

Introduction: Corporate Globalism, Civil Society, and Bioregionalism

Before 11 September 2001, globalization and the global marketplace were already rapidly becoming household words in the advanced industrial consumer societies so often characterized as the “Western world.” Then, on that fateful day, low technology (plastic knives) combined with fanatical human determination struck deadly blows at symbolic (and actual) centres of economic and military power in the most technologically advanced and powerful nation on Earth. Before that horrific 9/11 tragedy, globalization appeared to many as an unstoppable juggernaut. Since that terrible day, which some have named Black Tuesday, the global juggernaut now shows a more vulnerable face. Many fears have surfaced publicly, fears about personal safety, impending social chaos, systematic crackdowns on civil and political rights. Among the deepest fears is perhaps one that has for some time now been nagging us in the dark recesses of our minds: a deep recognition that the singular system of global corporate power and multiple technological wonders is, in fact, very fragile – a house of cards – and strategically dependent on centralized military-industrial organization, Middle Eastern oil, and many other nonrenewable critical mineral resources far distant from major centres of industry and consumption in the Western world.

Does the Western capitalist system as we knew it in the late twentieth century have a viable future? In some ways, 9/11 is a reminder that the dominant global economic order has many vulnerabilities – nuclear war, widespread pollution of air, soil, and water, global warming, ozone layer holes, accelerating loss of habitat, increasing desertification, depletion of groundwater, growing inequality and poverty, abuse of political and economic power, et cetera. Yet, in the face of these and many other severe problems of ecological and social sustainability, world leaders of economic globalism and their neoclassical economic theorists present us with no choice but to continue with globalization. For the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the G-8, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the European Union (EU), the Asia Pacific Economic Council (APEC), the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and other elite institutions and movers and shakers of global capitalism, there is only one possible future: a worldwide order of market-set prices, liberalized trade and finance, privatization, and limited and decentralized government power. This is a program originally inspired by the economics of one of its leading “gurus,” Milton Friedman (1962, 1-6). Whether one supports or opposes this one-world program for the future, one can no longer deny its present reality, a point made in great detail with many examples by William Greider in *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (1997).

In contrast, the principal subject of this book is a little-known social and cultural movement that promises to contribute vitally to civil society-based regional alternatives to that “manic logic.” This social movement is known by the unlikely and somewhat awkward name of bioregionalism. The bioregional movement has been growing slowly but steadily over the past thirty years in the United States and Canada, over the past fifteen years in Mexico, and more recently in Central and South America. There are also expressions of bioregionalism in Europe, Japan, and Australia. This movement of small communities and groups has been quietly growing in spite of the expanding capitalist juggernaut, and it has been unnoticed or ignored in the cultural mainstream (informed by the corporate-controlled media). Although bioregionalism as a movement of people is small and largely unnoticed, bioregional ideas have been adopted in varying degrees by certain jurisdictions from national to regional and municipal such as New Zealand, the State of California, and the City of Toronto.

In the following chapters, one of my goals is to contribute to an understanding that bioregionalism, based on locally and regionally integrated, self-reliant, holistic economies networked through communication and limited trade linkages, offers a crucial contribution toward sustainable, healthy, and sane alternatives to an increasingly unhealthy, unsustainable, and fragile global capitalist monoculture. Over the past twenty years, my own experience has been that, when people first hear about bioregional ideas, a common response is that they make a lot of sense but that they will never work in practice. So my purpose is also to show how the bioregional movement is beginning to carry out its long-term vision through short- and medium-term projects and processes in civil society and public life and in certain lifelong, committed experiments in cultural and social change in both urban and rural settings. An essential aspect of my approach is to show that these projects and processes engender immediate rewards for the participants in the short term as well. By rewards, I mean profound emotional and spiritual experiences that defy the narrow economic vision of

globalism centred on its abstract, neoclassical concept of the economic human being (this concept is explored in Chapter 1).

Globalization and bioregionalism offer two very opposed views of what a sustainable human future might look like, so globalization provides a logical context in which to explore bioregional alternatives. Globalization is now so geographically pervasive that it is inevitably a real-world context for local and regional efforts to build or enhance alternative approaches. Given the immense importance of corporate globalism, the breadth of discourse about it, and the deep opposition between the vision of globalism as a single system on the one hand and place-based bioregional diversity on the other, it is essential to present a clear analytical picture of what I understand by globalization.

In simple terms, globalization centres on the concept of a single global economy in which each region produces only one commodity or a few specialized commodities for the global market. In that sense, it is almost the opposite of a fully developed bioregionalism, which favours a planetary diversity of place-based bioregional economies conservatively and carefully producing and consuming primarily for their own populations' needs and only secondarily for interbioregional trade. Global trade is, of course, a key mechanism for globalization, but trade is only one of many aspects of the process of globalization. Today we hear of global corporations, global cities, global networks and forums, global TV, global monoculture, and even global malls where "global teens" shop for global brand name consumer products such as Nike, Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Benetton, et cetera. As Naomi Klein (2000) has effectively pointed out, such global commodities are increasingly produced in developing countries in "global sweatshops."

