Knowledge Creation in Transnational Urban Spaces: Experiences of Japanese Multinationals in the West Midlands Region of England

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1. Research Theme

This paper will outline research themes, main questions and methodology for a proposed research for a Ph.D. thesis. The proposed research is ambitious in two ways. First, it will attempt to combine anthropological research methods with global activities of multinational corporations on a macro scale. Second, it aims at contributing to theoretical discussion in the social sciences, especially with regards to 'globalisation and cities', by conducting empirical research.

A central aim of this research is to investigate how global flows of capital, information, technology and people have created new 'transnational knowledge' in 'urban spaces'. Research sites will be in the West Midlands region of England. In particular, the presence of Japanese multinational corporations in the region will be focused on to explore the historical process of interconnection between the British and Japanese social systems in the light of globalisation.

Compared with other regions in the U. K., studies on the influence of foreign direct investments to the local economy and society in the West Midlands region are few. To what extent have Japanese companies in the area integrated into the local economy? In order to investigate this question, closer attention will be paid to the 'socio-cultural' dimension of foreign inward investment as well as to its economic impacts on the area.

First, I will look at how institutional culture changes in transnational contexts of 'knowledge creation' (Nonaka, 1995). While Japanese firms are often held up as examples of 'learning organizations', there have been few studies of this 'learning in the context of extended international operations' (Bird and Beechler, 1999:8). The experiences of Japanese multinational companies in the West Midlands region will be focused upon to reveal the interplay of socio-cultural conditions and formation of human practices at micro levels. What adjustments are necessary when Japanese companies start to work jointly with non-Japanese counterparts in a foreign country? How does organisational 'knowledge creation' (i.e. skill formation, dissemination of information, decision making) take place on a global scale? Are there any different notions of 'individual skill formation' between Japanese and British employees? Qualitative research should be conducted to reveal what is taking place in a specific context and clarify the social contexts behind 'knowledge creation'.

There are two related fields of concern. First, how does a city change as globalisation proceeds? To assess this, the roles of a city in the local as well as the global economy will be explored. More specifically, I will look at how Birmingham copes with global economic competition and how it tries to create new social spaces and new images that can accommodate various and sometimes contesting public interests. The city of Birmingham is focused upon as the emerging center of global 'diasporic' communities, including not only the 'ethnic minorities' of multicultural society but also those of transnational business people, which have been under-researched.[1]

Theoretical discussions of globalisation will be outlined and special attention will be paid to the city's transformation in response to global technological innovations. Globalisation will be depicted as a local process and through the lived experiences of individuals, since, in the subjective and personal sphere, globalisation refers to 'the construction and invention of diverse localities through global flows of ideas and information' (Eade, 1997:4). Importance of the boundaries and institutions of nation-state

decreases as global and local relations interweave and worldwide social relations intensify. How, then, does a specific locality represent and reproduce the new social relations, derived from ongoing processes of negotiation of 'boundaries' and 'differences' on a global scale? [2]

The second set of questions concerns how technological innovations can be incorporated in local urban development. Many city governments around the world have recognised great opportunities in technologies and innovations for urban regeneration and economic growth. What kind of potential scenario could, then, be envisioned for the development of 'technocities' (McGuigan and Downey, 1999)? Increasingly, attention is directed towards exploring how the economic, social and cultural aspects of cities interact with the proliferation of advanced information and communication networks. However, despite the central importance of new technologies in the future of cities, 'issues of urban policy and planning have been virtually absent within both popular and academic debates'(Graham, 1999:10). [3]

The objective of the proposed research is to contribute to the study of transnational space and technology by offering a global as well as local interpretation of the experiences and self-perceptions of those involved in the globalisation process. It aims at filling the gap between 'wild optimism' regarding the global information society and 'actual empirical evidence of what is happening' (Webster, 1999:85) through an investigation of the historical and institutional process in which globalisation has taken place.

2. Global Networks of Communication and *'Socioscapes'* of City

2. 1. Theoretical Backgrounds of the Notion of Globalisation

As Wallerstein puts it: 'global integration can be conceived as being furthered thorough the expansion of economic activity to the extent that common forms of

industrial production, commodities, market behavior, trade and consumption also become generalized around the world' (Wallerstein, 1974, 1980: cited in Featherstone, 1995).

