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A metageographic community (MGC) is a construct that identifies patterns of an increasingly demassified society and accounts for flexible spatial dynamics facilitated by personal media. It acknowledges the meaning individuals ascribe to local places, to the breadth of their social networks over distance, and it incorporates communications media as essential to dynamic community building and persistence. In addition to providing a theoretical foundation for this construct, I have created a model by which to evaluate the coherence of demassified communities at four levels of association. A preliminary application of this model to two "invisible" ethnic groups in the United States has revealed that the coherence of even very small groups might depend on more than traditional characteristics of religious adherence, language retention, propinquitous clustering, or local landscapes. These communities have developed distanciated networks built on the frequency and types of long-distance interactions as well as the complexity of domestic and transnational networking; that is, they incorporate and depend on multiple locations. An MGC does not dissipate with distance, nor is it restricted or defined by limitations of place or boundary, although each place adds its own richness. By developing MGCs, even small, dispersed groups, such as older ethnic groups, transnational migrants, refugees—or other spatially "fuzzy" networks—can build a persistent and effective community across otherwise heterogeneous social or political space. As a dynamic, demassified entity, MGCs can have tremendous political, cultural, and economic influence not limited by physical or political boundaries. *Key Words: cumulative critical mass, distanciated communities, flexible networks, invisible geographies, personal media, spatial dynamics.*

地理元社区（MGC）是一种结构，它识别日益分散的社会和说明个人媒体促进的灵活空间动态。它承认个人归于各地的意义，他们的社会网络距离的广度，并且它也包含作为动态社区建设和持续的必不可少的的传播媒体。除了给这个结构提供理论基础，我创建了一个模型来评估分散社会在四个层面上的相干性。此模型在两个"无形"的美国族裔群体的初步应用显示，即使是很小的群体其相干性可能不仅仅取决于宗教坚持，语言保留，相关聚类，或当地景观的传统特色。这些社区开发了基于远程交互频率和类型以及国内和跨国网络的复杂性之上的远程网络，也就是说，他们运用并依赖多个位置。MGC 不随距离消散，也不因地方或边界的局限而受限制和界定，虽然每个地方添加其自己的丰富性。通过开发 MGCs，即使是小的分散的群体，如老年人族群，跨国移民，难民—或其它空间的"模糊"网络—都可以跨越否则是异构的社会或政治空间而构建一个持续有效的社区。作为一个充满活力的，分散的实体，MGCs 可以有不受自然和政治边界限制的巨大的政治，文化和经济影响力。*关键词：累积临界质量，分散社区，灵活的网络，无形的地域，个人媒体，空间动态。*

Una comunidad metageográfica (CMG) es un constructo que identifica los patrones de una sociedad crecientemente desmasificada y da cuenta y razón de una dinámica espacial flexible facilitada por medios personales. Reconoce el significado que los individuos adscriben a los lugares locales, en el àmbito de sus redes sociales a la distancia, e incorpora los medios de comunicación como esenciales para la construcción y persistencia de comunidad dinámica. Además de proveer una fundamentación teórica para este constructo, he creado un modelo con el cual evaluar la coherencia de comunidades desmasificadas a cuatro niveles de asociación. La aplicación preliminar de este modelo a dos grupos étnicos "invisibles" de los Estados Unidos, revela que la coherencia de grupos incluso muy pequeños podría depender de características diferentes a las tradicionales de adherencia religiosa, retención de lenguaje, agrupación de parentelas o paisajes locales. Estas comunidades han desarrollado redes distanciadas construidas a partir de la frecuencia y tipos de interacción a larga distancia, lo mismo que de la complejidad de encadenamientos domésticos y transnacionales; esto es, ellas incorporan múltiples localizaciones y dependen de ellas. Una CMG no se disipa con la distancia, ni está restringida o definida por limitaciones de lugar

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o límite, aunque cada lugar la enriquezca con nuevas dotes. Al desarrollar una CMG, incluso grupos muy pequeños y dispersos, tales como los grupos étnicos mayores, migrantes transnacionales, refugiados—u otras cadenas espacialmente "volátiles"—pueden construir una comunidad persistente y efectiva en un espacio social o político por lo demás heterogéneo. Como entidades dinámicas y desmasificadas, las CMGs pueden llegar a tener tremenda influencia política, cultural y económica, no demarcada por límites físicos ni políticos. *Palabras clave: masa acumulativa crítica, comunidades distanciadas, redes flexibles, geografías invisibles, medios personales, dinámica espacial.*

We have entered the era of the *demassified* society. Personal media and flexible networking are changing the ways we are using space, and they are changing our landscapes as well as our notions of boundaries. The term *personal media* refers to those communications technologies over which an individual can exert personal control by both creating and disseminating information. Older personal electronic media (cassette tapes, videotapes, and fax machines) have been commercially available since at least the 1960s, but due to financial and technological barriers, mass distribution using these media was limited to all but commercial sources. To distribute messages, either one physically had to transport video or audiotapes to their destinations, or their messages had to broadcast from a central location to fixed receivers requiring an extensive and commercially driven infrastructure. Messages by fax were dependent on a phone line hardwired in place. Yet, because of their relative mobility and the ability of private individuals to create their own messages, these early personal media were still important in effecting broad-scale social change over distance. For example, while still exiled in France, the Ayatollah Khomeini smuggled cassette tapes of his addresses through an underground network for his supporters to broadcast in Iranian mosques, ostensibly sowing the seeds of the Iranian Revolution from abroad. During the Cold War, videotapes of family and news events from the West were smuggled to loved ones behind the Iron Curtain, and clandestine "video parlors" in Eastern European countries developed in spite of the restrictions set by authoritarian regimes (Ganley 1992).

