies, boundaries are zones of danger requiring special ritual maintenance; in other sorts of societies, social relations are inherently fissive, creating a persistent tendency for some neighborhoods to dissolve. In yet other situations, ecology and technology dictate that houses and inhabited spaces are forever shifting, thus contributing an endemic sense of anxiety and instability to social life.

Much of what we call the ethnographic record can be rewritten and reread from this point of view. In the first instance, a great deal of what have been termed *rites of passage* is concerned with the production of what we might call *local subjects*, actors who properly belong to a situated community of kin, neighbors, friends, and enemies. Ceremonies of naming and tonsure, scarification and segregation, circumcision and deprivation are complex social techniques for the inscription of locality onto bodies. Looked at slightly differently, they are ways to embody locality as well as to locate bodies in socially and spatially defined communities. The spatial symbolism of rites of passage has probably been paid less attention than its bodily and social symbolism. Such rites are not simply mechanical techniques for social aggregation but social techniques for the production of "natives," a category I have discussed elsewhere (Appadurai 1988).

What is true of the production of local subjects in the ethnographic

record is as true of the processes by which locality is materially produced. The building of houses, the organization of paths and passages, the making and remaking of fields and gardens, the mapping and negotiation of transhuman spaces and hunter-gatherer terrains is the incessant, often humdrum preoccupation of many small communities studied by anthropologists. These techniques for the *spatial* production of locality have been copiously documented. But they have not usually been viewed as instances of the production of locality, both as a general property of social life and as a particular valuation of that property. Broken down descriptively into technologies for house building, garden cultivation, and the like, these material outcomes have been taken as ends in themselves rather than as moments in a general technology (and teleology) of localization.

The production of locality in the societies historically studied by anthropologists (on islands and in forests, agricultural villages and hunting camps) is not simply a matter of producing local subjects as well as the very neighborhoods that contextualize these subjectivities. As some of the best work in the social logic of ritual in the past few decades so amply shows (Lewis 1986; Munn 1986; Schieffelin 1985), space and time are themselves socialized and localized through complex and deliberate practices of performance, representation, and action. We have tended to call these practices *cosmological* or *ritual*—terms that by distracting us from their active, intentional, and productive character create the dubious impression of mechanical reproduction.

One of the most remarkable general features of the ritual process is its highly specific way of localizing duration and extension, of giving these categories names and properties, values and meanings, symptoms and legibility. A vast amount of what we know of ritual in small-scale societies can be revisited from this point of view. The large body of literature on techniques for naming places, for protecting fields, animals, and other reproductive spaces and resources, for marking seasonal change and agricultural rhythms, for properly situating new houses and wells, for appropriately demarcating boundaries (both domestic and communal) is substantially literature documenting the socialization of space and time. More precisely, it is a record of the spatiotemporal production of locality. Looked at this way, Arnold van Gennep's extraordinary and vital study of rites of passage (1965), much of James G. Frazer's bizarre encyclopedia (1900), and Bronislaw Malinowski's monumental study of Trobriand garden magic (1961) are substantially records of the myriad ways in which small-scale societies do not and cannot take locality as a given. Rather, they seem to assume that locality is ephemeral unless hard and regular work is undertaken to

produce and maintain its materiality. Yet this very materiality is sometimes mistaken for the terminus of such work, thus obscuring the more abstract effects of this work on the production of locality as a structure of feeling.

Much that has been considered local knowledge is actually knowledge of how to produce and reproduce locality under conditions of anxiety and entropy, social wear and flux, ecological uncertainty and cosmic volatility, and the always present quirkiness of kinsmen, enemies, spirits, and quarks of all sorts. The locality of local knowledge is not only, or even mainly, its embeddedness in a nonnegotiable here and now or its stubborn disinterest in things at large, although these are certainly crucial properties as Clifford Geertz has reminded us in much of his work (Geertz 1975, 1983). Local knowledge is substantially about producing reliably local subjects as well as about producing reliably local neighborhoods within which such subjects can be recognized and organized. In this sense, local knowledge is what it is not principally by contrast with other knowledges—which (from some nonlocal point of view) the observer might regard as less localized—but by virtue of its local teleology and ethos. We might say, adapting Marx, that local knowledge is not only local in itself but, even more important, for itself.

Even in the smallest of societies, with the humblest of technologies and in the most desolate of ecological contexts, the relationship between the production of local subjects and the neighborhoods in which such subjects can be produced, named, and empowered to act socially is a historical and dialectical relationship. Without reliably local subjects, the construction of a local terrain of habitation, production, and moral security would have no interests attached to it. But by the same token, without such a known, named, and negotiable terrain already available, the ritual techniques for creating local subjects would be abstract, thus sterile. The long-term reproduction of a neighborhood that is simultaneously practical, valued, and taken-for-granted depends on the seamless interaction of localized spaces and times with local subjects possessed of the knowledge to reproduce locality. Problems that are properly historical arise whenever this seamlessness is threatened. Such problems do not arrive only with modernity, colonialism, or ethnography. I stress this point now because I will discuss below the special properties of the production of locality under the conditions of contemporary urban life, which involve national regimes, mass mediation, and intense and irregular commoditization.

