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Which Britain? Which England? Which North?

If a dog bites a man in Bond Street, that's news; if a man bites a dog in Chorlton-cum-Hardy or Stoke-on-Trent, that is merely to be expected.

(old Fleet Street dictum; Hopkins 1957: 12)

All geographical locations in England are equal but some are more equal than others.

(Dodd 1986: 4)

The City, the West End and Westminster are the boundaries of opinion-forming Britain.

(Adonis and Pollard 1997: 100)

To focus upon the geographical dimension within British politico-cultural studies is to engage with a number of problematics. On the political side there are simple spatial images such as the 'North–South divide' but once the nuances of culture are added new layers of complexity are created. The result is that the politico-cultural spaces of Britain are confusing both to the British people in general and to those who study their collective quests for identity. In fact we can begin by problematizing the very idea of there being a 'British people'—certainly there is a segment of humanity who have (or will have when they reach the age of 18) the right to vote in United Kingdom general elections, but this state citizenship cannot be translated automatically into a British nation who celebrate their 'Britishness'. In fact British national practices are most conspicuous

in the unionist communities of Northern Ireland, the only part of the UK which is geographically outside of the island of Britain!

If not simply British, who are the natives of Great Britain? The reality is that when it comes to defining 'nations' you can pick any number between 1 and 7 to describe the constituent indigenous people(s) of the UK:

- *one nation*—British (imperial and unionist view);
- *two nations*—English and 'Celts' ('Anglo-Saxon' view);
- *three nations* —English, Scottish, and Irish (Scottish view—see Steed (1986));
- *four nations*—English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish (sometimes denoted WISE as anti-immigrant, extreme white view);
- *five nations*—English, Welsh, Scottish, Ulster unionists, and Irish nationalists (all 'nations' explicitly represented in Parliament, except, of course, the English);
- *six nations*—English, Cornish, Welsh, Scottish, Ulster unionists, and Irish nationalists (the Cornish nationalists have won some local political representation);
- *seven nations*—'Southern' or 'Real' English, 'Northern' English, Cornish, Welsh, Scottish, Ulster unionists, and Irish nationalists (for such a division of the English, see Osmond (1988))

Of course, these various 'nations' have variable contemporary credibility but in the modern cultural maelstrom none can be ignored.

This complex national stratification interacts with the simpler 'North–South' geographical model—which permeates so much popular and scholarly discourse on divisions of Britishness—to generate further conceptional tangles. The Home Counties are the focus point of this spatial configuration in a pattern of nested spaces at four geographical scales: (1) the Home Counties—London's metropolitan region– is formally part of (2) England, which is formally part of (3) Britain, which is formally part of (4) the United Kingdom (was the British Isles, now Great Britain and Northern Ireland). The clarity of this conceptualization is in the identification of the Home Counties as core area; compared to other states it is a particularly comprehensive core, dominant politically, economically, and culturally. However, given our nested spaces, which space is it that the Home Counties are core of—England, Britain, or the United Kingdom? The answer to this question affects what the North is and can seed confusion. For instance, in his chapter entitled 'The North–South Divide in England' Rob Shields (1991) uses the terms 'British North' and 'North of England'

interchangeably—his North–South divide map (p. 209) includes Wales but not Scotland in the area shaded as 'British North'. In strictly locational terms, of course, the north of England is 'middle Britain', the area between the English core and Scottish border (Taylor 1993).

Much of the geographical confusion inherent in Britishness stems from a particularly dominant conception of Englishness which Colls and Dodd (1986) have shown was only constructed between 1880 and 1920. In this chapter I explore the question as to whether this century-old, imperial politico-cultural outcome is ripe for revision under contemporary conditions of globalization—is 1980–2020 to be another watershed for Britishness as profound as the imperial one? If this is indeed the case then this is a period of fundamental politico-cultural choice for the citizens of the UK. Hence the argument of this chapter is organized through three questions ordered by geographical scale: which Britain? which England? which North? In the first section I discuss the 'English presumption' which equates just part of Britain with its whole; the second section deals with the 'rural presumption' which idealizes villages as the essential England; and the third section approaches the monolithic presumption which treats 'the North' as a singular and inferior region. Each section concludes with a *fin de siècle* challenge to these 'traditional' positions: devolution, Cool Britannia, and shopping malls respectively. Since this is an argument about choices, the chapter concludes with my own politico-cultural preference in a discussion of which world. Under conditions of contemporary globalization, I promote a very different geography of identity, not territorialist but city-centred in a global and European space of flows.