So what do I understand as globalization? My understanding of corporate globalization is informed by a range of important critical thinkers within and beyond academic circles. Some have compared the process of globalization to a global machine: "Imagine a wondrous new machine, strong and supple, a machine that reaps as it destroys. It is huge and mobile, something like the machines of modern agriculture but vastly more complicated and powerful – as it goes, the machine throws off enormous mows of wealth and bounty, while it leaves behind great furrows of wreckage" (Greider 1997, 11). Greider's metaphor of a great machine is not new. Over thirty years ago, American man of letters and generalist thinker Lewis Mumford (1970) used the term "the new megamachine" to describe the concentration of industrial and military power that developed during World War II in the United States and then used nuclear weapons on civilian populations. For Greider, the machine metaphor offers a simplified way to visualize the process of globalization. The global megamachine translates as none other than "modern capitalism driven by the imperatives of global industrial

revolution – the drama of a free-running economic system that is reordering the world” (1997, 11). While the megamachine provides a useful and vivid metaphor, I think that a more substantial and structural analysis is necessary to deal with such a huge and daunting phenomenon.

There are those (usually more traditional Marxists) who argue that the term “globalization” is, at best, confusing. The argument is that the process of globalization is not new but merely a continuation of the process of imperialism and capital accumulation on a world scale in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as analyzed by figures such as Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg in the early twentieth century and later updated by Samir Amin and others (see Amin 1974; Galtung 1971; Mies 1986; and Wallerstein 1979). Others, such as Noam Chomsky (1999) and geographer David Harvey (1989, 2000), while certainly not denying earlier imperialist development and a globalized, historical process of capital accumulation, argue that there is something new in the current phase of globalization that merits new analysis. There is also a growing critical discourse among political economists, political scientists, ecological economists, planners, and others involved with rethinking globalization that contributes to this spreading discourse (Aulakh and Schecter 2000; Douglas and Friedmann 1998; Lipschutz 1996; Rees 2002; Schecter 1999).

As someone who has been a longtime radical activist and thinker, as well as a more recently minted critical academic, I share the view that the contemporary process of globalization is rooted in a long period of capitalist development. For this view, I draw especially on the work of Harvey, whose analysis of the historical development of capitalism integrates a strong geographical dimension, one not developed by Marx. Harvey, in contrast, focuses on the uneven geographical dimension of the process of capital accumulation and development and the related process of “creative destruction.”

Throughout his work, Harvey returns to the process of creative destruction engendered by capital accumulation. On the one hand, capitalism is about an extremely powerful, creative process “particularly with respect to technology, organization and the ability to transform material nature into social wealth” (1989, 53). This very success produces huge surpluses that must be consumed if the process of capital accumulation and growth is to continue. Historically (and geographically), this process of consumption occurs in real places – cities and urban regions: “Urbanization has always been about the mobilization, production, appropriation, and adsorption of economic surpluses” (53). Over the past few decades, this drive for consumption has been reflected, in part, in the widespread phenomenon of local “growth machines” that take the form of urban pro-growth coalitions and urban boosterism (Davis 1992; Harvey 1989; Molotch 1976, 1993). In

this view, urban growth machines have become an integral part of the global megamachine, essential to the continued process of capital accumulation and adsorption of surpluses.

Of course, the process of capital accumulation didn't happen in a day. Harvey (1989) takes pains to describe three major periods in the long historical process of capital accumulation leading to the present period at the outset of a new millennium. In the first period, there was primitive and violent accumulation of capital under colonialism, the trade in slaves, and the initial concentration of capital in the mercantile city in the eighteenth century.

In the second period, the capitalist production of surpluses in early-nineteenth-century industrial cities such as Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds represented a shift from the mercantile appropriation of surpluses through trade, monopoly, and military control to the production of surpluses through the command over labour processes. This was, of course, the industrial revolution. It took place in or very near cities. In this period, overaccumulation of surpluses eventually became a serious problem for capitalism until it was partially resolved by geographical expansion and the shift from the industrial city to the imperialist city, which, in the last half of the nineteenth century, poured surplus capital into the colonies searching for further opportunities. Harvey points out that this development was an "unstable mix" of intense interurban competition, spiralling technological innovation, and imperialist geographical expansionism, which produced national geopolitical rivalries and two world wars, "the second of which inflicted enormous and uneven geographical destruction on urban assets – a neat but hideously violent resolution to capitalism's over accumulation problem" (34).

The third period, following World War II, is characterized by Harvey as the adsorption of surpluses accomplished by the shift from the Fordist industrial city to the Keynesian city, the expansion of consumption through Keynesian demand-side economic policies such as the expansion of the credit system, and unlimited debt creation (a perversion of Keynes's original concept, as Harvey carefully points out). This period also featured the rapid growth of the automobile industry, roads and expressways, urban sprawl, the proliferation of shopping malls, competitive and conspicuous consumerism, the rise of large transnational corporations, rapid technological innovations in many sectors, the destruction of entire city districts in the name of urban renewal, expansion of military production and weapons sales to regimes across the globe, and other familiar phenomena that continue into the present. All of this has been accompanied by a long series of reckless wars and military coups in various parts of the globe and an incredible (if uneven) toll of ecological devastation and loss of species and habitat,

which in aggregate amounts to a sixth great planetary extinction spasm, the first to be engendered by human actions (Wilson 1992).

So what is really different about contemporary globalization? Is it not just more of the same colonial and imperialist exploitation and expansion? Perhaps, but the geographical scale is now more truly global than in the days of Lenin and Luxemburg. Contemporary globalization comprises a daunting set of interconnected processes that includes the information and telecommunications revolution, flexible “just-in-time” production systems, more extensive globalized trade networks, the capitalist revolution in agricultural production in both advanced industrial and many “Third World” nations (the “green revolution”), and, most important perhaps, the increased power and global organizational and market reach of transnational corporations (built up during the post-World War II Keynesian period). These factors have combined to spread the process of cultural imperialism (as capitalist monoculture) over most of the globe. This is not to argue that monoculturalism (global teenagers in global malls serviced by global sweatshops) has swept aside the great diversity of distinct cultures over the Earth. However, that threat is very real (Klein 2000). Just as biodiversity is threatened by globalization, so too is cultural diversity threatened (but not eliminated) by globalization (Scholte in Aulakh and Schecter 2000).