The ways in which different nations have been drawn together into a tighter configuration by means of closer financial and trade ties, and through increasing technological development in producing more efficient and rapid methods of communication (e. g. mass media, transport, telephone, fax, etc.) has produced a higher density of interchanges. Moreover, there has been a deepening of intensity in a wide variety of cultural flows that render transnational encounters more frequent. Appadurai (1990), for example, refers to the increasing flows of people (immigrants, workers, refugees, tourists, exiles); technology (machinery, plant, electronics); financial information (money, shares); media images and information (from television, film, radio, newspapers, magazines); and, ideologies and world-views. While some might wish to see the motor force for these changes as 'the relentless progress of the capitalist economy towards a world system' (Wallerstein, 1974, 1980), or the movement towards a new, disorganised or 'post-Fordist' stage of capitalism (Lash and Urry, 1987), for Appadurai, there is a disjunction between the cultural flows, or what he refers to as 'scapes'(Featherstone, 1995:90).[4]

Appdurai describes a 'disjunctured global cultural economy' (Appadurai 1990:296). One of the advantages of the term 'scapes' lies in its reference to 'the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes' (*ibid.*, 297). The fluidity of these different components of global cultural flow is contrasted with the 'relatively stable communities and networks' through which people move (*ibid.*).

Eade points out that for Appadurai these scapes are engaged in processes of inequality and power, and that his model is attractively sensitive to the asymmetric flows of ideas, information, people and capital. Yet a question is raised by Appadurai's assumption concerning 'the stability of the communities and networks through which people move' (Eade, 1997:5). In a similar vein, Martin Albrow argues:

But how stable are these 'relative stabilities' and from the perspective of participants are they not equally 'scapes'? The missing term here surely has to be *'socioscape', the vision of social formations that are more than a people who occupy them at any one time.* Under globalized conditions people are increasingly uncomfortable when referring to them in old structural terms like 'community' or 'neighborhood' (Albrow, 1997:38; my emphasis).

A strong case has been made regarding the impact of global economic forces on urban life. However, disjunctures between cultural flows and various scapes described by Appadurai and Albrow prevent 'any straightforward determinacy of people's understandings by the processes of economic and geographical separation and inequality associated with those global forces' (Eade, *ibid.*, 12). What is necessary is, therefore, to take a closer look at what is actually occurring in a specific local condition, in addition to constitution of and negotiation among cultural groups in a specific local context. We can then open up a 'vision of social formations'.

2. 2. Technological Aspects of Global Networks

How do technological innovations affect 'vision of social formations' in a specific locality? Robins explains how new information and communication technologies have come to be linked to 'amelioristic social visions' (Robins, 1999:34).

Robins argues that there are two aspects of the 'corporate ideology of globalization'.

The first relates the global future almost exclusively to the emergence of a global information economy, to the centrality of information and knowledge work, and to the significance of increasing electronic flows through the world's information and communication networks. The second maintains that as sovereignty of national governments becomes undermined through the creation

of global markets, cities are coming to assume a new prominence in the world's economy, as the hubs and control centers of the new corporate networks (*ibid.*).

The global information economy is 'based less on the location of natural resources, cheap and abundant labour, or even capital stock and more on the capacity to create new knowledge and to apply it rapidly, via activities in ever-broadening space and time'(Carnoy et al., 1993:6). Thus, the crucial factor in transnational organization of this global economy has been the development of new information and communications technologies, increasingly integrated into a global technological infrastructure. There has also been an emergence of the 'elite of the global information economy' who are the crucial problem-solvers and strategic brokers of the new knowledge-based economy (Robins, 1999:37). Several authors have noted that policies of New Labour in Britain strongly support the idea of 'information super highway' (*ibid.*, 41; Webster, 1999:74).

What, then, does this ideology of global networks based on information economy and cities provide us with a vision of new urban development? What has the technological advancement to do with what is actually occurring as a consequence of global transformation? The global information economy is based on the capacity to create new knowledge and to apply it in ever-broadening spaces. It is the aim of the proposed study to question which factors promote 'knowledge creation' and which block this in transnational urban spaces.[5]

2. 3. City as Place: Transnationalisation, Power, and Inequality in Urban Geography

Sassen argues that 'place is central to many of the circuits through which economic globalization is constituted' and that one strategic type of place is the city (Sassen, 1999: 177). Similarly, King maintains: As a place of production, consumption, administration, or culture, the city is embedded in a global economy' (King, 1990:69). A focus on cities decomposes the national economy into a variety of sub-national components, some

profoundly articulated with the global economy and others not.