Before I embark on this questioning there are two important disclaimers I have to make. First, I will not be dealing with the United Kingdom as a whole, clearly the cultural and political issues surrounding the contested location of Northern Ireland in the UK is a distinctive topic in its own right which deserves many more words than I would be able to allocate to it here. Second, as readers may have guessed by my listing of possible 'indigenous nations' above, the multiculturalism consequent upon 'the empire coming to Britain' is not addressed until a final brief discussion of a *fin de siècle* opportunity offered by cosmopolitan cities.

Which Britain? The Land of the English versus Multinational State

England, it has been said, has too much history (Grainger 1986: 12). This intriguing observation makes the English the obverse of Eric Wolf's (1982) description of non-Europeans as 'people without history'. Putting to one side exactly why the English might be in this particular privileged position, we can add a further complicating fact: there is one prominent European people without history—the British! Obviously there is some compensation going on here; the surfeit of English history is in lieu of the lack of British history. It seems the British created the largest empire in the world but somehow failed to create a British history to accompany it. Instead, English history flourished and assumed the mantle of the necessary historical backcloth for imperialism: it was the 'expansion of England' that led to the British Empire. Only recently—since the political rise of non-English nationalisms in the 1970s—has this geographical anomaly been seriously addressed with the beginning of a new school of explicitly 'British history' (Grant and Stringer 1995; Taylor, 1997*a*). All this is symptomatic of what J. H. Grainger (1986: ch. 4) calls 'the English presumption'.

As the largest component of Britain, especially in population and wealth, England, in many foreign languages and in English itself, is commonly taken to mean the whole of Britain. For instance, on 14 August 1914, newspapers reported 'ENGLAND DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY' (Grainger 1986: 50). This was during the premiership of Viscount Asquith on whose gravestone it states 'Prime Minister of England, 1908–1916'. Actually there has never been a Prime Minister of England; the office of Prime Minister only evolved after England disappeared as an independent political entity through union with Scotland in 1707. It is testament to the power of the English presumption that this early twentieth-century, Scottish-born Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland could be posthumously celebrated as the political leader of just part of his realm. Of course, such geographical errors are never neutral. The English presumption—in Bernard Crick's (1997: 15) words, treating 'English as the adjectival form of citizenship of the United Kingdom'—turns the Scots, Welsh, and Irish into invisible peoples, hidden by an everyday political lexicon (Haseler 1996: 31).

Formally the relationship between Britain and England is quite straightforward: the former defines a state, the latter one of its constituent nations. In reality, however, the situation is usually con fused. One rare piece of evidence on comparative uses of British

and English can be found in the 'Britain in Pictures' series (published in the 1930s and 1940s by Collins). In Table 8.1 books are classified by their titles in terms of whether their subject matter is designated as British or English, e.g. *British Sport* and *English Cricket*. Of the original eighty-nine titles, four have no place designation, two refer to London, two to Scotland with one each for Wales and Ireland, leaving seventy-nine divided between Britain and England in the ratio 48:31. But the interesting point is that the balance between English and British varies greatly by subject matter. British is more represented in environmental (as an island) and state topics as might be expected but the intriguing area is in cultural matters where the balance is even. Visual and intellectual cultural persons tend to be British, language and artistic cultural persons tend to be English. But the latter is particularly conspicuous with matters pertaining to home: country houses, gardens, garden flowers, at table, and, of course, women and children are all 'English'. Hence, although the people are 'British' in Table 8.1, many of the key traditional attributes for national self-identity are 'English'.

The basis for these British English distinctions can be found in the historical cultural politics of Britain. With the formation of Great Britain in 1707, the Scots entered the Union as 'north British' but the idea of the English as 'south British' was never a starter. In the eighteenth century the English resisted the use of the name Britain to replace England in international affairs (Colley 1994: ch. 3) but gradually a *modus operandi* evolved whereby Britain became accepted for most foreign purposes—relations with an external Other—but with few or no domestic implications. This remarkable political achievement was made possible because '[t]he British polity refrained from major internal enterprises [and] did not press definitions of identity' (Grainger 1986: 52–3) resulting in a state 'cultural politics' which patronizes the non-English (Crick 1997: 15). That is to say, the English presumption may be insidious but it has remained just what it says it is, a presumption not a dictate.