Harvey (2000) points to four major shifts that signify why globalization has taken on a “new allure” and importance after the Keynesian period. The first is financial deregulation, initiated in the United States in the early 1970s as a response to the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system of international trade and exchange established toward the end of World War II. Deregulation allowed the global system to be coordinated through the market and “made the financial conditions of capitalism far more volatile” (61). Furthermore, the rhetoric accompanying this shift promoted the term “globalization” as a virtue. Noam Chomsky (1999) and a growing number of other critics refer to this shift as the Washington “consensus,” an array of market-oriented principles designed by the government of the United States. These include stringent structural adjustment programs, whose basic rules are liberalize trade and finance, let markets set prices, end inflation, and privatize.

The second major shift, the rate of technology transfer and imitation across and throughout different zones of the world economy, accelerated by leaps and bounds in the final decades of the twentieth century. It was facilitated by the increase of educated and scientifically trained elites “capable of adapting and adsorbing technological knowledge and know-how from anywhere and everywhere” (Harvey 2000, 61-62). While capitalism has historically always engendered succeeding waves of technology change, the current wave of profound technological change and product innovation is particularly concentrated in time while taking place (unevenly, of course) over greater geographical areas of the globe than ever before.

In the third major shift, the information revolution brought significant changes to the organization of production and consumption as well as to the definition of entirely new wants and needs. Dematerialized “cyberspace” in the form of the World Wide Web, originated by the military apparatus, was immediately seized upon by financial institutions and transnational capital to coordinate their activities instantaneously over space. The space and time of electronic media and communications imploded in a world where the monopolization of media power was already a problem for democracy, in spite of right-wing utopian claims that the information revolution is inherently emancipatory. Harvey (2000) goes on to warn that we should not ignore the strong totalistic tone of this technologically determinist rhetoric, “perhaps best captured in Margaret Thatcher’s famous declaration that ‘there is no alternative’” (62-63).

And, in the fourth major shift, the cost and time of moving commodities, production operations, and people tumbled, liberating many activities from former spatial constraints and permitting rapid adjustments in locations of production, consumption, and populations. Harvey (2000) emphasizes the importance of synergistic interactions among all four elements: “Financial deregulation could not have occurred, for example, without the information revolution, and technology transfer (which also relied heavily on the information revolution) would have been meaningless without a much greater ease of movement of commodities and people around the world” (63).

Over the past two decades, the shifts described above constitute a post-Keynesian shift in the process of globalization launched by the industrial revolution that could be viewed as an attempt to recapture the halcyon days of “laissez faire” liberalism of the late nineteenth century, organized and led by Great Britain (thus the current term “neoliberalism,” also referred to by some as “neoconservatism”). It was during this earlier “free-trade” period that private business corporations first consolidated and then extended their great power through a variety of means, which included legalization of the corporation as a “person,” limited liability for corporate shareholders, the ability of corporations (as persons) to own other corporations, and the “immortality” of the corporation (Grossman and Adams 1993; Kelly 1999; Korten 1995; Polanyi 1968; Yaron 2002). In the closing years of the twentieth century, the new period of “free trade” (the term preferred by its proponents over neoliberalism or capitalist globalization) was led jointly by Thatcherism in Great Britain and Reaganism in the United States.

There are several important effects or impacts of globalization that help to capture its meaning more fully. The first has been a weakening of the authority of nation-states vis-à-vis market forces. This is a pervasive theme in globalization literature (Schecter 1999, 71-73). It speaks to a decline in the power of the nation-state to regulate global corporations, markets, and finance capital. The information and electronic revolutions have facilitated

the twenty-four-hour, instantaneous, and ceaseless flow of capital and information that even the mainstream US-based magazine *Business Week* once referred to as the “global casino” (Henderson 1991). The ability of the state (any state, even the United States) to regulate exchange and interest rates has consequently lessened a great deal. As well, accelerated technological change, increased product flexibility, trade, and financial liberalization have allowed the market to function with increasingly fewer social and political constraints (Zoninsein in Schecter 1999). This loss of power to control capital mobility has meant that state operations have become more “disciplined” by finance capital than ever before; global capital in the form of international banks and global corporations now demands structural adjustment and fiscal austerity. Consequently, “the state has been to some degree reduced to the role of finding ways to promote a favourable business climate” (Harvey 2000, 65). However, Chomsky, Harvey, and others critically analyzing globalization also see a continuing important role for the state under neoliberalism, not only in terms of promoting economic development, but also in terms of maintaining consensus and social control (Chomsky 1999; Harvey 2000, 180-81; Lentner in Aulakh and Schecter 2000; Schecter 1999, 61-101). This concern has, of course, been heightened since 9/11. Thus, we now see huge expenditures on military production, severe tax cuts and, consequently, massive increases in the federal debt from the self-described “war president” George W. Bush.

