

# RENEGOTIATING COMMUNITY

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globalization + autonomy

# RENEGOTIATING Interdisciplinary Perspectives, Global Contexts COMMUNITY

Edited by Diana Brydon and William D. Coleman



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## Preface

# The Globalization and Autonomy Series: Dialectical Relationships in the Contemporary World

THE VOLUMES IN THE Globalization and Autonomy series offer the results from an interdisciplinary Major Collaborative Research Initiative (MCRI) funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). SSHRC set up the MCRI program to provide a vehicle to support larger projects with research objectives requiring collaboration among researchers from different universities and across a range of disciplines. The MCRI on Globalization and Autonomy began in April 2002. The research team involved forty co-investigators from twelve universities across Canada and another twenty academic contributors from outside Canada, including scholars from Australia, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Slovenia, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Drawing on additional funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the project became affiliated with a separate interdisciplinary research team of twenty-eight scholars, the Groupe d'Études et de Recherches Interdisciplinaires sur la Méditerranée (GERIM). GERIM is based in Tunisia and includes members from France, Spain, Jordan, and Lebanon as well. Scholars from the following disciplines participated in the project: anthropology, comparative literature, cultural studies, economics, English literature, geography, history, music, philosophy, political science, and sociology.

The project was conceived, designed, and implemented to carry out interdisciplinary research. We endeavoured to put disciplinary-based theories and conceptual frameworks into dialogue with one another, with a view

to developing new theories and understandings of human societies. Four conditions needed to be met if research were to be done in this way. First, we brought humanities and social science disciplines into a relationship of mutual influence, where perspectives were integrated without subordinating one to another. To achieve this integration, the team agreed on a set of core research objectives informed by existing writings on globalization and autonomy. Members developed a number of research questions designed to address these objectives, and a research plan that would permit them to address these questions in a focused, systematic way. Second, team members individually were encouraged to think inside disciplines other than their own and to respect differences across disciplines in terms of how the object of knowledge is constructed. Third, team members were selected to ensure that the research was carried out using multiple methodologies. Finally, faced with researching the complex relationships involved in globalization, an interdisciplinary approach meant that our work would be necessarily pluri-theoretical. We held to the view that theories would be most effective when, in addition to applying ideas rigorously, their proponents acknowledged the limitations of any particular theoretical perspective and consciously set out to cross boundaries and use other, sometimes seemingly incommensurable, perspectives.

To ensure intellectual integration from the start, team members agreed on this approach at the first full meeting of the project and committed to the following core objective: *to investigate the relationship between globalization and the processes of securing and building autonomy*. To this end, we sought to refine understanding of these concepts and of the historical evolution of the processes inherent in both of them, given the contested character of their content, meaning, and symbolic status.

Given that *globalization* is the term currently employed to describe the contemporary moment, we attempted to:

- determine the opportunities globalization might create and the constraints globalization might place on individuals and communities seeking to secure and build autonomy
- evaluate the extent to which individuals and communities might be able to exploit these opportunities and to overcome these constraints
- assess the opportunities for empowerment that globalization might create for individuals and communities seeking to secure and to build autonomy

- determine how the autonomy available to individuals and communities might permit them to contest, reshape, or engage globalization.

In seeking to address the core objectives for the project, we moved our research in three interrelated directions. First, we accepted that globalization and autonomy have deep historical roots. What is happening today in the world is in many ways continuous with what has taken place in the past. Thus, the burden of a contemporary examination of globalization and autonomy is to assess what is new and what has changed. Second, the dynamics of the relationship between globalization and autonomy are related to a series of important changes in the locations of power and authority. Finally, the globalization-autonomy dynamic plays out in the construction and reconstruction of identities, the nature and value of community, and the articulation of autonomy in and through cultures and discrete institutions. In each of these three areas, the team developed and agreed to answer core questions to provide clear direction for the research. The full text of the questions is available at <http://globalization.mcmaster.ca/ga/ga81.htm>.

Over successive annual meetings of the team, our research coalesced around the following themes: institutions and global ordering; democracy and legitimacy; continuity and rupture in the history of globalization and autonomy; history, property rights, and capitalism; community; culture; the situation and struggles of indigenous peoples; and the Mediterranean region as a microcosm of North-South relations. The researchers addressing these themes tended to be drawn from several disciplines, leading to interdisciplinary dialogue within each thematic group. The themes then crystallized into separate research problems, which came to be addressed by the volumes in the series. While these volumes were taking form, the project team also developed an online publication, the *Globalization and Autonomy Online Compendium* (see next page), which makes our findings available to the general public through research summaries; a glossary of key concepts, organizations, people, events, and places; and a comprehensive bibliography. The ultimate objective of all of these publications is to produce an integrated corpus of outstanding research that provides an in-depth study of the varying relationships between globalization and autonomy.

## **Globalization and Autonomy Online Compendium**

Readers of this volume may also be interested in the *Globalization and Autonomy Online Compendium* (available at [www.globalautonomy.ca](http://www.globalautonomy.ca)). The *Compendium* is a collective publication by the team of Canadian and international scholars who have been part of the SSHRC Major Collaborative Research Initiative that gave rise to the volumes in the Globalization and Autonomy series. Through the *Compendium*, the team is making the results of their research available to a wide public audience. Team members have prepared a glossary of hundreds of short articles on relevant persons, places, organizations, events, and key concepts and have compiled an extensive searchable bibliographical database. Short summaries of the chapters in other volumes of the Globalization and Autonomy series can also be found in the *Compendium*, along with position papers and peer-reviewed research articles on globalization and autonomy issues.

## Acknowledgments

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## Renegotiating Community



## chapter 1

# Globalization, Autonomy, and Community

Diana Brydon and William D. Coleman

*These are things I know  
anonymity, autonomy  
freedom to self-define  
to forget  
to come out  
to escape  
sometimes there is (something I understand)  
no room to negotiate*

— Shani Mootoo, “A Recognition,”  
*The Predicament of Or*<sup>1</sup>

THIS VOLUME DERIVES FROM an interdisciplinary research collaboration between the humanities and the social sciences. Our epigraph, a fragment from a poem by Canadian writer Shani Mootoo, reminds readers that understanding *how* a poem means is as important as determining *what* it means. Community, autonomy, and globalization are concepts that function emotively as well as analytically. This poetic fragment thus reminds readers that different interpretive communities bring different modes of thinking and arguing to the overarching team questions that have generated this volume and the series in which it participates. The poetic fragment shows how each community, to some extent, and always in a contingent fashion, generates its own modes of understanding out of the materials at hand. Reading this poem reminds readers of the relational and affective

dimensions of community, the contradictory emotions it may arouse, and the negotiations it requires around the pressures and satisfactions of belonging associated with community if there is to be room for individual autonomy within it. The poem reminds readers that community is less a given than a relation constantly under negotiation. Our study, like the poem, resists nostalgia for forms of ideal or mythic community that often seem to be revived in conditions of stress. The poem, however, does not consider what may be achieved beyond individual needs through engaging in collective action. In this volume, the affective and individual dimensions of community raised by the poem are placed in relation to the political, economic, and social aspirations of a variety of communities examined through a range of case studies. Our interest falls largely on the extent to which community autonomy may be achievable or even desirable under current conditions of globalization, where contemporary communication and information technologies and economic, social, and political relations are also changing how human beings understand their relations to others.