The result of this cultural politics is a confusing mixture of national identities. Outside England, dual identities have been constructed, so that, for instance, Scottish identity exists alongside British identity; a person may call themselves 'Scottish and British'. But the equivalent phrase 'English and British' has no meaning since, for the English, to be English is to be British (Osmond 1988). This has been called a fused identity and provides the cultural underpinning of the English presumption. This fusion is hardly a conscious adoption; in a recent interview with Richard Hoggart asking him

Table 8.1. What is 'British'? What is 'English'?

British	English
(a) 'Natural' phenomena	
Horses	Weather
Birds	Landscape
Wild flowers	
Wildlife	
Marine life	
Insect life	
Dogs	
Islands	
Trees	
(b) State and state-wide institutions	
Government	Bible
Statesmen	Church
Rebels and reformers	Social services
Trade unions	Education
Seamen	Public schools
Soldiers	
Merchant adventurers	
Battlefields	
Postage stamps	
Universities	
In the air	
Red Cross	
(c) Cultural institutions and practices	
Dramatists	Poets
Romantic artists	Novelists
Portrait painters	Letter writers
Cartoonists	Music
Photographers	Ballet
Historians	At table
Orientalists	Country houses
Philosophers	Gardens
Scientists	Inns
Medicine	Villages
Botanists	Cities and small towns
Journalists	Sporting pictures
Clubs	Water-colour painters
Polar explorers	Cricket
Mountaineers	Pottery and china
Sport	Books
Maps and map-makers	Essayists
Craftsmen	Popular/traditional art
Furniture-makers	Women

Table 8.1. continued

British	English
Drawings	Children
People	Life
(d) Economic practices	
Sea fishermen	Farming
Railways	Rivers and canals
Engineers	
Ports and harbours	

Note that England/Britain is already 'deindustrialized'!

about his identity he admits to being 'puzzled by the difference for an Englishman between Englishness and Britishness' (Anon 1997). If such an outstanding social thinker about England and the English as Hoggart is perplexed, we can begin to appreciate just how deep in English culture the fused identity lies. Many other examples of such confusion could be quoted. Perhaps the most notorious is that of Raphael Samuel (1989) in his monumental survey of patriotism who tells us in the preface of a late decision to change the 'patria' from England to Britain it is hard to imagine anyone other than an English person not being sure what to call his or her nation (Taylor 1991: 147). We can conclude that there is an important identity divide in Britain, not just in terms of national identities, but also in the manner in which Britishness is handled.

Fin de siècle challenge: devolution. Contemporary constitutional reforms are undermining the English presumption. Devolution to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland provides political identities to their respective cultural distinctive characters. This process is not particularly new: 'Home Rule all round' was part of the Liberal solution to Irish resistance to British incorporation from 1885. The failure of this policy with the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 put the issue of Scottish and Welsh political autonomy on the back-burner until the rise of their respective nationalist parties in the 1970s. Ironically the result of devolution is that the English presumption has politically backfired: in the new multinational state only the English have no parliament or assembly of their own; the Scots, Welsh, and Irish MPs in Westminster can vote on many English matters where English MPs cannot reciprocate because power has moved to Edinburgh, Cardiff, and Belfast.

Which England? The Land of Villages versus Political Modernizers

It has not gone unnoticed that the English do not have a 'homeland' as such, rather they have the Home Counties, a corner of the country masquerading as representative of the whole. This reflects the tendency towards exclusiveness in the practices of Englishness (Haseler 1996). Unlike other nationalisms where ideology and actions promote the inclusiveness we call nation-building, Englishness has never been a typical form of national identity because it has been intrinsically linked to class divisions. In this way exclusivity has been central to the formation of Englishness. The classic example is in the use of language where, unlike other nations who use language to unify, English accents are all important to differentiate hierarchically. At the top is RP (received pronunciation, otherwise known as 'posh English' or BBC English), the English spoken by the Home Counties' upper classes who constitute about 3 per cent of the population but wield an exorbitant amount of power (McCrum et. al. 1992: 3–8). This very real association with power means that in England we have language schools to teach English speaking to English people– elocution lessons are sold on the understanding that social and economic advancement depends on how you sound. But it is almost certainly the case that if you need elocution lessons it is too late; real power derives from attending exclusive public schools with their well-trodden pathways into the ancient universities, the guards, and the City. All of this is very class-selective as are the prime summer haunts where the 'English' need to be seen: Royal Ascot, the Henley Regatta, Wimbledon, the Lord's Test, Cowes Week, Epsom Derby Day, and Glyndebourne. These social events are all highly concentrated geographically in the Home Counties, a throwback to the 'Season' when aristocratic families visited their London homes. And at the centre of this social whirl is the monarchy residing officially in Buckingham Palace and relaxing at the family home, Windsor Castle. Tom Nairn (1988) calls this world the Crown Heartland, a social realm which is distinct and separate from most of England and the vast majority of the English but, nevertheless, has taken on Englishness as its mantra.