A second important effect of economic globalization over the past two decades has been a distinct tendency toward cultural convergence or global monoculture. Global markets, mass media (e.g., CNN), cyberspace, global brand names, and so on have given planetary currency to a wide range of symbols, ideas, habits, rules, words, products, and experiences that take on supraterritorial dimensions (Klein 2000; Scholte in Schecter 1999, 71). For Harvey (2000), however, it is far too simplistic to see globalism as purely a movement toward “homogeneity in global culture.” We must consider that a range of global corporations now markets cultural difference, and there are intense cultural reactions in many places against the homogenizing influence of global markets (67). Nevertheless, this “diversity” marketing, as Klein (2000) has compellingly argued, appears more realistically as a “candy-coated multiculturalism,” as a kinder, gentler packaging for homogenization – in effect, a monomulticulturalism, a “One World placelessness” created by an “ethnic-food-court approach” that, rather than “selling America to the world,” delivers a kind of “market masala to everyone in the world” (117).

The third effect is that globalization has engendered the actual geographical dispersal and fragmentation of production systems combined with the increasing centralization of corporate power, the increasing geographical dispersal of a growing world labour force, and the increasing cultural

heterogeneity of labour forces due to massive migrations in the latter half of the twentieth century. The combination of a greater global geographical reach of corporate power and an increased centralization of command and control functions clearly highlights the centrality of corporate power in the process of neoliberal globalization.

The migration of world labour has gone hand in hand with a rapidly accelerating migration to urban regions (from hinterlands both near and far). This migration is occurring at such a rate that it is better understood as hyperurbanization: that is, the current phase of urbanization is super rapid and largely unplanned, creating a totalizing effect on urban regions. With this development, the city and city region have become much more important as competitive entities in the global economy (Harvey 2000, 64). In the advanced capitalist countries, most people now live in cities. On a global basis, the world's urban population grew from 13 percent of total population in 1900 to 47 percent in 1999 (Jenks and Burgess 2000), with much of this urban growth occurring in the last half of the twentieth century. As well, there have been dramatic increases in the volume of global output and trade and in the number and size of cities as the global economy has shifted from the primary and rural to the secondary and tertiary urban sectors. Finally, the global economy has expanded threefold, and the human population has ballooned 30 percent to over six billion in the twenty-two years since 1980 alone (Rees 2002). Yet, in the neoliberal worldview of the late twentieth century, these cities and regions had to compete against each other in the increasingly liberalized markets of the process of globalization in order to continue (if not accelerate) the pace of growth. Moreover, attempts to internalize regional environmental costs (pollution, environmental degradation, etc.) and create sustainable and equitable regional development are seen as threats to regional "competitive advantages," leading capital to pursue its interests elsewhere (Burgess in Jenks and Burgess 2000) or to pursue legal challenges under NAFTA or the WTO. Thus, corporate globalization, reflected in policies of neoliberal "free trade" (the Washington Consensus), is – in principle – against *any* local regional economic diversity and integration with goals of self-reliance.

Along with the growth of urban regions under neoliberal globalization, we have seen the rise of local, urban "growth machines" – coalitions of business, labour (often construction trades), and municipal governments – designed to attract capital investment based on some local comparative advantage. Neoliberal growth machine politics conceives of the city as an entrepreneurial entity imitating the outlook and financial business practices of the private sector, as a risk taker, and as an active competitor in the economic sphere. In this view, public-private partnerships between municipalities and urban developers are seen as essential to urban growth and

revitalization. The private developers need the permits, licences, zoning changes, and so on, while the municipality needs the capital and organizational reach of big business. However, growth machine political economy has led municipalities into a zero-sum game of interurban and intra-urban competition to attract redevelopment capital via public-private “partnerships” that have been fiscally, socially, and environmentally damaging and narrowly focused on private gain in spite of proponents’ claims to the contrary (Harvey 1989; Leitner and Garner 1993; Molotch 1993). This second wave of urban renewal since World War II has produced some miserable failures even when evaluated on the narrow economic terms of their proponents (Flint and Detroit, Michigan), while others, widely hailed as great successes (Baltimore’s Harbour Place or Milwaukee’s Grand Avenue Project), exist in cities whose surrounding neighbourhoods continue to decline, demonstrating the failure of the “trickle-down” effect of globalization (Harvey 2000; Molotch 1993).

Ironically, these redevelopment projects, promoted on the basis of the comparative advantages of locality and place, end up mimicking each other and producing sameness in the name of the comparative advantage of the diversity of places. Their apparent success is therefore often short-lived or made redundant by alternative or parallel “innovations” reproduced elsewhere (Harvey 1989). Moreover, far from being “inevitable” outcomes of globalization, on closer inspection urban growth machines are revealed as the results of special interest, pro-growth actors – namely, the coalitions themselves (Molotch 1993). In sum, the result of urban growth machine development and heightened interurban competition “is a way into rather than out of capitalist crisis in the long run” (Harvey 1989, 55), which embodies the very manic logic about which Greider, Harvey, Korten, and a growing number of critical thinkers have been deeply concerned. Simply put, credit-financed shopping malls, sports stadia, and other spectacles of leisured consumerism are high-risk projects that can easily fall on hard times (Harvey 1989, 2000). Urban growth machines, like the global growth machine, represent a mostly ephemeral, fragile house of cards, as recent events have shown. We have only to think here of the spectacle of Giuliani, the mayor of New York City during the aftermath of 9/11, or President Bush pleading with Americans to return to shopping activities so that America can return to its normal business of commodity consumption.