If a large part of the ethnographic record can be reread and rewritten as a record of the multifarious modes for the production of locality, it follows that ethnography has been unwittingly complicit in this activity. This is a

point about knowledge and representation rather than about guilt or violence. The ethnographic project is in a peculiar way isomorphic with the very knowledges it seeks to discover and document, as both the ethnographic project and the social projects it seeks to describe have the production of locality as their governing telos.[2] The misrecognition of this fact in both projects, as involving only more humdrum and discrete actions and settings (house building, child naming, boundary rituals, greeting rituals, spatial purifications), is the constitutive misrecognition that guarantees both the special appropriateness of ethnography to certain kinds of description and its peculiar lack of reflexivity as a project of knowledge and reproduction. Drawn into the very localization they seek to document, most ethnographic descriptions have taken locality as ground not figure, recognizing neither its fragility nor its ethos *as a property of social life.* This produces an unproblematized collaboration with the sense of inertia on which locality, as a structure of feeling, centrally relies.

The value of reconceiving ethnography (and rereading earlier ethnography) from this perspective is threefold: (1) it shifts the history of ethnography from a history of neighborhoods to a history of the techniques for the production of locality; (2) it opens up a new way to think about the complex coproduction of indigenous categories by organic intellectuals, administrators, linguists, missionaries, and ethnologists, which undergirds large portions of the monographic history of anthropology; (3) it enables the ethnography of the modern, and of the production of locality under modern conditions, to be part of a more general contribution to the ethnographic record *tout court.* Together, these effects would help guard against the too-easy use of various oppositional tropes (then and now, before and after, small and large, bounded and unbounded, stable and fluid, hot and cold) that implicitly oppose ethnographies of and in the present to ethnographies of and in the past.

The Contexts of Locality

I have so far focused on locality as a phenomenological property of social life, a structure of feeling that is produced by particular forms of intentional activity and that yields particular sorts of material effects. Yet this dimensional aspect of locality cannot be separated from the actual settings in and through which social life is reproduced. To make the link between locality as a property of social life and neighborhoods as social forms requires a more careful exposition of the problem of context. The production of neighborhoods is always historically grounded and thus contextual. That

is, neighborhoods are inherently what they are because they are opposed to something else and derive from other, already produced neighborhoods. In the practical consciousness of many human communities, this something else is often conceptualized ecologically as forest or wasteland, ocean or desert, swamp or river. Such ecological signs often mark boundaries that simultaneously signal the beginnings of nonhuman forces and categories or recognizably human but barbarian or demonic forces. Frequently, these contexts, against which neighborhoods are produced and figured, are at once seen as ecological, social, and cosmological terrains.

It may be useful here to note that the social part of the context of neighborhoods—the fact, that is, of other neighborhoods—recalls the idea of *ethnoscape* (chap. 3), a term I used to get away from the idea that group identities necessarily imply that cultures need to be seen as spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or ethnically homogeneous forms. In this earlier usage, I implied that the idea of ethnoscape might be salient especially to the late twentieth century, when human motion, the volatility of images, and the conscious identity-producing activities of nation-states lend a fundamentally unstable and perspectival quality to social life.

Yet neighborhoods are always to some extent ethnoscapes, insofar as they involve the ethnic projects of Others as well as consciousness of such projects. That is, particular neighborhoods sometimes recognize that their own logic is a general logic by which Others also construct recognizable, social, human, situated life-worlds. Such knowledge can be encoded in the pragmatics of rituals associated with clearing forests, making gardens, building houses, which always carry an implicit sense of the teleology of locality building. In more complex societies, typically associated with literacy, priestly classes, and macro-orders for the control and dissemination of powerful ideas, such knowledges are codified, as in the case of the rituals associated with the colonization of new villages by Brahmans in precolonial India.

All locality building has a moment of colonization, a moment both historical and chronotypic, when there is a formal recognition that the production of a neighborhood requires deliberate, risky, even violent action in respect to the soil, forests, animals, and other human beings. A good deal of the violence associated with foundational ritual (Bloch 1986) is a recognition of the force that is required to wrest a locality from previously uncontrolled peoples and places. Put in other terms (de Certeau 1984), the transformation of spaces into places requires a conscious moment, which may subsequently be remembered as relatively routine. The production of a neighborhood is inherently colonizing, in the sense that it in-

volves the assertion of socially (often ritually) organized power over places and settings that are viewed as potentially chaotic or rebellious. The anxiety that attends many rituals of habitation, occupation, or settlement is a recognition of the implicit violence of all such acts of colonization. Some of this anxiety remains in the ritual repetition of these moments, long after the foundational event of colonization. In this sense, the production of a neighborhood is inherently an exercise of power over some sort of hostile or recalcitrant environment, which may take the form of another neighborhood.