Behind this social structure there is an England of villages, a presumption that everything good about England is rural. This is the great irony of the Englishness constructed a century ago: a rural make-over for the most urbanized country in the world (Howkins 1986). In H. V. Morton's (1927: p. xi) phrase, the English village is still 'the unit of development' behind Britain's greatness, the necessary spiritual underpinning of England. This has created a unique national image which excludes most of the people, the non-rural. Furthermore this rural idyll has a specific regional setting, the thatched cottages and village greens are most definitely not in the north of England. For the latter there is the space myth which Shields (1991: ch. 5) has described: excluded England as the 'Land of the Working Class', industrial, urban, and northern. This was the geographical outcome of the Industrial Revolution being reinterpreted as an historical aberration, quintessentially un-English (Wiener 1981; Taylor 1996).

There is a real sense in which this excluded England is England's Other (Taylor 1993). The exclusive Englishness of the twentieth century has developed precisely to eliminate the dirty, unpalatable working parts of England from influence and power, using class leadership to define the nature of English nationalism to be the very opposite of the experiences of the majority of the English people. This unique national project has therefore succeeded in defining national Self in opposition to an internal national Other. In so doing it has dismissed most of the English as second-rate people living in second-rate places in their own country (Horn 1970: 37–8). From being the land of the future in the mid-nineteenth century (Taylor 1996), the North was relegated to a working adjunct, necessary in war but otherwise to be looked down upon. There is a wonderful example of this in H. V. Morton's (1942) *I Saw Two Englands*. Written to contrast pre-war England with wartime England, the book unintentionally tells us much more about differences in space than of time: it is the geographical differences which most conspicuously define his 'two Englands'. A total of 187 pages are devoted to describing his 1939 summer trip from Kent (as 'Garden of England') in a circle to Northamptonshire (as an 'agricultural shire') via Sussex, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, and Huntingdonshire. The monarchy, aristocracy, and church, feature greatly in stories of great buildings used as historical stages for stories of English heroes and heroines. This is the 'pre-war England' which needs saving from foreign invasion. There are 84 pages on his 1939 autumn trip which goes west, and then up through the Midlands to the North. Because of wartime restrictions locations are less precise, but in the west he visits an aircraft factory, a flying school, a naval base and a tank exercise on Salisbury Plain. In the 'dreary, red brick, industrial Midlands, a region always hideous and deformed' (p. 238) he visits factories making tanks, shells, and anti-aircraft guns. In the 'North country', which is a 'queer country' and found to be 'strange' (p. 251), he visits a munitions factory, a large shipyard, and a fishing

port. This is Morton's 'wartime England' inhabited by 'the average provincial' (p. 232) gearing up to protect 'pre-war England' with its surfeit of history. Going into several editions, this popular wartime book put the 'two Englands' firmly into their respective places.

Fin de siècle challenge: 'Cool Britannia'. In a speech in 1993 John Major evoked rural England ('old maids cycling to holy communion through the morning mist') in a way which recalled his prime ministerial predecessor Stanley Baldwin's famous speech on England in 1924 ('the corncrake on a dewy morning') (Paxman 1998: ch. 9). The 1997 election ushered in a new government of self-ascribed modernizers for which the traditional rural presumption had no attraction at all. Instead we have the idea of 'Cool Britannia', the very opposite of traditional, at the cutting edge of new styles and fashions in a high-tech world. This political conflict is reflected in the elimination of hereditary (largely rural landowning) peers in the House of Lords and the plans to abolish hunting by hounds. The fact that the British beef industry could be almost destroyed by incompetent government with hardly a protest while fox-hunters were able to mobilize hundreds of thousands to march through London illustrates the importance of the 'cultural' as opposed to the 'economic' in the construction of the traditional English countryside.