There is already since 9/11 a nascent perception that people are beginning to spend more time in family and community activities rather than in the usual shopping mall excursions. If this proves to be a real and lasting shift, then the possibilities for a civil society-based cultural and social transformation away from the global manic logic of unregulated growth and consumerism become more imaginable, more desirable, more realizable,

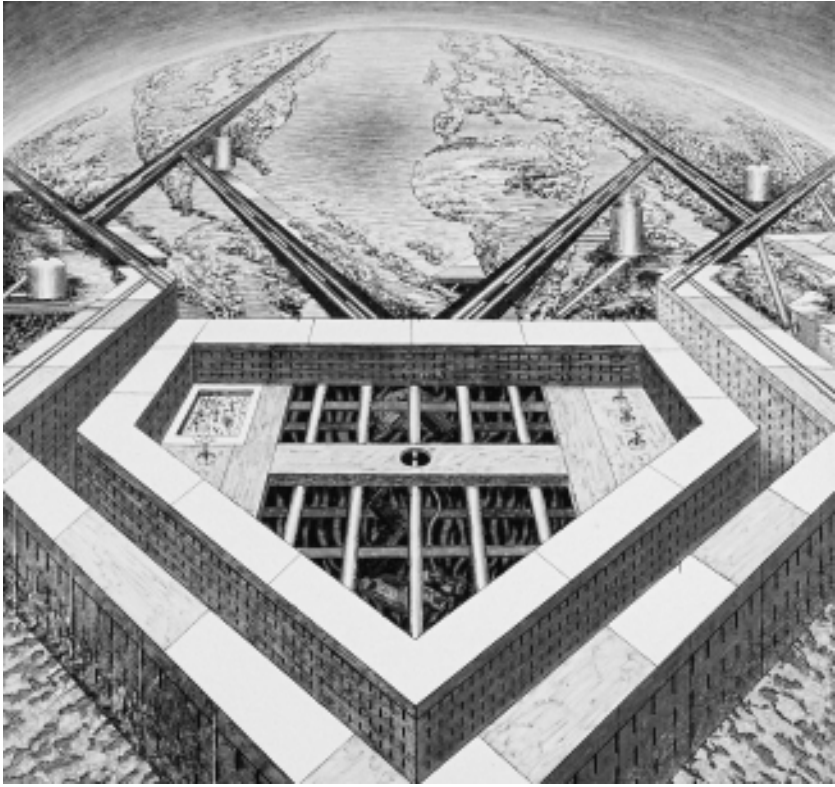


Figure 1 *Pentagon*, by Don Carr. “Pentagon” is a metaphor for what Lewis Mumford called the US “power complex,” the controlling nexus of the US military industrial complex. “Pentagon” also refers specifically to the Pentagon building in Washington, DC.

and more grounded in people’s actual relationships with each other and in emerging alternative behaviours. This book was written in the hope that a change in direction is possible, that people will be able to bring about a revival of community and democratic associational life in civil society, leading to a change in the culture of consumption and to corresponding and necessary changes in the economic and political structures and institutions of civilization. That a diverse movement (composed of many different groups in shifting alliances concerned with a host of pressing issues) has already begun to emerge is reflected in a growing discourse on the rise of civil society (Douglas and Friedmann 1998; Sandercock 1998).

During the same decades of neoliberal globalization described above, there has also been a proliferation of social movements and citizens’ organizations – cultural, economic, environmental, political, and social – in Eastern

and Western Europe, South and Central America, Mexico, the United States, Canada, and elsewhere that have given rise to a widely proliferating literature based on the revival, reconstruction, reemergence, or rise of civil society (Cohen and Arato 1992; Douglas and Friedmann 1998; Edwards et al. 2001; Keane 1988; Korten 1998; Lipschutz 1996; Sandercock 1998; Schechter 1999; Walzer 1995). The bioregional movement is part of this spectrum of civil society initiatives that include social and environmental concerns as well as economic and political issues and problems. More recently, as many people are now aware, there is also an emergent global movement of peoples challenging corporate globalization. This movement has mounted large public demonstrations in Europe, the United States (Seattle), Canada (Quebec City), Italy (Genoa), Mexico, India, Central and South America, and elsewhere, most often at meetings of the WTO, the G-8, and other global elite institutions, protesting exploitation of workers, environmental destruction, and erosion of human rights, civil liberties, social justice, and democracy.

This movement, often characterized in the corporate-controlled media as an “antiglobalization” movement, is perhaps better viewed as a movement *for* socially just, democratic, and ecologically sustainable approaches to globalization. It is a movement *for* creating forms of global democracy. The global movement against corporate or neoliberal globalization increasingly sees itself as being of and for civil society, taking an inclusive approach to issues of social justice, democracy, and environment (Independent Media Center 2000). The term “civil society” is used explicitly by many in the movement, influenced, in part at least, by the use of the term by the Zapatista Liberation Movement (EZLN) in Chiapas, Mexico. The origins of the global movement are located in an international network called People’s Global Action (PGA). PGA was formed out of a 1998 Zapatista *encuentro* (“gathering”) in Barcelona, Spain. Its founding members include anarchist groups in Spain, Britain, and Germany, a Gandhian socialist peasant league in India, the Argentinian teachers’ union, the Brazilian landless peasants’ movement, indigenous groups such as the Maori of New Zealand, the Kuna of Ecuador, and the Zapatistas who inspired the *encuentro*. Most of the movement’s techniques (consensus process, spokescouncils, even mass nonviolent civil disobedience itself) were first developed in the global south (Graeber 2002). The *encuentro* in Spain was modelled on the first *encuentro* organized in Chiapas, Mexico, by the Zapatistas in 1996.