According to Sassen (1999), introducing cities in the analysis of economic globalisation allows us:

a) to see the multiplicity of economies and work cultures in which the global information economy is embedded;

b) to re-conceptualize processes of economic globalisation as concrete economic complexes situated in specific places, and we can argue that much of the multiculturalism in large cities is as much a part of globalisation as is international finance;

c) to specify geography of strategic places at the global scale, places bound to each other by the dynamics of economic globalisation.

The infrastructure of activities, firms, and jobs that is necessary to run the advanced corporate economy is needed to be uncovered. Because rather than simply invoking the power of multinational corporations as the explanatory key of economic globalisation:

a focus on place and production takes us to the range of activities and organizational arrangements necessary for the implementation and maintenance of a global network of facilities, service operations, and markets; these are all processes only partly encompassed by the activities of transnational corporations and banks (Sassen, 1999:180).

Thus as Sassen maintains: 'We recover a broad range of types of firms, types of workers, types of work cultures, types of residential milieu, never marked, recognized, or represented as being part of globalization processes' (*ibid.* 181).

Various accounts of globalization refer to the issues of power, inequality and conflict. Lash and Urry provide framework for what they see as 'a complex dialectic of global *and* local processes' (Lash and Urry, 1994:284). Harvey (1989:293) argues that

the 'collapse of spatial barriers does not mean that the significance of place is decreasing' and as 'spatial barriers diminish so we become more sensitized to what the world's space contain' (cited in Lash and Urry, *ibid.*, 303). It may be suggested that human beings are capable of using their reflective capacity to resist at a local level, the collapse of spatial boundaries which globalisation entails (Eade, 1997:9). The flows of capital, information, images, and people across the globe can lead to 'new formulations of place at the local level as people pursue a critical stance towards the global economy of signs and space' get these reformulations of locality may be undertaken in order to attract global capital, and those working within the new information society and the new service class in particular (*ibid.*).

In this regard, the new urban economy is highly problematic. This is a fact particularly evident in global cities and their regional counterparts. It sets in motion 'a whole series of new dynamics of inequality' (Sassen, 1999:181). The new growth sectors — specialised services and finance — contain profit-making capabilities vastly superior to those of more traditional economic sectors. Although the latter are essential to the operation of the urban economy and the daily needs of residents, their survival is threatened in a situation where finance and specialised services can earn superprofits (*ibid.*).[6]

According to King, in the history of urbanisation in Britain, or especially in the history of individual cities, not much exploration has been undertaken regarding how this situation came about as part of a larger international process.

Many cities have become 'strategic arenas in which global capital structures its operations' and the 'accompanying transnationalization of labor includes both highly skilled and unskilled immigrants' (Holston and Appadurai, 1999:14). With regards to the effects of transnationalisation on nation-states, Holston and Appadurai argue that:

1. Transnationalisation initiates a new dynamic of inequality that significantly reduces common allegiances and civilities.

2. As mostly non- or post-nationals, people feel 'they are temporary transplants'. They are likely to retain primary loyalty — at least in cultural terms — to "diasporic identities" (*ibid.*, 12).

3. Transnationalisation generates a new global network of cities through which capital and labor pass. The fluidity of this network causes nation-states to modify their organisational, and especially legal, structure to attract global resources (*ibid.*, 12-13).

3. Re-conceptualising Multinationals: Organisational and Individual Responses to Globalisation

3. 1. General Backgrounds of Japanese MNCs / TNCs

By introducing multinational/transnational enterprises as an organisational form as part of the historical analysis of urbanisation in a specific *place*, it will be possible to examine a specific case of re-formation of the city as a transnational space in the light of globalisation.

As an empirical phenomenon, multinational corporations (MNCs) have existed at least since the nineteenth century, and some argue for an even longer history (Westney, 1999:11). Overall, over recent years, in automobiles, consumer electronics and, most recently, information and communication technologies, Japanese MNCs have proven highly successful, contributing to 'a massive shake-up of established — and expanding — corporate interests in the West' (Webster, 1999:65).

Westney analyses the evolution of research on multinational enterprises in general, and Japanese MNCs in particular. Academic studies of MNCs as an organisational form date from the early 1960s. In the 1960s and 1970s, definitions of the MNC varied. However, one common element was that 'it engages in international production and operates plants in a number of countries' (Westney, 1999:11).