Much of the narrative material unearthed by ethnographers working in small communities, as well as much of their description of rituals of agriculture, house building and social passage, stresses the sheer material fragility associated with producing and maintaining locality. Nevertheless, however deeply such description is embedded in the particularities of place, soil, and ritual technique, it invariably contains or implies a theory of context—a theory, in other words, of what a neighborhood is produced from, against, in spite of, and in relation to. The problem of the relationship between neighborhood and context requires much fuller attention than can be afforded here. Let me sketch the general dimensions of this problem. The central dilemma is that neighborhoods both are contexts and at the same time require and produce contexts. Neighborhoods are contexts in the sense that they provide the frame or setting within which various kinds of human action (productive, reproductive, interpretive, performative) can be initiated and conducted meaningfully. Because meaningful life-worlds require legible and reproducible patterns of action, they are text-like and thus require one or many contexts. From another point of view, a neighborhood is a context, or a set of contexts, within which meaningful social action can be both generated and interpreted. In this sense, neighborhoods are contexts, and contexts are neighborhoods. A neighborhood is a multiplex interpretive site.

Insofar as neighborhoods are imagined, produced, and maintained against some sort of ground (social, material, environmental), they also require and produce contexts against which their own intelligibility takes shape. This context-generative dimension of neighborhoods is an important matter because it provides the beginnings of a theoretical angle on the relationship between local and global realities. How so? The way in which neighborhoods are produced and reproduced requires the continuous construction, both practical and discursive, of an ethnoscape (necessarily nonlocal) against which local practices and projects are imagined to take place.

In one dimension, at one moment, and from one perspective, neighborhoods as existing contexts are prerequisites for the production of local subjects. That is, existing places and spaces, within a historically produced spatiotemporal neighborhood and with a series of localized rituals, social categories, expert practitioners, and informed audiences, are required in order for new members (babies, strangers, slaves, prisoners, guests, affines) to be made temporary or permanent local subjects. Here, we see locality in its taken-for-granted, commonsensical, habitus dimension. In this dimension, a neighborhood appears to be simply a set of contexts, historically received, materially embedded, socially appropriate, naturally unproblematic: fathers yield sons, gardens yield yams, sorcery yields sickness, hunters yield meat, women yield babies, blood yields semen, shamans yield visions, and so forth. These contexts in concert appear to provide the unproblematized setting for the technical production of local subjects in a regular and regulated manner.

But as these local subjects engage in the social activities of production, representation, and reproduction (as in the work of culture), they contribute, generally unwittingly, to the creation of contexts that might exceed the existing material and conceptual boundaries of the neighborhood. Affinal aspirations extend marriage networks to new villages; fishing expeditions yield refinements of what are understood to be navigable and fish-rich waters; hunting expeditions extend the sense of the forest as a responsive ecological frame; social conflicts force new strategies of exit and recolonization; trading activities yield new commodity-worlds and thus new partnerships with as-yet-unencountered regional groupings; warfare yields new diplomatic alliances with previously hostile neighbors. And all of these possibilities contribute to subtle shifts in language, worldview, ritual practice, and collective self-understanding. Put summarily, as local subjects carry on the continuing task of reproducing their neighborhood, the contingencies of history, environment, and imagination contain the potential for new contexts (material, social, and imaginative) to be produced. In this way, through the vagaries of social action by local subjects, neighborhood as context produces the context of neighborhoods. Over time, this dialectic changes the conditions of the production of locality as such. Put another way, this is how the subjects of history become historical subjects, so that no human community, however apparently stable, static, bounded, or isolated, can usefully be regarded as cool or outside history. This observation converges with Marshall Sahlins's view of the dynamics of conjunctural change (1985).

Consider the general relationship among various Yanomami groups in

the rain forests of Brazil and Venezuela. The relationship among settlements, population shifts, predatory warfare, and sexual competition can be viewed as a process in which specific Yanomami villages (neighborhoods), in and through their actions, preoccupations, and strategies, actually produce a wider set of contexts for themselves and each other. This creates a general territory of Yanomami movement, interaction, and colonization in which any given village responds to a material context wider than itself while simultaneously contributing to the creation of that wider context. In a larger-scale perspective, the overall network of space and time, in which the Yanomami produce and generate reciprocal contexts for specific acts of localization (village building), also produces some of the contexts in which the Yanomami as a whole encounter the Brazilian and Venezuelan nation-states. In this sense, Yanomami locality-producing activities are not only context-driven but are also context-generative. This is true of all locality-producing activities.

Thus, neighborhoods seem paradoxical because they both constitute and require contexts. As ethnoscapes, neighborhoods inevitably imply a relational consciousness of other neighborhoods, but they act at the same time as autonomous neighborhoods of interpretation, value, and material practice. Thus, locality as a relational achievement is not the same as a locality as a practical value in the quotidian production of subjects and colonization of space. Locality production is inevitably context-generative to some extent. What defines this extent is very substantially a question of the relationships between the contexts that neighborhoods create and those they encounter. This is a matter of social power and of the different scales of organization and control within which particular spaces (and places) are embedded.

Although the practices and projects of the Yanomami are context-producing for the Brazilian state, it is even truer that the practices of the Brazilian nation-state involve harsh, even overwhelming forces of military intervention, large-scale environmental exploitation, and state-sponsored migration and colonization that the Yanomami confront on hugely unequal terms. In this sense, which I will pursue in the next section on the conditions of locality production in the era of the nation-state, the Yanomami are being steadily *localized*, in the sense of enclaved, exploited, perhaps even cleansed in the context of the Brazilian polity. Thus, while they are still in a position to generate contexts as they produce and reproduce their own neighborhoods, they are increasingly prisoners in the context-producing activities of the nation-state, which makes their own efforts to produce locality seem feeble, even doomed.