Like the literature on globalization, the literature on civil society and the concepts and models used under the term is proliferating rapidly. There is even the concept of a “global” civil society spreading in the literature (Drysek 1997; Korten 1998; Lipschutz 1996; McGinnis 1999; Schechter 1999). For clarity in what follows, the concept of civil society needs to be defined and explained. My own theoretical perspective in this book is deeply informed

by civil society theory, particularly by the work of Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato (1992). I will introduce this theory, which I have borrowed and then revised, in order to integrate a vital ecological dimension that it totally lacked.

Most often the definition of civil society and the social and political economic analyses that flow from it depend on the model used to picture the relationships between civil society and the state or between civil society and the market. Many analysts of civil society (whether liberal or Marxist), including those using global civil society concepts, use a two-sphere model that depicts relationships between civil society and the state. These models include the corporate sphere as a part of civil society (see, e.g., Lipschutz 1996; Schecter 1999; Walzer 1995; and Warkentin 2001). Such definitions of civil society thus include citizens' organizations or alliances, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) whether formal or informal, trade unions, and private business corporations large and small. These models are seriously flawed. As Jean Cohen points out, the two-part (or two-sphere) model of civil society vis-à-vis the state, whereby civil society includes everything outside the state sector, can at best be a slogan, a mere starting point for mobilization against dictatorial statist regimes but not adequate for serious analysis of Western-style democracies. Planning theorist John Friedmann (1998) has also made an important contribution to civil society theory. For Friedmann, two-part models are useless in terms of making any real contribution to radical thought about social change (personal communication, 26 October 2001).

The major problem is that the two-part model ignores (or, at best, fails to focus on) the undemocratic relationships between powerful economic actors (banks, large corporations) and civil society. However, such relationships, based on economic power, can be "as great a danger to social solidarity, social justice, and autonomy as the power of the modern state" (Cohen in Walzer 1995, 36). Cohen adds that the autonomy of civil society is not the same as the autonomy of the market, since the former is based on normative principles "still oriented to the utopian ideals of modernity," including plurality, publicity, legality, equality, justice, voluntary association, and individual autonomy (37). This contrasts with the autonomy of the capitalist market driven principally, if not solely, by the profit motive. Historically, under capitalism, Cohen argues, economic society has been "more successfully insulated from the influence of civil society than political society" (38). In the current era of neoliberalism, this tendency is more pronounced than in the preceding Keynesian period. More than ever, the formal market sphere, now globally dominated by money capital and a rogue financial system, operates outside any human regulation, profiting from and contributing to the volatility of global money and speculative markets (Korten

1995). It follows that a three-part (or three-sphere) model is needed. Such a model requires a distinct economic sphere (as well as state and civil society spheres) to ensure a proper or adequate focus on the formal market sphere and its problematic relationship to civil society. There is another important reason to abandon two-part models of civil society. That is the concern among post-Marxists and interested others to create a democratic theory of radical social transformation that abandons the concept and strategy of “capturing state power.”

In contrast, Cohen and Arato (1992) have made an important contribution to an emergent body of theory thematizing a broad democratic transformation firmly based in civil society. This radical democratic theory offers promising insights for all social movements – and anyone – seeking to address the crisis of modern civilization. Self-proclaimed as “post-Marxist” theorists, Cohen and Arato break with the Marxist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and with the conception of the working class as the primary agent of social revolution. Also abandoned is the old dream of abolishing the state. Instead, a dual strategy, based in civil society, is proposed to replace it. Crucially different, though, is that in this three-part model (described in great detail by Cohen and Arato in their important contribution to democratic theory), civil society is differentiated from both political and economic spheres. In this conception, the working class is only one of many agents of transformation along with a wide diversity of other actors in civil society. Civil society is thus a much more inclusive sphere in which to situate and on which to base citizen action for democratic social change. In differentiating civil society from both the political sphere (dominated by the state) and the economic sphere (dominated by financial capital and large corporations), the theory also focuses on the necessity of democratizing large private economic institutions while retaining a focus on democratizing the state as well. Two-part statist/civil society models ignore this crucial strategic consideration.

Thus, this three-sphere model supports a strategy that views civil society as the sphere, or terrain, of “emancipation,” the sphere of the self-defence of society against both the economization of society on the one hand and the bureaucratization of it on the other (Cohen and Arato 1992). Its primary strategic purpose is to defend and strengthen democracy in civil society, reinvigorating grassroots democracy. Thus, “horizontal” actions target other actors within civil society, so that “civil society proper is the target and terrain of this politics of identity” (Cohen in Walzer 1995, 39). This basic strategy envisions horizontal communicative action targeting identities, norms, and institutions in civil society to form the democratic basis from which to initiate a second strategy in relation to the other two state and corporate spheres. This second dual strategy is aimed at democratizing

both political and economic spheres through campaigns for reforms of laws and institutions of state and corporate sectors alike. Horizontal actions toward democratizing civil society are thus combined with “vertical” campaigns of bridging or developing influence for democratic legal, policy, and institutional reforms within the dominant state and corporate sectors. The combined horizontal and vertical strategies must support each other for lasting social change, as we shall see in Chapter 1.