Which North? Inferior Industrial Region versus Cities of Consumption

Following Edward Said's (1978) logic for European construction of the 'Orient', we can identify a southern English construction of the 'North': this was the process whereby industrial Britain was 'northernized' as an inferior place. This external scripting means that 'no coherent "north country" has been invented in its own right: it exists mainly in contrast to southern England' (Paxman 1998: 157). One implication of this is that *regional* political assertion as traditionally conceived may not be the best way of returning cultural dignity to middle Britain. As a regional label, the North (or North-East or North-West) has no meaning except with respect to the rest of England; it is a compass point not a people. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when questions of regional autonomy or devolution are discussed there is confusion as to exactly what the North refers to geographically. In the 1991 'English Regional Government' debate in the House of Commons, for example, it was the North which dominated proceedings but there was no

agreement on such basic matters as where were its boundaries, where was its 'capital city', and whether there was one 'big' North or several 'little' norths (Hansard 1991; Taylor 1993). As these MPs, largely from northern English constituencies, debated, an outsider might well wonder whether there really was such a place as the North.

Within Englishness the North has been constructed as a simple monolithic concept. The North = industry equation drew a curtain across the country and hid the great contemporary variety of landscapes which make up middle Britain: the Don Valley and the Lake District provide typical contrasts. Of course when the cultural curtain was opened to (southern) English visitors they shielded their eyes from the industry and saw only pre-industrial historical sites (Taylor 1991). In his immensely popular *In Search of England*, H. V. Morton (1927; 24 reprints to 1937, and published as a Penguin paperback as late as 1960) purposively 'skirts Black England' (p. 181) in order to see 'the real north' (p. 207) of ancient cities (Chester, Durham, York) and countryside where 'monster towns and cities of the north of England are a mere speck in the amazing greenness of England' (p. 186). But the North is much more than this 'black versus real' English duality. It is largely made up of great nineteenth-century cities which have spent much of the twentieth century trying to come to terms with the decline of their industrial base. This is the real 'real north' as experienced by the vast majority of people who have lived and continue to live in middle Britain, not that 'real north' embodied in the southern search for something comfortably like themselves in an alien land.

It seems to me that any construction of new geographies of identity to challenge 'inferior, monolithic North' must begin with the 'mere specks', the great modern cities of middle Britain which have been the prime geographical victims of traditional twentieth-century Englishness. In this new geographical imagination an amorphous northern region gives way to a land of city regions centred on Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Leeds–Bradford, Sheffield, Hull, Middlesbrough, Preston, and Carlisle. This is a world of 'multiple norths' which derives from the geohistorical development of the area as specialist production complexes during the Industrial Revolution. Each city and its hinterland developed their own industrial character as they supplied the world market with different mixes of manufactures. Blanket designation as the North has not created a new homogeneity: Liverpool is as different from Manchester today as it has ever been. This variety has continued to be recognized in literature and art which focuses upon

'working-class heroes' but it is all lost in the prime image of the North as England's internal 'Other'.

Of course, Englishness was invented precisely to subvert the image of a land of cities. Behind the rural anti-industrialism there lay an antithesis to cities as centres of power and culture. As Paxman (1998: 162) notes: 'Having invented the modern city, not only did the English monied elite recoil in horror, they pretended it had nothing to do with them.' Hence, Paxman goes on to argue, there has been no development in the twentieth century of an 'English urban tradition' (p. 174). He quotes D. H. Lawrence:

> The English character has failed to develop the real *urban* side of a man, the civic side. Sienna is a bit of a place, but it is a real city, with citizens intimately connected with the city. Nottingham is a vast place sprawling towards a million, and it is nothing more than an amorphous agglomeration. There *is* no Nottingham, in the sense that there is Sienna. The Englishman is stupidly undeveloped as citizen. (p. 165)

For industrial-Midland Nottingham read any northern town or city. There was, of course, a civic tradition which developed in the cities of industrial Britain—the great Victorian town halls, city parks, and public hospitals remain as monuments to this era—but that was before the rural make-over of England which has dominated the twentieth century.

Seeing middle Britain as a land of cities immediately subverts the space myth of the North as the Land of the Working Class. Cities define functional not homogeneous regions: city regions are socially coherent entities inclusive of all classes, not uniform lower class ghettos. Hence simplistic North–South divide rhetoric is undermined by the existence of affluent northern city suburbs such as 'comfortable Didsbury' and 'handsome Hallam' (Shields 1991: 239) for the simple reason that all the major cities have their 'little Surreys'—this is how Tynesiders refer to their poshest housing estate, Darras Hall. But the affluence of these cities has reached far beyond these few richest places in functional city regions.