The poem dramatizes the ways in which claims to a shared community identity may be experienced as either limiting or expanding individual autonomy depending on the circumstances in which they occur. In this poem, the narrator tries to claim an affinity with a stranger based on a shared accent when both are far from the nation with which the accent is associated. But her claim to shared community on this basis is rejected. The narrator recognizes the irony in her desire to form a bond with this stranger in Canada when their paths would not likely have crossed back in Trinidad. Her “anonymity” in Canada, where she has escaped one community and not yet found another, it seems, is experienced as simultaneously alienating and liberating. The increased mobility associated with globalizing trends puts the imagined community of the nation under stress. When rebuffed by the stranger’s terse rejection of her claim to recognition — “You’re Trinidadian!” — with the words “I am Canadian” (Mootoo 2001, 84), the poetic persona produces the meditation that forms the epigraph cited above. The poem concludes with “Sometimes there is ... / no room to negotiate” (ibid., 85). Under contemporary conditions of diaspora, the poem implies, immigrants are likely to experience contradictory desires for communal belonging (to the nation left behind, to the diasporas in which they now live, and to the new country as a whole) that are not easily negotiated but not necessarily entirely exclusive either.

This book is dedicated to expanding the “room to negotiate” for individuals within communities and for communities within larger social

structures. We locate our own investigations within the broad context of what Seyla Benhabib (1992, 70–1), following Jürgen Habermas, terms “communicative ethics,” an understanding of community as formed, in part, through a process of reasoned argument sustained by a commitment to an ongoing moral conversation. Benhabib notes that Habermas often formulates his “insight concerning the intersubjective constitution of self-identity in the language of George Herbert Mead. The ‘I’ becomes an ‘I’ only among a ‘we,’ in a community of speech and action. Individuation does not precede association; rather it is the kinds of associations which we inhabit that define the kinds of individuals we will become” (ibid., 71).

In this book, we address particular instances of the contemporary renegotiations of community in response to various conflicts associated with globalization to interrogate received assumptions about community and autonomy in the hope of renewing their usefulness for changing times. A common thread is our concern with social justice and a view of community as something dynamically created by the engagement of all participants, including those usually considered less powerful actors. Our aim is to take disciplinary specialists out of their silos and into broader scenes of intellectual and ethical belonging, encouraging further thinking about interdisciplinarity-as-community, a move that globalizing processes require. Arjun Appadurai’s sustained attention to what one of his essays terms “grassroots globalization and the research imagination” (2000) has proved an inspiration for our project. According to Appadurai, imagination “allows people to consider migration, resist state violence, seek social redress, and design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across boundaries” (ibid., 6). Our interest falls especially on the felt need to “design new forms of civic association and collaboration,” often across previously established boundaries that mark physical and conceptual territories.

The poem addresses an individual’s response to the conflicting demands and rewards of community, implicitly posing the dilemma described by Zygmunt Bauman in *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*. Bauman argues that “there is a price to be paid for the privilege of ‘being in a community,’” claiming that the “price is paid in the currency of freedom, variously called ‘autonomy’, ‘right to self-assertion’, ‘right to be yourself’” (2001, 4). In claiming that diaspora provides little room to negotiate these contradictory pressures, described by Bauman as staged between “security and freedom” or “community and individuality” (ibid., 5), the poem illuminates what Mootoo terms, in the title of her collection, “the predicament of or.” By recognizing the differences within her original national

community, based on class, gender, and sexual preference as well as race, Mootoo implicitly rejects any framing of the choices between community and individuality as a simple choice between “security and freedom” (2001, 5). Rather, she sees that any calls to community offer both security and freedom on a differential basis. Mootoo’s poem and the collection in which it appears imply the necessity of moving beyond the limited choices framed by thinking within the established terms set for framing “the predicament of or.”

Many of the chapters in this volume also move beyond conventional frames determining “the predicament of or” to investigate the ways in which communities can accommodate differences and operate productively on a variety of scales within changing conditions brought about by globalization. The choices facing individuals in communities need not necessarily be posed in such limited terms, though of course they often are. Some of our authors find alternative definitions of community as inherently or at least potentially based on reciprocity rather than homogeneity and on affiliation rather than identity. These alternative definitions challenge the assumptions about human personhood and autonomy that ground the idea that community can only be achieved at the expense of the individual. We also consider the challenges and limits to collective action faced by communities in situations where collective autonomy is threatened. It is widely accepted that community has emerged as an important concept in globalization studies, generating a range of responses that may be summarized as often “either celebratory or dismissive” (DeFilippis, Fisher, and Shragge 2006, 673). Recognizing the contributions of each of these streams, our contributors argue that community needs to be understood in more complex ways that challenge some of the assumptions behind each of these models. Our case studies demonstrate that community cannot be theorized without reference to the particular. Community cannot be isolated as a concept from either the market or the state. To this extent, our volume is in dialogue with other volumes in this series that address the roles of institutions, legitimacy, and property. Nor can community be considered as an unproblematized ideal without accounting for how it deals with internal and external differences. To this extent, our volume is in dialogue with the companion volumes that address the autonomy of culture and indigenous peoples within contexts of globalization.

Our volume, then, engages with community studies on a variety of fronts. We recognize, with Jan Fernback (2007, 52), that in many of its current usages community has become a diluted concept, in part because “the

discourse about it tends to be totalizing,” in many spheres it has become a “buzzword,” and its use has been expanded to designate many different kinds of affiliation. We seek to reclaim community for more specific use by presenting case studies that locate our examination of community in interaction with the concept of autonomy. We interrogate definitions of community that depend on defining it solely in relation to a local place, as necessarily relying on relations based on sameness, and as requiring an intimacy of scale. Without idealizing or rejecting community, we ask how community functions within contemporary conditions that sometimes pose it as anachronistic and at other times require that it substitute in providing people with supports that were once provided by other institutions, especially the state. We question the extent to which community-based interventions, defined in such terms, may successfully modify the effects of neoliberal economics. A key issue for globalization scholars working on community remains that of determining in which direction globalizing processes seem to push: toward greater fragmentation of longer-standing communities or toward the formation of communities on a global scale. We see globalization operating on both fronts simultaneously. It may encourage greater diversity of communal identifications based on proliferating identities and identifications. It may also foster a broader awareness of shared circumstances that make the formation of global alliances and the recognition, on a transplanetary scale, of global community all the more urgent. At the same time, it can encourage a narrowing of community identifications based on the rejection of those perceived to be different. For us, these are not necessarily contradictory movements. Each may represent a response to the particular globalizing processes most urgent in a given situation.

Our case studies suggest that autonomy, the capacity for self-determination and the conditions enabling it, cannot be divorced from communal interactions. Communities remain important forms of collectivity for generating trust and feelings of belonging and for enabling humans to engage in collective action toward chosen goals. Furthermore, our studies suggest that communal autonomy remains a high priority for many individuals today. How that autonomy is exercised carries implications not only for the quality of life of an individual community but also for the larger human community brought into closer contact through forces of globalization. Sometimes the autonomy of one group will find itself in conflict with that of others. The autonomy of labour in relation to that of capital or of indigenous peoples in relation to that of their colonizers are relations of power where collective affiliations remain important, but they

are not static. Rather than describe indigenous and labour communities as left behind by globalizing developments or as merely resistant to them, our chapters consider the ways in which they are adapting to such pressures and learning to use them for their own purposes.