First Japanese MNCs moved to the newly industrialising countries of south-east

Asia for cheap labor, and they moved to the USA and the EC for access to markets. The rising popular interest in Japanese management practices and in the management of multinationals abroad has resulted in growing numbers of research in these areas. Increased attention has been paid to researching various aspects of the management systems of Japanese organisations in attempts to explain success of the Japanese economy in world markets. However, initial optimism concerning the smooth transfer of Japanese ideologies and organisational practices from expatriate Japanese managers to foreign employees gave way to recognition that intercultural processes are exceedingly complex (Sackmann et al.,1997).

The 1980s demonstrated that Japanese factory organisation could be transferred to plants overseas and that close working relationships could be developed between factories in Japan and their 'sister plants'. Since the end of the 1980s, however, Japanese MNCs have been widely considered as being faced with the need to change management systems at home if they are to succeed in building effective multinational corporations though Japanese companies were not unique in having to face organisational changes at home. During the 1990s, two new trends were seen. The first trend was 'the move beyond simply identifying the problems and barriers faced by Japanese firms as they internationalize'. Many researchers proceed with careful empirical analysis of the processes by which companies deal with the problems overseas as well as at home. The second trend was 'the move from an undifferentiated model of the "Japanese MNC" to an examination of differences across industries, across firms, and across locations' (*ibid.*, 25).

3. 2. Creation of Negotiated Cultures

On a practical level, the intensification of cultural flows described by Appadurai (1990)results in the need to handle 'problems of intercultural communication' (Featherstone, 1995:90) in the context of multinationals, too. In some cases this leads to

the creation of 'third cultures' which have a mediating function. This may be recognised in the cases of emergent cultures developed between Japanese expatriate managers and local employees in Japanese multinationals overseas (Beechler and Bird, 1999). Sumihara's (1999) study of performance appraisal in a Japanese corporation in New York reveals that individual action can be a source of social production and reproduction because, in drawing upon the two kinds of knowledge, individuals act recursively in a certain direction in time and space (Sumihara, 1999:94). The actions are recursive, or self-reproduced, based on that knowledge. Such knowledge is not static, but is subject to change through experience and learning (*ibid.*).

Analysis of one particular group shows that spontaneously created intercultural harmony and synergy are possible. With roots in sociocultural anthropology, researchers in this stream employ traditional inductive methods of their discipline. One of these methods involves long-term participant observation undertaken in conjunction with an extensive series of ethnographic interviews conducted with a wide range of informants (Sackmann et al., 1997).

Graham (1993) has provided ethnographic research into the transfer of a Japanese model to a car assembly plant in the USA. In the UK, Delbridge (1995) has contributed to this field by detailing worker's experiences of a just-in-time/total quality management system also outlining a significant impact on social relations of the adoption of such systems. Sharp (1997) also has provided detailed descriptions of the work experience of a manufacturing line in an international joint venture between a European and a Japanese organisation in the UK. Based upon the results of participant observation, she has provided vivid accounts of the emergence and interaction of subcultures on the shop floor.

In the analysis of their case studies of two Japanese multinationals in the USA and in Germany, Brannen and Salk focus on how organisational actors use their various cultural identities and affiliations to participate in and influence a new work setting. They

summarise as follows:

> Organizational culture as negotiated entity evolves as a dynamic, ongoing, and changing subtotal of interpersonal negotiations around organizational issues as they come up in real time over the course of organization's history. ...cross-cultural actors frequently face situations where no repertoires exist, so they create something new for both parties—working cultures particular to and evolving with the multinational context at hand (Brannen and Salk, 1999: 57).

When members from two or more distinct national and organisational cultures come together, a 'negotiated culture' emerges. The 'negotiated culture' approach views multinational organisations as settings in which members of different cultures encounter one another. From this perspective, national or organisational cultures that multinational organisational members bring can be recombined or modified through the ongoing interactions among members. Tnus the patterns of meaning and agency in the organisation arise from the cultural negotiations of its members. Brannen and Salk maintains that in analysing cultural negotiations, the following critical determinants should be taken into account:(*ibid.*, 39).

   (a) the specific history of the multinational;

   (b) the number and training of the individuals involved in the interactions;

   (c) the relative balance of power and influence among the individuals;

   (d) the balance of power and influence of the national cultural groups;

   (e) the extent of a priori knowledge of the other's culture, and;

   (f) the degree of internationalisation of the individuals and their respective organisational cultures.