Fin de siècle challenge: consumer modernity. In a recent survey of British shopping centres ranked in terms of turnover, Oxford Street, London, is listed second behind Tyneside's Metro Centre (Hetherington 1996). This triumph for an out-of-town shopping mall is a reflection of the Americanization of British everyday life but it also tells us about the transformation of northern cities (for consumer Newcastle, see Davis 1991). There are other successful malls—Meadowhall and Trafford Centre near Sheffield and Manchester respectively—as well as vibrant shopping centres in Newcastle (Eldon Square), Leeds (with its 'exclusive' Harvey Nichols men's store), and a redeveloped Manchester (courtesy of the IRA). As consumer modernity has replaced industrial modernity throughout the western world, the old North–South divide looks more and more like a parochial British obsession with an old myth. The contemporary Blairite political project can be interpreted as representing consumers, both north and south.

Which World? Territorialist versus Network Identities

Devolution, Cool Britannia, and shopping malls each in their different ways have recently undermined the image and nature of the Britain, the England, and the North bequeathed by late Victorian and Edwardian forebears. But to understand fully the processes involved in these transformations we need to look outside the bounds of the UK at what is happening in the wider world. The three challenges identified above at this *fin de siècle* are each constituents of wider social forces which have come to be called globalization. A highly integrated world economy combining global production with global consumption based upon global exchange, distribution, and communication has created opportunities for some, difficulties for many, and disasters for the rest. Generally speaking, as part of the core zone of the world economy, the UK has experienced more than its fair share of opportunities. This is most obviously the case for London and the Home Counties.

With New York and Tokyo, the City of London is one of the three great financial centres of the contemporary world economy. Beyond banking and finance there are an additional range of advanced producer services (e.g. accountancy, commercial law) which constitute global cities (Sassen 1991). Working in a global labour market, practitioners and professionals providing global city services have commanded 'global salaries'—levels of pay previously associated only with the 'stars' of that precocious global industry, Hollywood films. There was a time when millionaires were measured by their total assets; today salaries and bonuses adding up to more than a million pounds a year are commonplace in the City. Adonis and Pollard (1997) term these people the new 'Super Class'.

In other countries, the Super Class may be geographically spread as in Germany and the USA within their numerous global or world cities, but in Britain London completely dominates—Adonis and Pollard estimate that 'upwards of three-quarters of the 8,500 top private sector earners' work in or are associated with the City. This

concentration of wealth and economic power means that London is probably more dominant in the UK today than even when it was the imperial capital of the largest empire ever constructed (p. 100). However, as before,

> Britain beyond the Home Counties does not feature on its collective horizon; yet within that narrow sphere, the size of the Super Class is sufficiently large for it to have equipped itself with a highly developed infra-structure of private schools, hospitals and leisure facilities. (p. 100)

Same pattern but a different process: the Home Counties were the home-base for the British Empire, now they are a home-pad for servicing global capital.

What does this mean for the rest of England and Britain? I have previously argued that there is a sense in which the UK may not be large enough to accommodate both London and England (Taylor 1997*b*). There are many circumstances where the City of London's global interests might well be at deviance with those of the rest of the country. Are we leading towards the curious situation where the capital city is the enemy within? This is where the North, and indeed England and Britain in general, viewed as a land of many cities, is so important. As the capital city, London was always an exception to the blanket condemnation of things urban within Englishness. After all it was the central place around which the 'Season' unfolded every summer. Globalization thus far has favoured London and Cool Britannia has been a truly metropolitan phenomenon, but the consumer revolution shows that Britain's provincial cities have not been immune to the recent development of a highly integrated world economy. The question is, how can these lower-tier cities of Britain compete with global London?

Most resistance to globalization has been cultural, invoking national particularity against a supposed universal globalism as represented, for instance, by the role of the English language in global media. National political mobilization is typically territorial in nature, using boundaries to resist transnational processes. It seems to me that this spatial strategy is inappropriate for the Britain beyond the Home Counties core. It is not just that there can be little language resistance in the UK (even in the 'Celtic' nations English is easily the majority language) but territorial organization may in fact be intrinsically counter-productive for such a highly urbanized population. Alongside the tradition spaces of territories, globalization promotes new spaces of flows in what Castells (1996) calls a network society. At one level this is a world city network within which a European city network is nested with London at its apex. And it is at this continental level that the emergence of competition between alternative spatial configurations is occurring as network versus territorial strategies.