### Introducing Our Keywords

The discussion that follows arises from the interplay between our reading of the academic literature developed around globalization, autonomy, and community and the individual research that went into each case study. In undertaking this collaborative project, we have come to recognize that globalizing processes (perhaps especially those resulting from modernity and colonialism) have thrown universalist assumptions about the shared meaning of many central social concepts into question, with the idea of community among those most disputed. In the early years of the twenty-first century, theorists in several disciplines across the human and social sciences are approaching the variable meanings of community, autonomy, and globalization by seizing on the idea of the keyword, as introduced by the English cultural theorist Raymond Williams in an influential text first published in 1976 and revised by Williams in 1983 (published in 1985). In trying to understand the changing meanings attached to the word *culture* in the mid-twentieth century, Williams realized that, in addition to carrying histories of changing usages into their current employment, certain words assumed significance in clusters of relations. When examined in historical and cultural contexts, they might be understood to operate somewhat like keys to unlock the doors of perception. In other words, the available vocabulary constitutes a particular framework for seeing and thus understanding the world; it can also be used to open up issues or problems to new kinds of questions. With the rise of the Internet and search tools such as Google, the keyword assumes renewed importance in influencing and possibly determining how certain communal relations, framed through concepts such as globalization and autonomy, are perceived and hence how choices may be framed in the future.

Our first keyword is *globalization*. Like both autonomy and community, but in a more expansive and public way, this term has become part of daily life in the mass media and a common part of the discourse of politicians, corporate executives, social movements, and a wide range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Whether invoked publicly or privately, it carries a strong emotive content, signalling a position in major debates

of the day, whether to liberalize trade further, to accept that environmental warming is real, to resist Western cultural influences, to give life to human rights for women, or to detect the legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Academics are participants in these debates and conflicts. They also observe these usages and try to understand their meanings and why they are being used in the ways they are. They also analyze the discourses involved to understand better what is being referenced and meant by globalization. Some look at political, cultural, economic, or other social processes through the lens of the global, questioning whether these processes are, in fact, globalizing ones. Others question any stark opposition between the local and the global, arguing instead that conventional borders are becoming blurred through globalizing processes. As Saskia Sassen argues, for example, subnational scalings may be viewed “as components of *global* processes, thereby destabilising older hierarchies of scale and conceptions of nested scalings” (2006a, 120). While Mulrennan’s chapter in this volume shows how local communities may exploit such changes in nested scalings to enhance collective autonomy, Russell, Preston, and Nyers reinforce this point in order to caution that the local cannot be conceived of in any singular way: it may be constituted by competing versions of community and autonomy that complicate any simple conflation of the geospatial with the communal.

*Community* in its contemporary usage provides a good example of these blurrings of scale. It was once seen to designate a small social grouping operating on a local scale that often assumed face-to-face contact. This meaning has not disappeared but has been extended to designate imagined forms of relation within larger social structures. Theorists such as Benedict Anderson (1983) use it to designate the space of the nation. More recently, others have reinvented the term to describe transplanetary affiliations of people who share a sense of belonging, for whatever designated reason (professional, environmental, political), to a community that spans the globe. In this respect, these communities can go directly from the local to the global or vice versa. Sassen (2002, 371) observes that “today’s re-scaling dynamics cut across institutional size and across the institutional encasements of territory produced by the formation of national states.”

These various activities have led academic authors to ask the question what is globalization? As often occurs, however, we find that there are many answers. Still, the word *global* can be counterposed to “national,” “regional,” or “local” and given meaning in this way, even when, as Sassen (2006a) suggests, such boundaries may then require blurring. In this volume, Mulrennan shows how certain communities may operate in nested

fashion across these various scales without collapsing the distinctions among them. Jan Aart Scholte (2005) offers that the word *global* might be profitably understood as referring to phenomena that are “transplanetary.” In this reading, globalization refers to processes, specifically the spread and growth of transplanetary connections between people (ibid., 59). This growth might take place in the economic, political, cultural, migration, military, or other realms. Clearly, this growth is uneven. As Arif Dirlik (2001, 16) writes, “not only are large parts of the world left out of those processes, but even in those parts of the world that are included in the processes, the processes appear as pathways in networks of one kind or another that leave untouched or even reduce to marginality significant surfaces of what is implied by the term *global*. The global therefore is something more than national or regional, but it is by no means descriptive of any whole.” Chapters by O’Brien; Webb and Young; Cook; Schagerl; and Slemmon make this point in particular ways, stressing the unevenness of what passes for the global in different contexts.

Nor is there anything inevitable or necessary about this growth. Transplanetary connections have been growing for centuries if not millennia. Even if we look back only a century, we note that the last half of the nineteenth century and the first fourteen years of the twentieth were characterized by accelerating growth in transplanetary connections, albeit connections mediated by nation-states and imperial powers, in most areas of social life. After the First World War, however, these connections shrank or were abruptly ended by economic, political, and other actors to the point that the levels of human migration and of economic interdependence at the end of the nineteenth century would not be seen again until the 1980s (Bairoch 2000; Bordo, Eichengreen, and Irwin 1999; Hirst and Thompson 1999). Similarly, more recent events such as the attacks on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 or the collapse of the Doha Round trade negotiations lead many to ask, “Is globalization over?”

Most observers, even those who are skeptical, do allow, however, that the growth of transplanetary connections has accelerated in the period following the Second World War and particularly since the late 1970s. There are varying explanations for this acceleration. At the heart of most of them is the continued dynamism of capitalism coupled with the innovations in information and communication technologies that have permitted transplanetary connections to become more “supraterritorial,” to use a common term, and they are less bound by the physical locations or the nation-state boundaries within which people live. These technologies have

permitted more connections to become planet wide, and the growth of these connections has meant that they intrude more into the daily lives of more persons than before (with Dirlik's caveats noted above) and that they are quickly made (Held et al. 1999). Scholte (2005, 61) refers to transworld simultaneity (they extend anywhere across the planet at the same time) and transworld instantaneity (they move anywhere on the planet in no time). While accepting such a view, Habib cautions in this volume that Internet sites are still located and managed from a particular local site, which influences the perspectives and emphases of the content, even when conceived in the context of a global struggle.

These new forms of planetary connections and their consequences are only now beginning to be understood. Economists argue that they appear to make financial crises more severe and more difficult to overcome. Wars such as the US invasion of Iraq, the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, and the civil war in Sri Lanka tend quickly to become global spectacles, leading Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004) to coin the term "global civil wars." Others suggest that imaginations are expanded by these changes. Roland Robertson (1992,8) refers to "an intensification of consciousness of the world" or increasing globality in many societies, where globality refers to the consciousness of the world as one place. Appadurai comes at the same issue differently and speaks of a changing role for the imagination. He suggests that, under present globalizing conditions, particularly the global movement of people and electronic media, imagination becomes a social practice, "a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility" (1996, 31). In this understanding, individuals place themselves in a world context and are more likely to imagine themselves doing new things in different ways. In this volume, Schagerl and Slemon deal most directly with particular types of a global imaginary, in ways that caution against too enthusiastic an embrace of its potential for enhancing a broadly based autonomy.

This analysis of transplanetary and the emphasis on supraterritoriality highlight the emphasis on changes in the structures of spaces in these discussions of globalization. There is a danger in such an emphasis to overlook another key phenomenon, that of place. For our purpose of seeking an understanding of community and autonomy, the relationship between globalization and place is a crucial one. The literature has tended to equate the global with space, capital, history, and agency and the local with place, labour, and tradition (Escobar 2001a, 141). Manuel Castells' (1996) distinction between "spaces of flows" and "spaces of places" reflects this kind of

emphasis. This tendency is unfortunate because it privileges the powerful when it comes to agency and can lead to misunderstanding how communities are changing with globalization and what these changes might mean for their vitality and their survival.