It should be remembered that globalisation is causing researchers engaged in cross-cultural organisational research to reconsider the notion of 'culture'. When culture is

viewed as contested, temporal, and emergent, the researcher must seek to capture the volatility of a culture construct. Also, it is suggested that any interpretation of culture necessarily reflects the background and values of the ethnographer (Clifford, 1986; Sackmann et al., 1997; Sakai, 2000).

3. 3. Knowledge Creation in MNCs

So far the focuses have been on 'person-to-person interaction', and the notion of 'negotiated culture' carries 'a powerful undercurrent of adaptive learning' (Bird and Beechler, 1999:8). While Japanese firms are often held up as example of 'learning organizations', there have been few studies of this 'learning in the context of extended international operations' (*ibid.*).

Nonaka (1995:83-90) has defined a dynamic pattern of organisational learning whereby an individual's learning is merged with that of others over time, in a dynamic spiral. He suggests a five-phase model in the knowledge conversion process linking one person to another, and thus capable of facilitating learning within the firm.

Nonaka (*ibid.*, 59) draws on Michael Polanyi's (1966) distinction between 'tacit knowledge' and 'explicit knowledge'.[7] He argues that human knowledge is created and expanded through social interaction between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge, which he calls as 'knowledge conversion' process. It is social processes among individuals not only limited *within* an individual.

The 'tacit' dimension of knowledge is acknowledged in other literature. For instance, Teece (1981:86) argues: 'When knowledge has a high tacit component, it is extremely difficult to transfer without intimate personal contact, demonstration, and involvement. Indeed, in the absence of intimate human contact, technology transfer is sometimes impossible' (cited in Nonaka, 1995:223).

Nonaka argues that the organisational knowledge-creation process used by Japanese companies can work across national boundaries, citing a case illustrated by *Nissan's*

Primera Project (ibid., 200-212). A further step towards the theme of 'global knowledge creation' is taken with a case illustrated by *Shin Caterpillar Mitsubishi REGA Project.* This is a story about two companies forming a joint venture to develop a global line of hydraulic shovels. This case demonstrates that the newly formed Tokyo-based company, *Shin Caterpillar Mitsubishi,* surmounted many obstacles and successfully developed and marked the REGA series of hydraulic shovels for a global market *(ibid.,* 212-222). Here, Japanese engineers learned how to externalise tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, and internationalise it. It also shows how American engineers learned how to socialise tacit knowledge from interaction with other people or direct experience on-site, and internationalise it.[8] Discovering and remedying weakness, both at the individual and organisational levels, holds the key to an effective organisational knowledge-creation process on a global scale.

Building on such previous research, it is the aim of the proposed study to develop a better understanding of the factors that enhance 'global knowledge-creation' and wise use of research results in understanding ongoing globalisation processes. The key questions have to do with factors that advance organisational knowledge creation on a global level. Which characteristics promote 'knowledge creation' and which block this? These may be categorised in four ways, as follows:

- characteristics of the multinational organisations;
- characteristics of 'knowledge' created by the organisations and user groups;
- characteristics of modes of dissemination or linkages between organisations, and;
- characteristics of the social domain that the research enters.

4. Research Sites and Methods

4. 1. Region, City and the New Town: Some Historical Backgrounds

The City of Birmingham has a population of 960,970 (census 1991). It is governed

by Birmingham City Council, which had a budget of around £1 billion for 1998, employing a total of 25,727 people in 1996/1997. On all these counts, it is the largest local authority in Great Britain, including London, as London is at the moment divided into numerous local authorities. Ethnic minorities form just over one fifth of Birmingham's population.

The city of Birmingham lies in the middle of the Metropolitan Area of the West Midlands (this area covers the territory of the former West Midlands County Council, established in 1974, and abolished in 1986. It remains in use as a basis for statistics, however). There are six other local authorities in this area; Wolverhampton, Dudley, Coventry, Solihull, Walsall, and Sandwell. The two largest among these are Coventry and Wolverhampton, each with a population of around 250,000. All of them are largely urbanised and industrialised. Total population of the area is 2,551,700, making it the second largest urban area by population in Britain after London.