This example has wide general applicability. The capability of neighborhoods to produce contexts (within which their very localizing activities acquire meaning and historical potential) and to produce local subjects is profoundly affected by the locality-producing capabilities of larger-scale social formations (nation-states, kingdoms, missionary empires, and trading cartels) to determine the general shape of all the neighborhoods within the reach of their powers. Thus, power is always a key feature of the contextual relations of neighborhoods, and even "first contact" always involves different narratives of firstness from the two sides involved in it.

The political economy that links neighborhoods to contexts is thus both methodologically and historically complex. Our ideas of context derive largely from linguistics. Until recently, context has been opportunistically defined to make sense of specific sentences, rituals, performances, and other sorts of text. While the production of texts has been carefully considered from several different points of view (Bauman and Briggs 1990; Hanks 1989), the structure and morphology of contexts has only lately become the focus of any systematic attention (Duranti and Goodwin 1992). Beyond anthropological linguistics, context remains a poorly defined idea, an inert concept indexing an inert environment. When social anthropologists appeal to context, it is generally to a loosely understood sense of the social frame within which specific actions or representations can best be understood. Sociolinguistics, especially as derived from the ethnography of speaking (Hymes 1974), has been the main source for this general approach.

The structure of contexts cannot and should not be derived entirely from the logic and morphology of texts. Text production and context production have different logics and metapragmatic features. Contexts are produced in the complex imbrication of discursive and nondiscursive practices, and so the sense in which contexts imply other contexts, so that each context implies a global network of contexts, is different from the sense in which texts imply other texts, and eventually all texts. Intertextual relations, about which we now know a fair amount, are not likely to work in the same way as *intercontextual* relations. Last, and most daunting, is the prospect that we shall have to find ways to connect theories of intertextuality to theories of intercontextuality. A strong theory of globalization from a sociocultural point of view is likely to require something we certainly do not now have: a theory of intercontextual relations that incorporates our existing sense of intertexts. But that is truly another project.

The relationship between neighborhood as context and the context of neighborhoods, mediated by the actions of local historical subjects, ac-

quires new complexities in the sort of world in which we now live. In this new sort of world, the production of neighborhoods increasingly occurs under conditions where the system of nation-states is the normative hinge for the production of both local and translocal activities. This situation, in which the power relations that affect the production of locality are fundamentally translocal, is the central concern of the next section.

The Global Production of Locality

What has been discussed thus far as a set of structural problems (locality and neighborhoods, text and context, ethnoscapes and life-worlds) needs now to be explicitly historicized. I have indicated already that the relationship of locality (and neighborhoods) to contexts is historical and dialectical, and that the context-generative dimension of places (in their capacity as ethnoscapes) is distinct from their context-providing features (in their capacity as neighborhoods). How do these claims help to understand what happens to the production of locality in the contemporary world?

Contemporary understandings of globalization (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Featherstone 1990; King 1991; Robertson 1992; Rosenau 1990) seem to indicate a shift from an emphasis on the global journeys of capitalist modes of thought and organization to a somewhat different emphasis on the spread of the nation form, especially as dictated by the concurrent spread of colonialism and print capitalism. If one problem now appears to be the dominant concern of the human sciences, it is that of nationalism and the nation-state (Anderson 1991; Bhabha 1990; Chatterjee 1986, 1993; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990).

While only time will tell whether our current preoccupations with the nation-state are justified, the beginnings of an anthropological engagement with this issue are evident in the increasing contribution of anthropologists to the problematics of the nation-state (Borneman 1992; Moore 1993; Handler 1988; Herzfeld 1982; Kapferer 1988; Tambiah 1986; Urban and Sherzer 1991; van der Veer 1994). Some of this work explicitly considers the global context of national cultural formations (Hannerz 1992; Basch et al. 1994; Foster 1991; Friedman 1990; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Rouse 1991; Sahlins 1992). Yet a framework for relating the global, the national, and the local has yet to emerge.

In this section, I hope to extend my thoughts about local subjects and localized contexts to sketch the outlines of an argument about the special problems that beset the production of locality in a world that has become deterritorialized (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), diasporic, and transnational.

This is a world where electronic media are transforming the relationships between information and mediation, and where nation-states are struggling to retain control over their populations in the face of a host of subnational and transnational movements and organizations. A full consideration of the challenges to the production of locality in such a world would require extended treatment beyond the scope of this chapter. But some elements of an approach to this problem can be outlined.

Put simply, the task of producing locality (as a structure of feeling, a property of social life, and an ideology of situated community) is increasingly a struggle. There are many dimensions to this struggle, and I shall focus here on three: (1) the steady increase in the efforts of the modern nation-state to define all neighborhoods under the sign of its forms of allegiance and affiliation; (2) the growing disjuncture between territory, subjectivity, and collective social movement; and (3) the steady erosion, principally due to the force and form of electronic mediation, of the relationship between spatial and virtual neighborhoods. To make things yet more complex, these three dimensions are themselves interactive.