This competition is expressed as a choice between a Europe of Regions and a Europe of Cities. It is best illustrated in north-east Spain where Catalonia and Barcelona are embarked on quite different geographical strategies (Morata 1997). After the Catalonian regional government eliminated its major political rival, the Barcelona metropolitan authority, in 1988, the city of Barcelona devised a city-based strategy called the C6 network linking Barcelona to five other cities (Montpellier, Palma de Mallorca, Toulouse, Valencia, and Zaragoza). In contrast Catalonia has set up a western Mediterranean Euro-region, a contiguous cross-border territory including Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrénées. The C6 network and the Euro-region are alternative tendencies in the contemporary reshaping of European space (Morata 1997: 297). In general, with the Maastricht Treaty setting up the Committee of Regions the territorialist strategy has a head start over the Euro-cities approach but, in contradiction to this, contemporary forces of globalization would seem to privilege a space of flows in a world city network. The balance between these two forms of space in the reshaping of Europe, and with it Britain, is yet to be decided.

In Britain, this choice of spaces is epitomized by two campaigns for constitutional change: the *City Region Campaign* and the *Campaign for a Northern Assembly*. The former campaigns for a middle layer of government which is city-centred, the latter for an assembly for the official Northern Region. This is a territory defined by central government consisting of the five most northern counties of England. It is not at all clear how any new sense of identity can be developed in an area whose main communality seems to be remoteness from the state officials who defined it (Elcock 1997: 430). The alternative for this area is three city regions (based upon Carlisle, Newcastle, and Middlesbrough) reflecting the spatial organization of the lives of the people who live in the region. My preference for this city solution is based in part from the fact that urbanized Britain developed in a past space of flows defined by free trade and imperialism and declined precisely when designated in territorialist terms as the monolithic North. But the important questions relate to the present and the future.

London is building a position at the apex of a world city network which will include, within the European sector of the world economy, Paris and Frankfurt and possibly one or two other cities such as Milan and Berlin. This apex will not exist at the top of a simple

city hierarchy as some have suggested; rather there will be a complex network of niches and layers with cities finding their unique locations in the new information-led world economy. But will the apex cities rule this arrangement in the sense that their interests prevail? With London, Paris, and Berlin aboard, it would seem we could expect little resistance from the three strongest European states. But what of the other cities? London versus Newcastle or Manchester is no contest but co-operation between cities in different strata could well even things up politically. Manchester, Newcastle, and Leeds, with Birmingham, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, might find they had common interest with the likes of Bordeaux and Marseilles, Cologne and Stuttgart, Seville and Valencia, Venice and Turin, and so on, against London and the rest of the apex. Such leagues of cities might create a very new European balance of power in a world space of flows.

Fin de siècle opportunity: cosmopolitan cities. With cities to the fore, cosmopolitan identities can again begin to rival national identities. The world of global cities is also the world of global diasporas leading to multiple layers of identity with state, national, regional, diasporic, and city identities all available. In the case of the English and their British state, the rural English presumption has acted as a geographical exclusion to non-white citizens, concentrated in cities and with no historical link to the idealized English landscape (Kinsman 1995). A multicultural Britain needs to identify with its cities.

Further Reading

Hasseler, S. (1996), *The English Tribe*, London: Macmillan. This provides a comprehensive survey of the peculiarities of the English and their Englishness and emphasizes the need for fundamental political change.

Osmond, J. (1988), *The Divided Kingdom*, London: Constable. With chapters on all the major 'nations' of the UK including the northern English, this volume represents the political and cultural concerns which emanated from the rediscovery of the North–South divide in the 1980s.

Paxman, J. (1998), *The English: A Portrait of a People*, London: Michael Joseph. A comprehensive review of traditional Englishness and its current crisis of identity. Good on the absurdities and contradictions in this most unusual nationalism, the author nevertheless is optimistic for its future.

Shields, R. (1991), *Places on the Margin*, London: Routledge. This important book attempts to locate place at the centre of social theory and uses the 'space-myth' of the North of England as one example to illustrate his thesis.

Taylor, P. J., et. al. (1993), 'Political Geography Debate No. 5: The Break-up of England'; *Political Geography*, 12. This comprises a lead paper on 'the meaning of the North' followed by six comments and reply to provide a variety of views on the position of the North in the UK.

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