Dirlik (2001) argues that behind this thinking is an imperfect understanding of the scalar terms “global” and “local.” This binary, global-local, is seen to parallel the space-place one. The emphasis in globalization studies has been to argue that the local cannot be conceived without reference to the global. But the reverse is also true: “The global cannot exist without the local which is the location for its producers and consumers of commodities, not to speak of transnational institutions themselves” (ibid., 29). Dirlik adds that, “instead of assigning some phenomena to the realm of the global and others to the realm of the local, it may be necessary to recognize that in other than the most exceptional cases these phenomena are all both local and global, but that they are not all local and global in the same way” (ibid., 30).

This argument against asymmetry in the relations between global and local scales extends to how we then understand a second keyword, *place*. Arturo Escobar (2001a, 140) defines place as “the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however unstable), sense of boundaries (however permeable), and connection to everyday life.” Groundedness refers not to an immutable fixity but to a link to topography and to socio-cultural practices. People build boundaries around this topography and these practices, albeit often permeable ones. In these respects, as Escobar notes, places are constructed whether by people’s work, their narratives, or their movements (ibid., 147). What is important here is that these constructions are not solely determined by capital or global forces, although these factors will affect placebuilding through the political economy of work in particular and through changing patterns of consumption and the routines of daily life. The cultural construction of identities, subjectivities, and differences can lead to forms of agency that challenge the global, if not change it. Wendy Harcourt (2001, 301) writes, “the politics of place deliberately challenges the sense of polarity between local and global — as if the local is here and the global far away. Instead it positions the global as very closely mapped onto the local. People live with the global in their own lives and indeed shape the global at the local level.” How people shape the global through community action in places is a major theme of this volume.

Part of this process includes place-based challenges to how globalization unfolds. The new information and communication technologies permit

what Escobar (2001a, 144) refers to as the “concatenation” of places, networks of places tied into struggles to reshape global spaces. Harcourt (2001) emphasizes the importance of these networks of places in her analysis of women’s struggles against domestic violence and poor health care. Women become “networkers” and “netweavers” in place-based politics linked in cyberspace. This “place-based politics ties localities into a global network society, redefining possibilities for women’s sense of self, position in the community, and access to the public arena and decision-making venues” (ibid., 320). Escobar makes similar points in analyzing the place-based politics of indigenous peoples in South America.

The growth of transplanetary connections, some of them supraterritorial, and the changing constructions of places in response to and in the reshaping of those connections have direct relevance to community. Historically, communities formed in places that, in turn, often became defined by those communities. The experience of location, with a measure of groundedness and boundaries, helped to foster the communication and imagining needed to develop the sense of belonging that is central to community. Admittedly, the resulting isomorphism between community and place could also end up reinforcing inequalities and oppressions internal to those places, and colonization often added another layer of oppression to such dynamics. Just as globalizing processes change the politics of place making as noted above, they also challenge these isomorphisms. New means of communication, coupled with the expanded potential of the social imagination noted by Appadurai above, open alternative avenues for constructing and grounding senses of belonging. The sense of proximity, what is “nearby,” changes in that it can grow out of the “networking of social relations across large tracts of time-space, causing distant events and powers to penetrate our local experience” (Tomlinson 1999, 9). In short, the opportunities for networking, netweaving, and the concatenation of places that come for some with contemporary globalization may provide a base for communicative processes shaping “new cultural codes of belonging” (Delanty 2003, 191). Accordingly, changing forms of place making lead to new politics of places, which permit the imagining and constructing of new communities or the reconstructing of old ones. They also provide new opportunities for rethinking autonomy and the relations it involves.

In asking what is at stake in understanding community in relation to globalization, we have chosen to focus on the problematic philosophical concept of *autonomy*, our third keyword. Autonomy, as the capacity for self-determination, has emerged as a particularly contentious site

for understanding globalization and community in recent years. Within some contexts in a local form, it may also appear as a practical solution to the threatened disintegration of multicultural states. James Stacey Taylor concludes that “these are exciting times for both autonomy theorists and all who draw upon the concept of autonomy” (2005, 3). Many are now concluding that autonomy seems to be the value most at stake within such contentious areas as disputed political concepts of democracy, citizenship, and personhood; within disputed cultural concepts of communitarian, identity, and minority politics and associated notions of civil society and the public sphere; and within philosophical discussions ranging from moral philosophy to applied ethics. For Ranabir Samaddar, “we find in the problematic of autonomy, the congealed presence of several outstanding elements impinging on the present politics of dialogue, namely, the minority question, the issue of self-determination, globalization, and the twin strands of rights and justice” (2004, 108–9). The individual case studies that follow investigate each of these issues. Unpacking that “congealed presence” within the problematic of autonomy occupies many recent studies within a variety of fields. In locating itself within the triangulated sphere of globalization, autonomy, and community, our volume makes room to negotiate across the disciplinary divisions that tend to address these questions in isolation from one another.

Whereas globalization and community are part of an everyday vocabulary, autonomy remains a more specialized term that has not yet entered the vocabulary of keywords. Still, the concept signals major areas of concern within globalization studies. As Kwame Anthony Appiah argues, “to have autonomy, we must have acceptable choices” (2005, 30). In other words, the conditions in which a person or collectivity can exercise autonomy appear to be changing, partially as an effect of living in an interconnected world. The nature of the choices afforded by globalization is one of the main bones of contention between those satisfied with existing trajectories of globalization and those seeking alternative pathways through different processes. For many, autonomy, choice, and agency are what seem to be at stake in globalization. Many believe that, while globalization threatens community and national autonomy (usually understood in terms of self-governance and cultural distinctiveness), globalization simultaneously enables certain forms of individual autonomy. This point is probably made most clearly in the chapters by Cook and Schagerl, which address the ways in which global mobility might enhance the ability of some women to gain increased personal autonomy, either individually or as part of an imagined

community. The majority of chapters in this volume explore the ways in which individual and communal autonomy may be self-reinforcing. The question posed in a recent article, “Who deserves autonomy, and whose autonomy deserves respect?” (Beauchamp 2005), reminds us, however, of the deeply evaluative nature of most uses of autonomy and their embeddedness within hierarchical systems of power.

Since autonomy is used to describe the self-government exercised by individuals and by the groups they form, it is not always easy to determine which form of autonomy should take precedence. When the nation-state was believed to constitute the main form of group identity, individual and community autonomy could be seen as co-constitutive — that is, as shaping and complementing one another, but only by bracketing the needs of women and racialized groups within the polity. As globalizing processes have led to changes in the functions of the nation-state, other forms of collective identity (some new but many previously repressed) have emerged to claim autonomy, both within and beyond the nation-state on the international scene. Negotiating these autonomy demands places pressure on how a community constitutes itself and understands its limits. Thus, changes in how communities understand their boundaries both contribute to what we call globalization and are affected by it.

In this volume, we explore these kinds of changes by looking at the experiences of a variety of existing and mostly self-identified communities to evaluate claims about how globalization, autonomy, and community work in the world today, within the interscalar range from the local to the global or the global to the local. Using a case study approach developed from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, contributors to this volume have worked collaboratively to create a collective transdisciplinary analysis of the ways in which a variety of communities exercise, enhance, or find their autonomy limited in relation to different globalizing pressures. Our interest lies in following John Dunn’s lead in considering to what extent autonomy might be used as a metric for judging social achievement under globalization (2003, 59–60). As he argues, “it remains a question of the keenest interest how far globalization has in practice enhanced the autonomy of different groups of human beings, and how far such gains in autonomy as it has delivered have been applied in practice for the advantage or disadvantage of other human beings” (ibid., 53). In seeking to answer this question, we examine the pressures that globalization may place on community autonomy and the ways in which that autonomy may be exercised to influence globalization.