The nation-state relies for its legitimacy on the intensity of its meaningful presence in a continuous body of bounded territory. It works by policing its borders, producing its people (Balibar 1991), constructing its citizens, defining its capitals, monuments, cities, waters, and soils, and by constructing its locales of memory and commemoration, such as graveyards and cenotaphs, mausoleums and museums. The nation-state conducts throughout its territories the bizarrely contradictory project of creating a flat, contiguous, and homogeneous space of nationness and simultaneously a set of places and spaces (prisons, barracks, airports, radio stations, secretariats, parks, marching grounds, processional routes) calculated to create the internal distinctions and divisions necessary for state ceremony, surveillance, discipline, and mobilization. These latter are also the spaces and places that create and perpetuate the distinctions between rulers and ruled, criminals and officials, crowds and leaders, actors and observers.

Through apparatuses as diverse as museums and village dispensaries, post offices and police stations, tollbooths and telephone booths, the nation-state creates a vast network of formal and informal techniques for the nationalization of all space considered to be under its sovereign authority. States vary, of course, in their ability to penetrate the nooks and crannies of everyday life. Subversion, evasion, and resistance, sometimes scatological (Mbembe 1992), sometimes ironic (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992a), sometimes covert (Scott 1990), sometimes spontaneous and sometimes planned, are very widespread. Indeed, the failures of nation-states to con-

tain and define the lives of their citizens are writ large in the growth of shadow economies, private and quasi-private armies and constabularies, secessionary nationalisms, and a variety of nongovernmental organizations that provide alternatives to the national control of the means of subsistence and justice.

States vary as well in the nature and extent of their interest in local life and the cultural forms in which they invest their deepest paranoias of sovereignty and control. Spitting on the street is very dangerous in Singapore and Papua New Guinea; public gatherings are a problem in Haiti and Cameroon; disrespect to the emperor is not good in Japan; and inciting pro-Muslim sentiments is bad news in contemporary India. The list could be multiplied: nation-states have their special sites of sacredness, their special tests of loyalty and treachery, their special measures of compliance and disorder. These are linked to real and perceived problems of lawlessness, reigning ideologies of liberalization or its opposite, relative commitments to international respectability, variably deep revulsions about immediate predecessor regimes, and special histories of ethnic antagonism or collaboration. Whatever else is true of the world after 1989, there do not seem to be any very reliable links between state ideologies of welfare, market economics, military power, and ethnic purity. Yet whether one considers the turbulent post-Communist societies of Eastern Europe, the aggressive city-states of the Far East (such as Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong), the complex postmilitary polities of Latin America, the bankrupt state economies of much of sub-Saharan Africa, or the turbulent fundamentalist states of much of the Middle East and South Asia, they appear to pose a rather similar set of challenges to the production of neighborhood by local subjects.

From the point of view of modern nationalism, neighborhoods exist principally to incubate and reproduce compliant national citizens—and not for the production of local subjects. Locality for the modern nation-state is either a site of nationally appropriated nostalgias, celebrations, and commemorations or a necessary condition of the production of nationals. Neighborhoods as social formations represent anxieties for the nation-state, as they usually contain large or residual spaces where the techniques of nationhood (birth control, linguistic uniformity, economic discipline, communications efficiency, and political loyalty) are likely to be either weak or contested. At the same time, neighborhoods are the source of political workers and party officials, teachers and soldiers, television technicians and productive farmers. Neighborhoods are not dispensable, even if they are potentially treacherous. For the project of the nation-state, neighborhoods represent a perennial source of entropy and slippage. They need to be policed almost as thoroughly as borders.

The work of producing neighborhoods—life-worlds constituted by relatively stable associations, by relatively known and shared histories, and by collectively traversed and legible spaces and places—is often at odds with the projects of the nation-state.[3] This is partly because the commitments and attachments (sometimes mislabeled "primordial") that characterize local subjectivities are more pressing, more continuous, and sometimes more distracting than the nation-state can afford. It is also because the memories and attachments that local subjects have of and to their shop signs and street names, their favorite walkways and streetscapes, their times and places for congregating and escaping are often at odds with the needs of the nation-state for regulated public life. Further, it is the nature of local life to develop partly in contrast to other neighborhoods, by producing its own contexts of alterity (spatial, social, and technical), contexts that may not meet the needs for spatial and social standardization that is prerequisite for the disciplined national citizen.

Neighborhoods are ideally stages for their own self-reproduction, a process that is fundamentally opposed to the imaginary of the nation-state, where neighborhoods are designed to be instances and exemplars of a generalizable mode of belonging to a wider territorial imaginary. The modes of localization most congenial to the nation-state have a disciplinary quality about them: in sanitation and street cleaning, in prisons and slum clearance, in refugee camps and offices of every kind, the nation-state localizes by fiat, by decree, and sometimes by the overt use of force. This sort of localization creates severe constraints, even direct obstacles, to the survival of locality as a context-generative rather than a context-driven process.