The West Midlands metropolitan region is largely urbanised and industrialised, situated about 110 miles (180 kilometres) north-west of London. The region has been at the centre of the British metal and engineering industry since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, development of the city of Birmingham and its rise to a position of first provincial British town occurred rapidly during the 19th century and are closely linked to its industrial development. Birmingham's traditional specialities are the manufacture of motor vehicles and the processing of non-ferrous metals; it also used to be known for production of small arms, jewellery, and small metal products. Today, it remains a major industrial centre and is recovering from the economic crisis that affected industrial Britain in the 1970s and 1980s. The City Council is trying to diversify the industrial base by developing new, high value, high growth activities such as telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and computer software/hardware services (Economic Development Programme 1997/1998, Birmingham City Council). Finally, Birmingham and the West Midlands metropolitan   region are surrounded by the West

Midlands region, which comprises five counties: Warwickshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, and Herefordshire, which are mainly suburban or rural.[9]

It is worth mentioning one of the New Towns in the West Midlands region in terms of its relationship with Japanese investment. Telford is a New Town,[10] one of 25 new towns built by the Government over the past 50 years, all of which are located close to large cities. Their main purpose has been to provide a better living environment for people moving out of congested inner city areas. As an international town—a multi-cultural town—Telford has many links with, and influences from across the world. Telford now has 152 overseas companies employing 16,000 people. The highest numbers of foreign-owned companies are from USA (40). However, there are 16 Japanese companies located in the town offering 6,500 jobs. The reason for this high level of Japanese investment is that in the early 1980s, many Japanese companies were seeking manufacturing bases in Europe to enable them to maximise opportunities offered by the European Market. Telford was fortunate that it was able to offer a first class relocation assistance package with offices in Japan, UK government financial aid, and green field development sites. The town also had good communications with Europe and a population which was welcoming to new companies and ideas. Japanese companies in Telford have shared much of their culture and added much to the area. They are proud of their investment and achievement in Telford and keen to integrate with and support the community.[11]

4. 2. Research Methods

Thomas Eriksen (1995:290) elucidates some general points concerning the consequences of globalisation for anthropological thought. He points out that classic fieldwork has become insufficient as the sole method of collecting the data and insights required to understand social and cultural life on the planet. Therefore, fieldwork must generally be supplemented with additional sources giving access to the wider context of

the phenomena being explored through participant observation.

In particular, the information and communication industry is of specific interest for the proposed study. The structure of telecommunications industry of UK and Japan will be examined, and organisational linkages between different sectors within the 'Information, Computer and Telecommunications' industry in the area will be investigated. The structure of the global telecommunication and information technology industry as well as state-of-the-art transnational business operations, will be studied. For example, British Telecommunication plc, the world's leading provider of telecom services, has recently revealed that it would jointly develop *Intelligent Distributed Management System* with a leading Japanese provider of comprehensive information solutions for the global marketplace. It is hoped that ethnographic study of information management and organisational 'knowledge creation' of some of the Japanese and British corporations located in the West Midlands region will be conducted.

Quantitative data will be combined with narrative accounts from interviews and attempt to reconstruct the 'story' of lived experiences of globalisation. Sakai, who studied Japanese bankers in the City of London, maintains that 'the analysis of stories rather than pursuing "facts" turned out to be a distinct advantage' (Sakai, 2000:12).

We can see how these managers, who are involved in international business, perceive their cultures, including their values, ways of thinking, lifestyles, attitudes to work and religion, a sense of belonging, and so on. This is the great advantage of life-story interviews, which could open up a new approach to organization studies in this era of globalization (*ibid.,* 13).

The oral history/life-story method has the advantage of 'allowing the possibility of obtaining people's views of the world at the same time as revealing their position in the "imagined community"' (*ibid.,* 12).

Initially, conducting interviews with both Japanese and British professionals of

global information economy in the area to understand their 'life-world' will be essential. In order to draw a broader picture of the influence of 'globalisation' onto the region, interviews will be conducted among Japanese expatriate managers in multinational corporations of different industries (such as electronics and the automotive industry), of different places (Birmingham, Derby, Telford, etc.), and of different sizes, also with the families of expatriate managers; British counterparts in multinationals and their families; British employees of Japanese MNCs; city planners, and those working in local agencies who promote globalisation processes. What are their images of 'globalisation' and what are their perceptions of 'success' like in a transnational world?

The underlying assumption of the proposed study is that, if the city, organisations and individuals wish to cope with challenges posed by 'globalisation', creation and invention of some specific 'local' knowledge will be indispensable. How is 'local' knowledge created and how is it disseminated as 'information' and 'images' of a particular locality? *Socioscapes* (Albrow, 1997) of the city and multinationals as organisations offer us some frameworks for tackling the issue of ongoing processes of globalisation.