Globalization may well claim to be the dominant keyword for explaining, justifying, or opposing economic and cultural change in the late twentieth century. In this context, notions of community may more often be invoked to describe ways of life once valued and now threatened by globalizing processes. Nonetheless, the rhetoric of globalization has also been skilful in reinvoking community in various, sometimes contradictory, ways, leading critics such as Iris Marion Young (1990) to question its utility for a transformative politics in contemporary conditions and Arjun Appadurai (2006a, 7) to cite Philip Gourevitch's reminder, in relation to Rwanda, that "genocide, after all, is an exercise in community-building." Whereas Williams could conclude in 1976 that "unlike all other terms of social organization (*state, nation, society*, etc.) [community] seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term" (66), such is no longer the case today. Philosophers such as Jean-Luc Nancy (1991, 2000) and Giorgio Agamben (1993, 1998) argue that the histories of fascism and communism require a fundamental rethinking of the kinds of investment in community that these ideologies represented. Chapters by Schagerl and Slemon revisit Williams' claim to query his idealization of community from the perspective of postcolonial critique. We conclude that *community*, our fourth keyword, has both defenders and attackers among a variety of old antagonists, so that it cannot be seen as the property of either traditionalists or iconoclasts, of either the left or the right. Our interest in this collection, however, is less in considering community as a normative ideal and more in describing its manifestations and how it functions in relation to globalization and autonomy.

In 2004, J. Hillis Miller revisited Williams' work to conclude that "assumptions about individuality and inter-subjectivity largely determine one's ideas about community. Williams's community is only one possibility within a wide spectrum of recent concepts of community. These concepts are incompatible" (16). That sense of incompatibility among alternatives, rather than a universal consensus about value and meaning, seems to characterize our current global moment. As Perin Matteo explains, "Nancy's thought of existence makes it impossible to think about human beings in the individualistic terms of a doctrine of natural law" (2005, 335-6), a direction that challenges understandings of autonomy as "individualistic freedom" or total independence. When the autonomy of one community is achieved at the expense of another, evaluative decisions must be made on the basis of other criteria. How to legitimate these criteria remains a complex question. While Miller is correct in identifying community

as a complex terrain of contemporary dispute, he evades rather than addresses the issue by shifting the grounds that determine community back onto another set of terms, individuality and intersubjectivity. These terms, however, are just as problematic and in turn may be said to rely on implied concepts of community or social justice for their own constitution. Appiah, like Miller, assumes that in the final analysis individuality trumps community. He argues that “we should defend rights by showing what they do for individuals — social individuals, to be sure, living in families and communities, usually, but still individuals” (2005, 72). But communities need not be constituted solely through the logic of individual rights thinking assumed by Appiah. Despite the confidence of such claims, common sense about individuals as the primary category and rights as the primary value is itself a historical and possibly culturally specific development. It is questioned on many fronts, including within major branches of philosophical, indigenous, feminist, literary, and postcolonial theory (Barclay 2000; Herz 2004; Matteo 2005). Certain feminist theorists are arguing for the necessity of refiguring autonomy in relational terms. Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (2000, 4) employ “relational autonomy” to designate “a range of related perspectives” premised on the “conviction that persons are socially embedded and that agents’ identities are formed within the context of social relationships and shaped by a complex of intersecting social determinants, such as race, class, gender, and ethnicity.” Their focus on the intersubjective dimensions of selfhood and identity is questioned in turn by philosophers working within deconstructive traditions.

Such contemporary philosophers have begun to theorize sociality (understood as the tendency of human beings to form social groups) beyond dependence on identity, individuality, or intersubjectivity in ways that carry major implications for how we understand autonomy and community. Giorgio Agamben (1993, 1998), Maurice Blanchot (1988), and Jean-Luc Nancy (1991, 2000, 2007) have contributed to current thinking about how alternative forms of collectivity and an alternative politics might be imagined. Best known among the attempts to work through some of the implications of their work is Hardt and Negri’s influential perspective on globalization through the conceptual lens provided by their ideas of empire (2000) and multitude (2004). Many critics of Hardt and Negri concur with Gary Hall (2007, 73) when he concludes that they “are conspicuously unable to answer the question in *Empire* as to how any such synthesis between commonality and singularity can be achieved.”<sup>2</sup> This is not necessarily a defect, however, because it involves thinking about dialectics

differently and seeing that it is “the disparate, indefinite, open nature of collective struggle in Empire” that “gives politics its ‘chance,’ as well as ‘a chance to change’” (ibid., 73). In the characteristic language of this school of thinking, “it’s a process of ‘synthesizing without synthesis’, unification without unity, ‘community without community’” (ibid.). Nonetheless, the difficulty of translating such insights into action remains. Hardt and Negri are not alone in finding themselves caught between older ways of thinking and the emergent new. What “community without community” could mean in practice is a challenge currently engaged more extensively in theory than in practice, although the unhappiness with traditional concepts of community signalled through this phrasing and the concomitant utopian investments in a “coming community” (Agamben 1993) characterize many elements within the activist community associated with the World Social Forum.

Our study puts this kind of questioning and resituating of community (most evident in chapters by Nyers and Slemon) into dialogue with theorizations of community that derive from other intellectual traditions, including those from indigenous communities. Joanne Barker’s thoughtful introduction to her edited collection, *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination* (2005), explains the historical and contemporary logic behind the strategic deployment of discourses of sovereignty by many indigenous nations in their quest for collective self-determination. As she explains, “the *making ethnic* or *ethnicization* of indigenous peoples has been a political strategy of the nation-state to erase the sovereign from the indigenous” (16). Such an effort, by collapsing “indigenous peoples into minority groups” (17) or communities, tends to deny indigenous peoples their right to autonomy — that is, the right to speak for themselves in terms established by themselves. For such reasons, indigenous theorists remain wary of the trap of describing themselves through Western concepts while insisting on their right and their ability to adapt and redefine such terms for their own purposes. Chapters by Russell and Mulrennan elaborate these negotiations in contemporary global contexts.

As Marie Battiste points out in her introduction to her edited collection, *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (2000, xx), attention to indigenous knowledge enables those trained in other traditions to perceive both “the singularity of Eurocentric thought” and the dominance of its “prevailing authority.” Aboriginal views of relationality, which “assert that all life is sacred and that all life forms are connected” (Henderson 2000,

259), challenge European-derived views of the autonomous and individuated self as a form of being existing in tension with community.

In basing our approach to community on a foundational respect for the autonomy of all persons and collectivities engaged in larger systems of communal interaction, we are explicitly embracing an approach quite different from that articulated by advocates of community cohesion as a new framework for approaching race, culture, and diversity (see Cantle 2005) and different as well from communitarians who see advocating community as implying a moral choice (see Etzioni 1995, 1996). As Jon Burnett (2007, 117–18) notes, the community cohesion approach often relies on simplistic premises with roots in earlier imperialist assumptions about civilizational superiority and inferiority, leading it to embrace its own “civilising mission” and to “mistakenly pit diversity against solidarity.” Social cohesion theory has been used within neoliberal discourse to deny difference and thus to deny the need for or the value of renegotiating community. Our approach, on the contrary, charts a more complex route but one that holds more promise for thinking and enacting community without enforcing hierarchized forms of homogenization or invoking a specific nationalist or moral agenda. Rather than placing community in opposition to globalizing fragmentations, as these discourses tend to do, this study examines the ways in which communities renegotiate their identities and their functions within changing global circumstances, sometimes finding new ways to cooperate across differences and forging new alliances and sometimes solidifying older patterns of exclusion.