It seems to me that, among the plethora of civil society theories, only two models, that of Cohen and Arato and the four-sphere model of Friedmann, engage the complex reality of modern, global capitalist society clearly and critically enough (with respect to both state and corporate institutions and power) to shed some light on possibilities and paths for radical but democratic alternatives. I have found the Cohen and Arato three-sphere model the most analytically useful with respect to the dual strategy theorization.

However, their civil society theory lacks both an ecological critique of globalism and a cultural critique of its underpinnings based on the narrowly conceived modernist construct of “economic man” (sic). As such, their model fails to integrate ecological thought and analysis. In the entire 600-page text of their major work, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, there is no definition of ecology, nor is there any discussion of an ecological dimension to civil society theory. In my view, no theory of social transformation can overlook the central importance in our time of ecology, given the immense, varied, and complex dimensions of global ecological crises, the profound cultural rift between dominant modern “Western” civilization and the natural world, and the importance of a wide diversity of literature on these questions (Berman 1981, 1989; Brown et al. 1996; Brown and Kane 1994; Evernden 1985; Merchant 1980; Naess 1990; Rowe 1990; World Commission on Environment and Development 1987; Worster 1985). So the primary theoretical goal of this book is to make a contribution to the integration of ecological, spiritual, and sustainability concerns with civil society theory, particularly with respect to the three-sphere model of Cohen and Arato. In my view, civil society theory must become fully inclusive of ecological, spiritual, and sustainability concerns in order to engage in any real way with both the concerns themselves and the movements in civil society that address those concerns. Theories of social change that do not engage with practices of social change remain merely formal academic constructs. By employing a civil society theoretical framework to explore the strengths and weaknesses of bioregionalism as a grounded alternative to neoliberal globalization, I intend to contribute to the development of an ecologically and spiritually informed civil society theory and to reveal some important lessons for developing an understanding of strategic democratic change in civil society aimed at democratizing both state and corporate

sectors. In this way, strategies to expand democracy in both political and economic spheres are thus given urgent attention and opened to serious exploration and examination.

Bioregionalism is a philosophy with values and practices that attempt to meld issues of social and economic justice and sustainability with cultural, ecological, and spiritual concerns. Furthermore, bioregional efforts at democratic social and cultural change take place primarily in the sphere of civil society. What would an encounter between democratic civil society theory and bioregional philosophy and practice be able to tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of bioregionalism? Conversely, what insights might bioregional experience contribute to civil society theory, especially with respect to its lack of any ecological dimension? Moreover, the bioregional movement has developed a praxis of social change that challenges the modernist construct of “economic man” upon which neoliberal globalization rests. Civil society theory, like bioregionalism, questions neoclassical economic constructs that deny/negate broader enlightenment conceptions of humans as social, communicative beings (Friedmann in Douglas and Friedmann 1998). It seems to me that employing democratic civil society theory as a means to explore bioregionalism as an emergent alternative to globalism promises to enrich both civil society theory and bioregional vision and practice. Moreover, this encounter might reveal important lessons for all social movements concerned with developing strategies to defend and enhance democracy in the face of the globalizing capitalist world order.

This book weaves together stories of the bioregional movement in Canada, the United States, and Mexico from its birth in the early 1970s to 1998. Through these stories, the vision, values, social change strategy, and community-building and networking tools/methods of the movement are revealed. Questions essential to movement building are explored. How does a movement rooted in social and cultural change and community building begin? How does it grow? What problems do local bioregional organizers and cultural change participants encounter in their efforts to move toward a more equitable, just, and sustainable society? What lessons can we draw from bioregional experiments in social, ecological, and economic sustainability? In presenting these stories, I pursue an extended inquiry into the possibilities for broader social and cultural change in one of the consumerist heartlands of global capitalism, North America.

The stories and examples presented here show that bioregionalists integrate cultural change into the centre of their paradigm of social transformation. Bioregionalists critique conspicuous consumption, and they work to implement changes in their lives and those of others, chiefly through horizontal efforts in civil society, building place-based communities and networks that respect ecological limits. Bioregionalists promote strategies aimed

at reducing both aggregate and individual consumption. They attempt to live their daily lives in ways that greatly reduce their personal levels of consumption. Such efforts are seen by bioregionalist practitioners not as sacrifices that they must make for the environment or for social justice but as real, achievable improvements in the quality of their own lives. Reductions in consumption and the demanding life work of organizing for sustainable social change have been supported – in the experience of many bioregionalists – by certain emotional/spiritual benefits of bonding both with other humans and with the natural world in particular places. Using an analytical tool that I call “ecosocial capital,” I have identified this vital bonding process as a synergistic energy involving spiritual feelings of joy and love.

The concept of ecosocial capital emerges from the current discourse on social capital, specifically a social capital critical of concepts of under-socialized, “economic man” as an atomized, hyperindividualistic consumer. Social capital theory, like civil society theory, emphasizes the importance of horizontal bonding relations of peers based on trust. Simply put, social capital refers to and includes norms of cooperation, reciprocity, and mutual aid; relations of trust; and organized social networks (Putnam 1993a, b). It is important to note here, since so many commentators have overlooked it, that social capital inheres in the structure of relationships of information and trust built between and among individuals (Coleman 1990). Thus, social capital cannot be measured quantitatively. Rather, it is about relationships. As such, it is already, implicitly at least, an ecological concept.

My use of the concept of social capital is different from that of either Coleman or Putnam. I have adapted social capital as a “sensitizing concept” to aid in the exploration and interpretation of emergent patterns of socio-cultural relationships in the bioregional movement. Research using sensitizing concepts seeks grounded, interpretive explanations through naturalistic research that also seeks to improve the analytical tools themselves (Pyne Addelson 1991, 91). In this book, I attempt to show how bioregionalists have created social capital through their horizontal community-building strategies and how the profound emotional and spiritual rewards of social capital and ecosocial capital help to support this work.