Yet the isomorphism of people, territory, and legitimate sovereignty that constitutes the normative charter of the modern nation-state is itself under threat from the forms of circulation of people characteristic of the contemporary world. It is now widely conceded that human motion is definitive of social life more often than it is exceptional in our contemporary world. Work, both of the most sophisticated intellectual sort and of the most humble proletarian sort, drives people to migrate, often more than once in their lifetimes. The policies of nation-states, particularly toward populations regarded as potentially subversive, create a perpetual motion machine, where refugees from one nation move to another, creating new instabilities there that cause further social unrest and thus further social exits. Thus, the people-production needs of one nation-state can mean

ethnic and social unrest for its neighbors, creating open-ended cycles of ethnic cleansing, forced migration, xenophobia, state paranoia, and further ethnic cleansing. Eastern Europe in general and Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular are perhaps the most tragic and complex examples of such state-refugee domino processes. In many such cases, people and whole communities are turned into ghettos, refugee camps, concentration camps, or reservations, sometimes without anyone moving at all.

Other forms of human movement are created by the reality or lure of economic opportunity; this is true of much Asian migration to the oil-rich parts of the Middle East. Yet other forms of movement are created by permanently mobile groups of specialized workers (United Nations soldiers, oil technologists, development specialists, and agricultural laborers). Still other forms of movement, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, involve major droughts and famines, often tied to disastrous alliances between corrupt states and opportunistic international and global agencies. In yet other communities, the logic of movement is provided by the leisure industries, which create tourist sites and locations around the world. The ethnography of these tourist locations is just beginning to be written in detail, but what little we do know suggests that many such locations create complex conditions for the production and reproduction of locality, in which ties of marriage, work, business, and leisure weave together various circulating populations with kinds of locals to create neighborhoods that belong in one sense to particular nation-states, but that are from another point of view what we might call *translocalities*. The challenge to producing a neighborhood in these settings derives from the inherent instability of social relationships, the powerful tendency for local subjectivity itself to be commoditized, and the tendencies for nation-states, which sometimes obtain significant revenues from such sites, to erase internal, local dynamics through externally imposed modes of regulation, credentialization, and image production.

A much darker version of the problem of producing a neighborhood can be seen in the quasi-permanent refugee camps that now characterize many embattled parts of the world, such as the Occupied Territories in Palestine, the camps on the Thailand-Cambodia border, the many United Nations organized camps in Somalia, and the Afghan refugee camps in Northwest Pakistan. Combining the worst features of urban slums, concentration camps, prisons, and ghettos, these are places where, nonetheless, marriages are contracted and celebrated, lives are begun and ended, social contracts made and honored, careers launched and broken, money made and spent, goods produced and exchanged. Such refugee camps are

the starkest examples of the conditions of uncertainty, poverty, displacement, and despair under which locality can be produced. These are the extreme examples of neighborhoods that are context-produced rather than context-generative. These are neighborhoods whose life-worlds are produced in the darkest circumstances, with prisons and concentration camps being their most barbaric examples.

Yet even these brutal examples only push to an extreme the quotidian ethos of many cities. In the conditions of ethnic unrest and urban warfare that characterize cities such as Belfast and Los Angeles, Ahmedabad and Sarajevo, Mogadishu and Johannesburg, urban zones are becoming armed camps, driven wholly by *implosive* forces (chap. 7) that fold into neighborhoods the most violent and problematic repercussions of wider regional, national, and global processes. There are, of course, many important differences between these cities, their histories, their populations, and their cultural politics. Yet together they represent a new phase in the life of cities, where the concentration of ethnic populations, the availability of heavy weaponry, and the crowded conditions of civic life create futurist forms of warfare (reminiscent of films like *Road Warrior, Blade Runner,* and many others), and where a general desolation of the national and global landscape has transposed many bizarre racial, religious, and linguistic enmities into scenarios of unrelieved urban terror.

These new urban wars have become to some extent divorced from their regional and national ecologies and turned into self-propelling, implosive wars between criminal, paramilitary, and civilian militias, tied in obscure ways to transnational religious, economic, and political forces. There are, of course, many causes for these forms of urban breakdown in the First and Third Worlds, but in part they are due to the steady erosion of the capability of such cities to control the means of their own self-reproduction. It is difficult not to associate a significant part of these problems with the sheer circulation of persons, often as a result of warfare, starvation, and ethnic cleansing, that drives people into such cities in the first place. The production of locality in these urban formations faces the related problems of displaced and deterritorialized populations, of state policies that restrict neighborhoods as context producers, and of local subjects who cannot be anything other than national citizens. In the most harsh cases, such neighborhoods hardly deserve the name anymore, given that they are barely more than stages, holding companies, sites, and barracks for populations with a dangerously thin commitment to the production of locality.

Lest this seem too dark a vision, it might be noted that the very nature of these less pleasant urban dramas drives individuals and groups to more

peaceful locations where they are willing to bring their wit, skills, and passion for peace. The best moments of urban life in the United States and Europe are owed to these migrants who are fleeing places far worse than Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Miami. Yet we know that the production of locality in South-Central Los Angeles, on Chicago's West Side, and in similar parts of large American cities is a highly embattled process.

The third and final factor to be addressed here is the role of mass media, especially in its electronic forms, in creating new sorts of disjuncture between spatial and virtual neighborhoods. This disjuncture has both utopian and dystopian potentials, and there is no easy way to tell how these might play themselves out in regard to the future of the production of locality. For one thing, the electronic media themselves now vary internally and constitute a complex family of technological means for producing and disseminating news and entertainment. Film tends to be dominated by major commercial interests in a few world centers (Hollywood, New York, Hong Kong, Bombay), although major secondary sites for commercial cinema are emerging in other parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa (such as Mexico City, Bangkok, and Madras). Art cinema (partly built on a growing transnational network of film festivals, exhibitions, and commercial auctions) is spread both more broadly and more thinly across the world, but crossover films (such as *Reservoir Dogs*, *The Crying Game*, as well as *Salaam Bombay* and *El Mariachi*) are on the increase.