Recognizing the need to reconfigure the relation between autonomy and community in contemporary times, Benhabib (2004, 217) asks, “how can democratic voice and public autonomy be reconfigured if we dispense with the faulty ideals of a people’s homogeneity and territorial autochthony?” The chapters in this volume suggest that we should not so readily assume that the notion of a people’s homogeneity is necessarily linked to territorial autochthony — that is, to notions of belonging by virtue of birth or origin only. Increasingly, analysts are finding such ideals either flawed or insufficient for describing community, even indigenous community, in global times. For those of us working in settler colonies in particular, it is important to look more closely at exactly what territorial autochthony might entail. From the perspective of the world’s indigenous peoples, territorial autochthony and a responsibility for and to place are not necessarily coupled with assumptions about homogeneity. They may well prove compatible with the kind of “vision of *just membership*” that Benhabib advocates (ibid., 3).

We cannot resolve these questions here. Even among ourselves, we work within scholarly traditions that frame the very terms of this discussion differently. Where we do agree is that debates around community constitute the moment when autonomy becomes useful for understanding how self-consciousness, self-determination, solidarity, and sociality are being reconfigured as the world globalizes.<sup>3</sup> In this volume, some contributors focus on the ways in which the process of community building involves the simultaneous exercise and production of autonomy, whereas others are more interested in the ways in which community autonomy may be strengthened and instrumentalized to realize common goals.

### **Our Structure and Its Argument**

We employ the first-person plural throughout this introduction because the collaborations across disciplines in which we have been engaged for the past four years have not only encouraged us to think about communities but also contributed to a growing sense that we ourselves have now formed a particular type of interdisciplinary community. The work has become collective, and we have been changed in the process. Several of our chapters are written in the first person, a mode that is common to some of our disciplinary practices and uncommon to others. We maintain it here because to our way of thinking it reinforces the importance of situatedness, the place (multiply constituted by different communal involvements) out of which a perspective emerges. It is important that each contributor situate his or her work within at least two perspectives, that of his or her individual discipline and that of the interdisciplinary negotiations of the interplay of autonomy, community, and globalization that have structured our collaboration. Each contributor needs the space to nuance his or her differences in the approaches taken to these questions, thereby enriching the contribution of the whole. Each chapter renegotiates the terms of encounter, resets the terms of discussion, and readjusts the lens for seeing, thereby adding to the nuances of our text when read across disciplines and a range of approaches.

The volume is divided into two complementary parts that recognize the embeddedness of different communities within larger structures and the ways in which they are both shaped by them and may play a role in influencing them. Our first section, "Global Capitalism and Community Renewal," attends to the economic dimensions of globalization as experienced on the ground in a variety of localized communities. Our

second section, “Building Transnational Communities,” focuses on the political and cultural dimensions of globalization across a range of scales. These dimensions include global negotiations across differences of place and in response to global flows. The contributors recognize that economics and culture interact. Furthermore, the historical legacies of colonialism and communal deterritorialization emerge as unifying themes across these divisions. Each chapter approaches the problematic of globalization, autonomy, and community in a singular way that has been developed in close dialogue with the others to reveal the tensions at play within this dynamic as it is currently understood.

Opening Part 1 are three chapters examining indigenous place-based communities that are engaging globalization on terms grounded in their histories. These chapters use indigenous cases to make important points about the complexities and dynamism of communities and their interactions with larger state, policy, and corporate processes. These communities do not function as “anachronistic remnants yet to be fully engaged by globalization” (Russell, page 34, this volume), as often assumed. Instead, these communities (often perceived as only traditionally rooted) are globally linked through relations of conflict, collusion, and negotiation on a variety of scales. These chapters support Colin Scott’s (2001, 4) assertion that, “as Aboriginal societies elaborate strategies for autonomous development within myriad contexts, usually against daunting odds, they are actively challenging and revising commonplace theories about the necessities inherent in mass market economies and state monopolies of power.” Wendy Russell and Dick Preston look at two northern Canadian communities based on opposite sides of James Bay, the challenges they face, and how they are addressing them. Russell argues that, when place is denied its relevance under the pressure exerted by global diamond mining in the late twentieth century, there are consequences for the operations of autonomy. These consequences are still being worked out. Russell recognizes two types of community interacting in the Nishnawbe Aski region of her field research: first, communities defined as traditional constellations of residential groups based on the sharing of resources; second, communities functioning as regional artifacts of the colonial era created for control of the people. These contrasting experiences of community, which map different relations onto the land in question, are both in play as the territory is opened to capital development. At this stage, it is not clear to what extent the conditions exist for successfully achieving autonomy in conformity with indigenous notions of reciprocal community.

Preston, in contrast, focuses on a particular Cree community's reinvention of itself and the development of the notion of Cree citizenship through gestalt practices. He sees the Nemaska band story as an example of best practices that succeeded, largely because conditions enabling autonomy were present in their case at the time they made their own choice to relocate. With the resources and support to undertake a community consultation and the power to elect their own leaders, they were successful in imagining a new social scale of autonomy in concordance with their values. They were able to transform their sense of identity and cohesion through the collective performance of community that took place through their managed community consultation. What the future holds as leaders change and new challenges emerge cannot be predicted, however, as community autonomy must be continually re-enacted.

Monica Mulrennan considers the social and political dynamics involved in community-based conservation (CBC), especially as manifested through the experiences of the small island of Erub in the eastern Torres Strait. Building on the work of Russell and Preston, she argues that recognition of nested and intersecting levels and scales of community has major implications for community-based conservation. Understanding the links between resource conservation and the larger political agendas of indigenous communities can provide much-needed perspective on their roles in CBC. Like Russell and Preston, Mulrennan is concerned that the complexity of the local remains understated, with potentially negative implications for local autonomy and with reduced opportunities for scientists and policy makers to gain insights from local models. She reminds readers that indigenous communities are making substantial strides in the strategic use of globalizing discourses and networks (i.e., enhancing their autonomy). At the same time, she cautions that "community" is not a preferred category for indigenous representatives in domestic or UN settings, where "nation" is often the preferred term for achieving external recognition of group sovereignty and its associated autonomy. Our book begins with three indigenous, place-based communities and a relatively intimate scale to challenge romanticized versions of indigenous community while complicating understandings of how local rootedness, historical memory, and attachment to place may operate under a variety of global, market, and state pressures.

The following two chapters consider new communities that arose in the face of duress as a result of the stress and crisis created by an emergency in which people felt compelled to stand their ground, in part, because

they had few options. As such, they fit some of Peter Baehr's criteria for a "community of fate" (2005). Baehr argues that such a community must be distinguished from Ulrich Beck's risk society. The solidarity that emerges from such a situation must be experienced "as a rupture with the recent past" and with "normal times" (Baehr 2005, 182). Such is the case for the two communities examined here. Scott Prudham examines the quest for social and environmental justice of a local BC NGO, the Youbou TimberLess Society (YTS), formed after the closure of a local mill, when ownership was transferred from one company to another and the workers were abandoned by their province and their union. Amanda White investigates the rise of a new community movement within the traditional community of Galicia, Spain, that arose in response to an oil spill off the Atlantic coast, the kind of environmental disaster that accompanies increased global trade. This community saw itself moving from "servitude to dignity." In each case, the new community that arose in response to a specific crisis of identity dissipated as the context of emergency disappeared.