While bioregionalists spend a great deal of their daily efforts in this horizontal work in civil society, they also put effort into pursuing vertical reforms. However, they have not sufficiently theorized their strategy vis-à-vis either the state or the corporate sectors with respect to strategic vertical reform and its relationship to horizontal community building. That is, they have not sufficiently theorized their strategy for vertical political and economic institutional transformation that would support lasting cultural and economic changes in civil society. In particular, they have not developed any common theory or strategy with respect to the entrenched power of

banking capital and large corporations. Yet, as the economic system becomes increasingly globalized through the global reach of corporate and financial power, it is clear that, unless we learn how to effect democratic change within the corporate sector (as well as the state sector), movements for social change will not be successful in achieving deep and lasting reforms necessary for sustainability and justice. Reforms in the political sphere alone are not sufficient to democratize the corporate and finance capital sector, since, as already discussed, under the contemporary neoliberal order, global corporations and financial capital are outstripping the ability of states to regulate or even monitor their global activities.

After considerable thought about this problem over several years, I believed that a serious inquiry into bioregionalism could draw crucial cultural insights from its local community building and networking. This knowledge could then be used to inform civil society theory, strengthening it considerably by including cultural change as a fully integrated dimension of theory. In turn, this reconstructed, integrated theory (with its previous understanding of combined horizontal-vertical strategies) might inform social movements such as bioregionalism with some key insights into selected vertical strategies for political and economic institutional change in both state and corporate spheres. Such vertical strategies for democratic change would complement and support grassroots efforts at horizontal change in the sphere of civil society.

The search for cooperative and democratic solutions to the global crisis of civilization inevitably raises questions as to what is most fundamental about human nature and culture. These are questions about the ability of human beings to live cooperatively, about the relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world, and about the meaning of human life. Some, following classical conservative philosopher Thomas Hobbes, argue that humans have never lived cooperatively, that the original condition of humankind was a war of all against all.

Today there is good evidence, some of which I present in Chapter 2, to suggest that, during humanity's early days in the domestic mode of production (gathering, hunting, and gardening), many human groups did live cooperatively in extended families and communities and did so in the context of a worldview that conceived of humans as an integral part of the greater family of life on planet Earth. This is a worldview that places the human community squarely within the greater "community of beings" (the natural world). I make the case that modern society has some important lessons to learn from these societies, lessons about cooperative living among humans, about living with care and respect for all life, and about the conservative and careful use of natural resources. Informed by an anthropology with both sociocultural and ecological underpinnings, my review of the domes-

tic mode of production – which serves as an introduction to my exploration of bioregionalism – challenges the narrow construct of the acquisitive and selfish human individual of neoclassical economics with a socialized concept of the human being.

My theoretical approach is located in the radical planning tradition that has been referred to as the tradition of social mobilization (Friedmann 1987, 75). Radical planning asks the general question how does social mobilization to effect radical transformation occur? Thus, my approach falls within both social science and the humanities since it includes anthropological and sociological dimensions as well as historical and philosophical inquiry. Traditionally, the social sciences and the humanities have confined themselves to human-centred questions and concerns, leaving the natural sciences to deal separately with questions of a nonhuman nature. Few social scientists holistically address questions concerning relationships between human and nonhuman nature. In contrast, my work is informed by an ecologically centred perspective. Social questions remain crucially important in my approach. However, since human cultures and economies are, in fact, located within natural systems, the study of human systems and cultures must be undertaken through a more holistic social ecology. A social ecological perspective challenges the separate and anthropocentric treatment of human social science and recognizes both the interdependence of human and natural systems and the primacy of humankind's "obligate dependence" (Rees 1990) upon the natural world. From within the research framework of an ecocentric scientific paradigm, the test of "good" science is not that it works in the sense of enabling humans to exploit the world around them more efficiently but that it works in the sense of assisting and enabling them to live in ways that preserve and foster the health, safety, and well-being of both the human and the nonhuman communities (Eckersley 1992, 116).

Chapter 1 examines both the neoclassical economic argument for globalism that supports constant increases in consumption/production and an opposing ecological analysis of the problem, including an exploration of the decline of community accompanying the drive for growth. This provides a context for a discussion of the theory of civil society and ecosocial capital.

In Chapter 2, I take up the question of human nature and the ability of humans to live cooperatively in community by looking at our roots in the domestic mode of production. I conclude with a discussion of contemporary civil society and the role of the informal economy.

Chapter 3 is an exploration of bioregional philosophical values that have emerged from the bioregional movement in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, values that deeply challenge the notion of "economic man."

In Chapter 4, I examine the bioregional movement's organizing strategy and tools for community building toward cultural and economic conversion to sustainable society. This is both a philosophical and an experiential exploration using many examples.

Chapter 5 presents five stories or narrative accounts of bioregionalists' efforts at reinhabitation in two large urban regions and three rural watersheds in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

In Chapter 6, I present the story of the continental bioregional movement through narrative accounts of seven continental congresses.

Finally, the conclusion returns to theoretical considerations of civil society and bioregionalism, outlines my development of an ecocentric civil society theory, and attempts to draw some lessons for democratic social transformation in the face of corporate globalization, not only for the bioregional movement, but for social movements and society more generally.