Notes

(1)   See Sakai, 2000:245.

(2)   As for ethnography of 'boder-crossing entities', see Hannerz (1997).

(3)   As Graham puts it, 'Questions of agency and local policy tend to be ignored in the simple recourse to either generalized, future-oriented debates, or to macro-level, binary models of societal transformation'(Graham, 1999: 10).

(4)   Appadurai distinguishes between five dimensions in global cultural flow in the contemporary world. The *ethnoscape* refers to 'the landscape of persons who continue the shifting world in which we live': tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles,

guest workers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree. The *technoscape* means the 'global configuration...of technology' which in important ways shapes the flow of cultural meaning, and it includes the uneven global distribution of technology. The *finanscape* is the flow of capital, which has increasingly become disembedded from territories. *Mediascapes* refer to the distribution of electronic capabilities to both produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, film production studios, etc.). *Ideoscapes* are concatenations of images, but these are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power, or a degree of this (Appadurai, 1990:296-300).

(5) As Castells posits it, 'information becomes the critical raw material of which all social processes and social organisations are made' (Castells, 1994:21). Stehr (1994) points out the emergence of 'knowledge societies'.

(6) These new inequalities in profit-making capacities of economic sectors, earning capacities of households, and pricing in upscale and downscale markets have contributed to the formation of informal economies in major cities of highly developed countries. Such informal economies can be interpreted as a negotiation between (a) these new economic trends, and (b) the existing regulatory frameworks that were engendered in response to older economic conditions (Sassen, 1999:181).

(7) Nonaka describes characteristics of 'tacit knowledge' and 'explicit knowledge' as follows: Tacit knowledge is personal, context-specific, and therefore hard to formalize and communicate. Explicit or 'codified' knowledge, on the other hand, refers to knowledge that is transmittable in formal, systematic language. Tacit knowledge is created 'here and now' in a specific, practical context and entails what Bateson (1973) referred to as 'analog' quality. Sharing tacit knowledge between

individuals through communication is an analogue process that requires a kind of 'simultaneous processing' of the complexities of issues shared by the individuals. On the other hand, explicit knowledge is about past events or objects 'there and then' and is oriented towards a context-free theory. It is sequentially created by what Bateson calls 'digital' activity (Nonaka, 1995: 59-61).

(8) It shows what socialization can do to turn such potentially destructive clashes into immensely valuable chances for innovation. The synthesis is a synergy of Japanese and American strengths. Japanese strengths can be represented by the effective use of socialization and self-organizing teams. American strengths, on the other hand, rest on externalization and combination (*ibid.*, 221-222).

(9) The information is cited from *Report According to the Grid for City Templates of the MPMC* Project by Romain Garbaye; http:// www. unesco. org/ most./p97city.htm.

(10) As one of the main growth centres in the West Midlands region the population has grown steadily from 74,000 in 1968 to 123,000 in 1996. The population is forecast to grow to 136,000 by 2006.

(11) These are some of the linkages that have been established:

- The first Japanese company to establish in Telford, Maxell UK, made a gift of cherry trees and these form a beautiful cherry grove in the Town Park.

- Children of Japanese executives attend local schools, and share and explain to their fellow students the Japanese holidays–for example, local companies fly fish kites during Boys' week.

- Many Japanese students also attend 'Japan School' on Saturdays where they undertake further work to maintain their cultural heritage and keep up with Japanese educational requirements. (However, the number of Japan School pupils is reducing, as the number of Japanese staff located in Telford reduces as a result of manufacturing companies becoming more established.)

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グローバライゼーションによる都市空間と知識の再編成
－イギリス・ウェストミッドランド地域における日系多国籍企業の経験－

〈要　約〉

北川　文美

　本稿の主題は、グローバルな資本・情報・人・技術の移動により国境を越えた知識が生成され、新たな都市空間が作り出される過程を分析することである。イギリス・ウェストミッドランド地域における日系多国籍企業の経験に焦点を当て、グローバライゼーションによりイギリスと日本の社会システムが相互に与えた影響と、それらが地域に及ぼした影響とを考察する。

　本研究は社会科学において二つの貢献をする。第一に、文化人類学で用いられる民族誌の手法を、国境を越えたマクロな多国籍企業の活動に適用する。第二に、グローバライゼーションが都市空間に及ぼす影響について、具体的事例の調査を通して議論をより豊かにすることを目的とする。