Television, both in its conventional broadcast forms as well as through new forms of satellite hookup, increasingly leapfrogs the public spaces of cinema viewing and comes into forests of antennae, often in the poorest slums of the world, such as those of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The relationship between film viewing in theaters and on videocassettes in domestic settings itself creates very important changes, which have been argued to signal the end of cinema viewing as a classical form of spectatorship (Hansen 1991). At the same time, the availability of video-production technologies to small communities, sometimes in the Fourth World, has made it possible for these communities to create more effective national and global strategies of self-representation and cultural survival (Ginsburg 1993; Turner 1992). Fax machines, electronic mail, and other forms of computer-mediated communication have created new possibilities for transnational forms of communication, often bypassing the intermediate surveillance of the nation-state and of major media conglomerates. Each of these developments, of course, interacts with the others, creating complicated new connections between producers, audiences, and publics—local and national, stable and diasporic.

It is impossible to sort through this bewildering plethora of changes in the media environments that surround the production of neighborhoods. But there are numerous new forms of community and communication that currently affect the capability of neighborhoods to be context-producing rather than largely context-driven. The much-discussed impact of news from CNN and other similar global and instantaneous forms of mediation, as well as the role of fax technologies in the democratic upheavals in China, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union in 1989 (and since) have made it possible both for leaders and nation-states, as well as their various oppositional forces, to communicate very rapidly across local and even national lines. The speed of such communication is further complicated by the growth of electronic billboard communities, such as those enabled by the Internet, which allow debate, dialogue, and relationship building among various territorially divided individuals, who nevertheless are forming communities of imagination and interest that are geared to their diasporic positions and voices.

These new forms of electronically mediated communication are beginning to create *virtual neighborhoods*, no longer bounded by territory, passports, taxes, elections, and other conventional political diacritics, but by access to both the software and hardware that are required to connect to these large international computer networks. Thus far, access to these virtual (electronic) neighborhoods tends to be confined to members of the transnational intelligentsia, who, through their access to computer technologies at universities, labs, and libraries, can base social and political projects on technologies constructed to solve information-flow problems. Information and opinion flow concurrently through these circuits, and while the social morphology of these electronic neighborhoods is hard to classify and their longevity difficult to predict, clearly they are communities of some sort, trading information and building links that affect many areas of life, from philanthropy to marriage.

These virtual neighborhoods seem on the face of it to represent just that absence of face-to-face links, spatial contiguity, and multiplex social interaction that the idea of a neighborhood seems centrally to imply. Yet we must not be too quick to oppose highly spatialized neighborhoods to these virtual neighborhoods of international electronic communication. The relationship between these two forms of neighborhood is considerably more complex. In the first instance, these virtual neighborhoods are able to mobilize ideas, opinions, moneys, and social linkages that often directly flow back into lived neighborhoods in the form of currency flows, arms for local nationalisms, and support for various positions in highly lo-

calized public spheres. Thus, in the context of the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu extremists on 6 December 1992, there was an intense mobilization of computer, fax, and related electronic networks, which created very rapid loops of debate and information exchange between interested persons in the United States, Canada, England, and various parts of India. These electronic loops have been exploited equally by Indians in the United States standing on both sides of the great debate over fundamentalism and communal harmony in contemporary India.

At the same time, continuing with the example of the Indian community overseas, both the progressive, secularist groupings and their counterparts on the Hindu revivalist side (members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and sympathizers of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Bajrang Dal, sometimes referred to as the Sangh *parivar* or family) are mobilizing these virtual neighborhoods in the interest of political projects that are intensely localizing in India. The riots that shook many Indian cities after 6 December 1992 can no longer be viewed in isolation from the electronic mobilization of the Indian diaspora, whose members can now be involved directly in these developments in India through electronic means. This is not entirely a matter of long-distance nationalism of the sort that Benedict Anderson has recently bemoaned (Anderson 1994). It is part and parcel of the new and often conflicting relations among neighborhoods, translocal allegiances, and the logic of the nation-state.

These "new patriotisms" (chap. 8) are not just the extensions of nationalist and counternationalist debates by other means, although there is certainly a good deal of prosthetic nationalism and politics by nostalgia involved in the dealings of exiles with their erstwhile homelands. They also involve various rather puzzling new forms of linkage between diasporic nationalisms, delocalized political communications, and revitalized political commitments at both ends of the diasporic process.

This last factor reflects the ways in which diasporas are changing in light of new forms of electronic mediation. Indians in the United States are in direct contact with developments in India that involve ethnic violence, state legitimacy, and party politics, and these very dialogues create new forms of association, conversation, and mobilization in their "minoritarian" politics in the United States. Thus, many of those most aggressively involved through electronic means with Indian politics, are also those most committed to efforts to reorganize various kinds of diasporic politics in the cities and regions of the United States. Further, the mobilization of Indian women against domestic abuse, and the collaboration of progressive Indian groups with their counterparts involved with Palestine

and South Africa, suggest that these virtual electronic neighborhoods offer new ways for Indians to take part in the production of locality in the cities and suburbs in which they reside as American teachers, cabdrivers, engineers, and entrepreneurs.