Prudham's chapter shares with the opening three chapters an interest in how global capital engages resource-dependent communities and the different ways such communities try to respond. For Prudham, the importance of the YTS is the challenge it poses, through its struggle for greater local autonomy, to a global consensus that saw corporate or government responsibility to workers rendered redundant under neoliberal theory. The shifts in self-understanding of this community, as it sought to identify allies in its struggle, highlight the ways in which the search for justice eclipses narrower understandings of self-interest. They remind us of the ways in which "community turns on the ambiguous politics of social claims mobilized in opposition to market self-regulation" (page 101, this volume). This chapter reminds readers of the fragile and provisional character of many communities wrestling with the new challenges of globalization. Similarly, the sinking of the ship *Prestige* examined by White provides the opportunity for local communal autonomy to be debated. Here, a complex process of historical continuity and change shaped public reaction and activist claims within a long-standing framework of ethnic, linguistic, and geographic difference. White's chapter focuses on a historical region as a community; it documents transformations in regional identity due to events and activism related to globalization; and it analyzes the processes of reimagining regional identity within a federal state system itself embedded in the European Union (EU) federation of states. These multiple layerings link forward to later chapters that investigate transnational networks and institutions.

While the preceding chapters address community and autonomy in predominantly resource-based communities undergoing changes due to economic globalization, Peter Nyers addresses migration and the emerging movement of undocumented migrants in Canadian cities. The city has emerged as an important locus for reimagining community under conditions of globalization. Undocumented migrants put pressure on established forms of communal identity such as citizenship, challenging the boundaries drawn between alien, resident, and citizen that fracture unitary conceptions of human rights. Inspired by the International Parliament of Writers global network of autonomous “cities of refuge,” Nyers extends the concept beyond its initial focus on the individual high-profile refugee. He considers the implications for community and autonomy once the “city of refuge” is opened to *masses* of people whose legal status forces them “to live on the borders of belonging.” Once again an argument is made for thinking through the ethical implications of globalization in conjunction with its economic developments. This chapter forms a pivot between the locally grounded communities examined in Part 1 and transnational communities of various kinds examined in Part 2. Nyers addresses the ways in which the boundaries between the local and the transnational are blurring with the movements of people across the globe in search of refuge and work. Their quests for autonomy provoke questions about the nature and political status of the community. As Nyers notes, they carry implications for rethinking the modalities of membership that constitute a community and the potential imagining of “solidarities yet to come.” Like the other chapters in this first section, Nyers considers what happens when global processes appear to move into local communities, changing their dynamics and their self-understandings. Taken as a whole, these chapters demonstrate the ways in which global movement and interaction are changing self-understandings and collective actions across both rural and urban communities in ways that challenge some conventional understandings of the urban/rural divide.

The chapters in Part 2, in contrast, focus on communities organized on broader global, national, or regional scales. This section considers a new set of issues surrounding the building of non-territorial, cross-border communities as sometimes providing new means for the exercise of autonomy. We open with Michael Webb and Patricia Young’s review of some UN-supported transnational women’s movements and global social policy activists, on the one hand, and some women’s and policy activists working within the European Union, on the other. Their comparative review of

these disparate groups helps to clarify the difference between networks and communities and stresses the importance of the process by which activists consciously attempt to build community in the face of difference through dialogue. Like Preston, they stress the importance of dialogue for generating trust and enabling consensus to emerge across differences. Certain transnational women's communities operating with UN support were able to generate such dialogue. Where opportunities for dialogue and a willingness to negotiate are absent, they conclude, networks often fail to gel into fully operative communities. Perhaps their major point is that such transnational networks do not merge into full-fledged communities automatically but often depend on external interventions and policies (e.g., by UN or EU agencies), on processes of development over time, and on the willingness and ability of participants to make a greater personal investment in the process.

Similar issues are noted in Robert O'Brien's chapter, especially in relation to specific developments within the history of the Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights (SIGTUR), a loosely regional labour organization that has made concerted efforts to create community across differences within its diverse membership. The identity of this nascent community entails contradictions in geography, nationality, ideology, organizational forms, producer and consumer interests, and gender so that its efforts to forge community constitute a particularly interesting study. O'Brien frames this discussion within a more generalized analysis of the relationship between globalization and labour autonomy in the post-1945 era. He asks if it is possible that new transnational identities and alliances between workers could compensate for setbacks at the national level. To answer this question, he argues that it is necessary to distinguish between workers in the North and in the South and between protected and unprotected workers. While it is possible to generalize that globalization simultaneously undermines and strengthens labour autonomy, its impact is uneven depending on other factors. In the North, worker autonomy has been undermined by globalization, while in the South some workers experience increased political autonomy but decreased market autonomy. While workers face immense difficulties in addressing globalization, transnational cooperation may help to ameliorate conditions. O'Brien's study of SIGTUR identifies three community-building strategies designed to create an instrumental community with the goal of increasing labour autonomy at the expense of capital or business autonomy. These strategies include running cultural exchanges, devising new symbols and documenting group

experiences, and mounting joint campaigns. These community-building strategies help to compensate for differences within the group without necessarily succeeding in creating the kind of coherence associated with traditional place-based communities.

Jasmin Habib considers the cyberactivism of transnational activist groups in relation to organizing around the Palestinian right to return. She explores how social justice networks may find their projects intersecting with Palestinian communal efforts to remap an erased homeland through the medium of the Internet. In other words, she shows how a territorially based community, when deprived of its land, may reconstitute its identity and its struggle by establishing a global presence on the web and forming a strategic alliance with other transnational activist groups. Importantly, Habib notes the continued emplacement of such globally activist groups, making their performance of virtual community less a non-place (as is sometimes argued by globalization theorists) than the result of practices filtered through multiple webs of interpersonal relations, some of which still derive from place-based interactions. Working within constrained circumstances, the Palestinian community organized around the right to return demonstrates its ingenuity by discovering new ways to expand its autonomy but remains far from achieving the full autonomy that remains the goal of the movement.

The final cluster of three chapters revisits the question of continuities between colonialism, imperialism, and globalization as examined in our opening three chapters. Looking back to the early twentieth century, Jessica Schagerl notes how memberships in communities of the Dominion of Canada and the British Empire were seen as complementary rather than competing identities for women active in the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE). These women showed through their activities that it was possible to stay in Canada but act in awareness of a global consciousness, even though their global consciousness and the organization it developed were in fact quite circumscribed by privileges of class, race, and religion. In examining one of the historical, gender-based communities that preceded the UN-based women's communities studied by Webb and Young, Schagerl considers the ways in which the desire for autonomy of one group of women in a male-dominated society implicitly and sometimes explicitly excluded other communities of women.

In a similar vein, Nancy Cook's chapter demonstrates the ways in which transnational development workers in northern Pakistan near the end of the twentieth century continued to subscribe to a global consciousness

developed under empire, similar to that which had motivated the IODE. In each of these instances, certain Western women gained autonomy through consolidating gendered communities that were implicitly bolstered by racial and class privileges. Their communal autonomy was often implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, maintained at the expense of the autonomy of racialized others. These communities were built around gender, class, and race in ways that compensated for gendered exclusions from public space by capitalizing on racial and class privileges. As a result, the limited autonomy that they achieved seems to be compromised by their inability to imagine a more inclusive community.

In keeping with the volume's skepticism toward many of the dominant assumptions governing celebrations of community in current contexts, Cook's and Schagerl's chapters deny easy generalizations that might see women's community building as liberating for everyone or transnational communities as escaping the historical problems of place-based ones while remaining attentive to the genuine needs that community can meet. Stephen Slemon's chapter similarly balances recognition of the investments individuals make in community with a critique of its more problematic dimensions. Slemon concludes the volume by analyzing the international mountaineering community as a "brotherhood of the rope." This chapter extends Cook's and Schagerl's focus on gender-specific communities constituted through class privilege to analyze the homosociality of mountaineering, as it has developed from imperial times into the global present, including its imbrication in contemporary capitalist commodity culture. His chapter spans the twentieth century to show how a gendered mountaineering community arose in conjunction with British imperialism and has since been transformed through global capital. He asks three questions: (1) Why is it that mountaineering produces representative "heroes" who can never represent "the mountaineering community"? (2) Why does it go into panic when women, or clients, end up representing the practice? and (3) Why is it that commodity fetishism now stands in for "the mountaineering community" among consumers in the more wealthy countries? Slemon notes the ways in which a community may build itself upon structured disavowals of its material practices and contingent relations to such an extent that its capacity for autonomy in the contemporary period must be questioned. Taken as a whole, these analyses lead us to reframe the terms of debate around globalization, autonomy, and community in ways that resist setting globalization in simple opposition to either community or autonomy.

## Conclusion

The chapters in this volume investigate the ways in which communities can operate productively on a variety of scales and they identify some of the obstacles preventing the exercise of communal autonomy in global times. We show how overly simplistic notions of the local and of community, including romanticized representations, may ignore or misunderstand how communities actually function and what is currently at stake regarding issues of resource use, environmental protection, or democratic practices. Our investigations challenge many of the stereotypes of particular communities that still function in contemporary writing about globalization and community. These include stereotypes of indigenous communities as timeless or trapped in the past, stereotypes of online communities as participating in a virtual reality beyond place, or stereotypes of logging communities as necessarily in conflict with environmental or indigenous groups. The reality is more complicated. We conclude that communities are always being negotiated, both internally and in relation to external forces. Local identities may be redefined, as in the evolution of a community of loggers into a timberless society (Prudham) or the transformation of a marginalized community “from servitude to dignity” (White), but such redefinitions do not necessarily result in increased communal autonomy.

Our contributors examine a range of communities, from those that seem to be integrated and deeply bonded (Russell, Preston) through communities that seem to be more broadly based yet still effective in achieving certain forms of collective agency (O’Brien, Webb and Young) to those that appear to be quite fragile (Cook, Slemon) or no longer tenable (Schagerl). These latter chapters raise the question of how deep such an association must run before it can viably be considered a community. In answering this question, some of our contributors privilege the phenomenological experience of those for whom the relations described generate a meaningful sense of belonging, while others stress the extent to which common goals may be realized through communal action. Some put less stress on the notion that a truly effective community has to be formally organized into a common unit or has to achieve collective agency as long as individuals may attain autonomy within it, while for others collective autonomy is the goal by which a successful community may be judged. We agree, however, that a community, while capable of evolving from traditional forms, remains more than a network.

A network refers to a set of nodes or sites that are in regular communication with one another for functional, strategic, economic, or political reasons. Each node has a certain independence from the other, and communication between nodes can vary from highly frequent to rare, depending on circumstances. The recent developments in information and communication technologies have made it easier for individuals, groups, and communities to form networks and to maintain them at extensive, even global, scales. Examples often cited in globalization studies include contemporary financial markets and women's activism (Sassen 2004, 2006b) and the individuals, organizations, and groups that came together to oppose the Multilateral Agreement on Investment or to support the treaty to ban landmines. After the goals of the network are accomplished, communications become more quiescent between nodes until revived for another financial transaction or political campaign. Such networks could evolve into communities if social relations become more dense, less episodic, and invested with emotive content, including a sense of responsibility and commitment to the goals of the group. In contrast to Sassen's findings, such seems to be the case within the transnational women's movements associated with the United Nations described by Webb and Young.

Our team project is based on the premise that globalization introduces complexities of such magnitude and particularity that an interdisciplinary approach is best suited to understand and address them. As a result, individual chapters engage with the debates of their own disciplines and those that emerged from collaborative work on this volume. These debates crosscut in multiple ways. Our research confirms the prevalent belief that in some ways the idea of community and the values associated with it are currently in transition. Autonomy remains a value, but the conditions in which it might be understood and exercised are changing. The desire for community may be met through a variety of social relations and collective actions. Communities are human creations, capable of renewal and adaptation, and constituted by internal diversity as well as by what lies outside communal boundaries, whether they are defined in cultural, geopolitical, or other terms. Communities are reproduced through the interplay of past, present, and imagined futures. Their renewal or creation involves a mix of cultural values, institutional structures, and communicative practices.

While the relation to place for many communities, old and new, is changing, places remain the sites for the politics of globalization and autonomy engaged in by communities. In this volume, we focus attention

on the changing circumstances in which communities find themselves and the functions that they serve. We ask how communities are formed and sustained in a variety of circumstances and how they are changing in response to global developments. The dimensions of globalization that have emerged as most salient for our studies include cultural movement and belonging associated with increased intensity and extensity of connections enabled by empire or development initiatives, new technologies, institutions such as the United Nations or the European Union, or migration. The formation of transnational connections across previously defined cultural differences or between formerly isolated places based on these dimensions can also become crucial for community building. We have not exhausted the range of influences or the types of community formed through contemporary pressures, but we hope to have shown why such studies remain important for scholars today.

We began this project with an interest in the interplay between individual and collective autonomy. Looking back, we can now see that, when studying community, our focus is usually on collective autonomy: why it is necessary and what it can achieve. For us, how autonomy is negotiated is crucial. We ask: Autonomy for whom? At the expense of whom? Is autonomy negotiated in the name of reciprocity or exploitation? These questions must enter the balance in determining the nature and achievements of autonomy, what it means, and what it can signify for different collectivities. In attending to the full complexity of autonomy in its current usages, contributors to this volume hope to deepen understanding of changing notions of individual and collective agency, as exercised through evolving understandings of community and its relations to civil society, state institutions, and the public sphere. We unpack the notion of community as a monolithic construct by distinguishing among a variety of long-established and emerging forms of community. In rethinking the conventional oppositions between grounded and virtual communities, we suggest that autonomy, too, is evolving as a concept from its Greek roots. Because community as a concept operates pivotally but differentially across the humanities and social science disciplines, we hope that this book may also serve an integrating and reorienting function for the range of groups engaged with community studies, from the most theoretical to the most practical. Although each of the volume's three animating concepts (with place an important fourth component) has individually attracted considerable research attention, we believe that this is the first comparative study to systematically consider the linkages and disjunctures among globalization, autonomy, and community.

## Part 1: Global Capitalism and Community Renewal



## chapter 2

# Globalism, Primitive Accumulation, and Nishnawbe Aski Territory: The Strategic Denial of Place-Based Community

Wendy Russell

GLOBALIZATION IS OFTEN IMAGINED to be happily ungrounded and rootless, and sometimes it may be so. Popular representations of globalization depict a borderless and instantly accessible world or a world of mingling leading toward total convergence. Whether globalization offers global citizens a “shopping mall of cultures” or seamless, homogeneous world unity (Trouillot 2001, 4), space (as literal and imagined distance) is largely rendered irrelevant, in part because we can triumph over the limits of physical distance (with technology) and in part because “we” are all in contact. Here I argue that, in the extension of this triumph over space, places (as specific locations) are thus also rendered irrelevant as they are redefined relative to the imagined global whole. “Place” has a restricted repertoire under the enthusiasms of globalism, that is, and appears only as an imagined point of origin for ideas, bodies, “cultures” — the everything that we imagine getting caught up in global flows (see Tsing 2005). In this chapter, I consider the ways in which place continues to trouble any attempt to imagine such a certain global whole by comparing and contrasting a variety of discursive constructions of the same “place,” the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. As a territory newly opened to a flood of mineral prospecting, the region is simultaneously being reinserted into a global whole as part of various global discourses, specifically as a new resource frontier for capital, as a pristine environment, and as an indigenous and colonized homeland. At the same time, this place is also actively reimagined as a “community” built in the mundane and material acts of immediate daily life, and it is this