Indians in the United States are now engaged in a variety of ways in the politics of multiculturalism in the United States (Bhattacharjee 1992). This engagement is deeply inflected and affected by their involvement in the incendiary politics of their homes, cities, and relatives in India, and also in other locations where their Indian friends and relatives live and work—in England, Africa, Hong Kong, and the Middle East. Thus, the politics of diaspora, at least within the past decade, have been decisively affected by global electronic transformations. Rather than a simple opposition between spatial and virtual neighborhoods, what has emerged is a significant new element in the production of locality. The global flow of images, news, and opinion now provides part of the engaged cultural and political literacy that diasporic persons bring to their spatial neighborhoods. In some ways, these global flows add to the intense, and implosive, force under which spatial neighborhoods are produced.

Unlike the largely negative pressures that the nation-state places on the production of context by local subjects, the electronic mediation of community in the diasporic world creates a more complicated, disjunct, hybrid sense of local subjectivity. Because these electronic communities typically involve the more educated and elite members of diasporic communities, they do not directly affect the local preoccupations of less educated and privileged migrants. Less enfranchised migrants are generally preoccupied with the practicalities of livelihood and residence in their new settings, but they are not isolated from these global flows. A Sikh cabdriver in Chicago may not be able to participate in the politics of the Punjab by using the Internet, but he might listen to cassettes of fiery devotional songs and sermons delivered at the Golden Temple in the Punjab. His counterparts from Haiti, Pakistan, and Iran can use the radio and the cassette player to listen to what they choose to pick from the huge global flow of audiocassettes, especially devoted to popular and devotional music and speeches.

Different groups of Indians in the United States also hear speeches and sermons from every known variety of itinerant politician, academic, holy man, and entrepreneur from the subcontinent, while these make their American tours. They also read *India West*, *India Abroad*, and other major newspapers that imbricate news of American and Indian politics in the same pages. They participate, through cable television, video, and other

technologies in the steady noise of home entertainment produced in and for the United States. Thus the work of the imagination (chap. 1) through which local subjectivity is produced and nurtured is a bewildering palimpsest of highly local and highly translocal considerations.

The three factors that most directly affect the production of locality in the world of the present—the nation-state, diasporic flows, and electronic and virtual communities—are themselves articulated in variable, puzzling, sometimes contradictory ways that depend on the cultural, class, historical, and ecological setting within which they come together. In part, this variability is itself a product of the way that today's ethnoscapes interact irregularly with finance, media, and technological imaginaries (chap. 2). How these forces are articulated in Port Moresby is different from their articulation in Peshawar, and this in turn from Berlin or Los Angeles. But these are all places where the battle between the imaginaries of the nation-state, of unsettled communities, and of global electronic media is in full progress.

What they add up to, with all their conjunctural variations, is an immense new set of challenges for the production of locality in all the senses suggested in this chapter. The problems of cultural reproduction in a globalized world are only partly describable in terms of problems of race and class, gender and power, although these are surely crucially involved. An even more fundamental fact is that the production of locality—always, as I have argued, a fragile and difficult achievement—is more than ever shot through with contradictions, destabilized by human motion, and displaced by the formation of new kinds of virtual neighborhoods.

Locality is thus fragile in two senses. The first sense, with which I began this chapter, follows from the fact that the material reproduction of actual neighborhoods is invariably up against the corrosion of context, if nothing else, in the tendency of the material world to resist the default designs of human agency. The second sense emerges when neighborhoods are subject to the context-producing drives of more complex hierarchical organizations, especially those of the modern nation-state. The relationship between these distinct forms of fragility is itself historical, in that it is the long-term interaction of neighborhoods that creates such complex hierarchical relations, a process we have usually discussed under such rubrics as state formation. This historical dialectic is a reminder that locality as a dimension of social life, and as an articulated value of particular neighborhoods, is not a transcendent standard from which particular societies fall or deviate. Rather, locality is always emergent from the practices of local subjects in specific neighborhoods. The possibilities for its realization as a structure of feeling are thus as variable and incomplete as the relations among the neighborhoods that constitute its practical instances.

The many displaced, deterritorialized, and transient populations that constitute today's ethnoscapes are engaged in the construction of locality, as a structure of feeling, often in the face of the erosion, dispersal, and implosion of neighborhoods as coherent social formations. This disjuncture between neighborhoods as social formations and locality as a property of social life is not without historical precedent, given that long-distance trade, forced migrations, and political exits are very widespread in the historical record. What is new is the disjuncture between these processes and the mass-mediated discourses and practices (including those of economic liberalization, multiculturalism, human rights, and refugee claims) that now surround the nation-state. This disjuncture, like every other one, points to something conjunctural. The task of theorizing the relationship between such disjunctures (chap. 2) and conjunctures that account for the globalized production of difference now seems both more pressing and more daunting. In such a theory, it is unlikely that there will be anything mere about the local.