Today, a profusion of ever more efficient and portable fax machines, computers, cell phones, camera phones, instant messaging devices, Bluetooth devices, BlackBerries, and smart phones, many including Internet access, are changing the source, form, speed, and distribution of information. These media are putting more generative power in the hands of smaller groups and individuals that increasingly can vie for control traditionally wielded only by state authority or corporate media institutions. Additionally, as powerful instant communications have brought world events into our homes, to our computer screens, and to our cell phones, they also have brought a plethora of data to our fingertips. Users no longer need to be hardwired in place; a single individual can launch mass distributions of messages electronically from anywhere with the press of a button, and information or misinformation can travel around the world with a single keystroke faster than one can check that information for accuracy. The transmission of information through personal media has potentially explosive implications for both the individual and society much as the printing press had on preprint societies, or as the telegraph had when it lifted information electronically off the printed page and transmitted it over distance at the speed of sound (Pred 1973; Schudson 1978; Eisenstein 1979). Users can access information or coalesce with relative ease around specialized interests and causes regardless of distance, create a groundswell of influence, access or subvert official channels, or even challenge established political systems to an unprecedented degree. Growing numbers of spatially separated individuals, or individuals who otherwise would be restricted from accessing or generating broadcast messages through *mass* communication, now use personal media that do not require expensive hardwired networks and cumbersome physical infrastructures. Personal media today emphasize the immediacy of connection, social proximity, and shared identity without boundaries, and they enable users to weave kaleidoscopic patterns of networks across multiple (and mobile) locations.

Changes in the media that transmit information alter the relations between people, thereby altering the possibilities and extent of social and political structures by collapsing both space and time (Innis 1951; McLuhan 1964; Abler 1971, 1975; Brunn and Leinbach 1991). By extension, changes in the way we communicate also can alter the communities we create and the ways these communities exist in the world. Personal media extend what Giddens (1984) described as "the properties which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and . . . lend themselves 'systemic' form" (17). More important, these new technologies enable individuals to use distance as a tool by which to create and manipulate

communities of like-minded individuals regardless of physical location. In fact, dispersion and distance actually can increase the resources for such community formation. Barriers of distance are softening, boundaries delimited by space are warping, and there are new social forces afoot. Communities that traditionally had been dependent on localized critical mass now can create a mobile, cumulative, mass over distance, developing a community (writ large) that is more difficult to detect by looking for it at any one place. These changes affect not only our everyday worlds of meaning and identity but our political and economic worlds as well. In short, we are experiencing a social revolution in spatial dynamics.

Current transnational studies reflect many of the ways advances in communications technologies are accelerating these changes. For example, some studies have emphasized the use of *flexible spaces* that affect economics or the imagined economies of globalization (Knuchel 1994; Light and Gould 2000; Pries 2001; Saxenian 2002; Leyshon, Lee, and Williams 2003; Cameron and Palan 2004). Others have emphasized challenges to nation-states and the permeability of boundaries (Shain 1989; Taylor 1994; Portes 1996; Prasenjit 1998; Joppke 1999; Ong 1999; Schmidtke 2001). The rapid and widespread diffusion and use of personal media clearly facilitates the development of social forms that structure space in innovative ways, and the communities that result are becoming more flexible and responsive to changing collective needs. Therefore, we also need a larger contextual framework that highlights in a more systematic way the emerging structures of this spatial revolution. This article explores some of the common structures of these new demassified communities. It considers the role of spatial location in their formation and maintenance and ways their spatial patterns can vary; it suggests criteria for their analysis; and along the way it suggests ways we might identify the objective evidence of their existence. To this end, I am presenting a theoretical construct called a *metageographic community* (MGC).[1] This construct includes a multiscaled model that can help to systematically identify and map communities that are developing a kind of third force dynamic that otherwise might not appear as clearly by applying more unidimensional research tools. The MGC model will help us identify what a complex demassified community looks like, provide some guidelines for recognizing each of its four levels, and offer geographic evidence of its cumulative critical mass. More important, it will enable us to analyze what MGC communities (writ large) enable people to do as a result of their membership.

Traditionally, a community was composed of a group of individuals with whom one could have daily face-to-face interaction; it was relatively small, intimate, and local. Personal communication and local media were the means by which members of these communities (writ small) developed interconnections, shared cultural paradigms, perpetuated identities, and in other ways made their presence known to others in proximate space. Over time, however, mass media distributions and electronic transmission (newspapers, radio, and television) organized individuals into anonymous mass audiences that shared a regional or national identity or shared other targeted demographic characteristics (Boorstin 1965, 1974; Pred 1973; Weber 1976; Connor 1990). Mass networks subsumed the individual across relatively static space in what was largely a one-way flow of information from source to consumer. Distance and difference were challenges overcome by homogenization through market research. Today, the diffusion of personal media in general, and digital face-to-face communications more specifically, paradoxically has expanded the immediacy of the intimate over greater and greater distances while advertising searches for more effective ways to reach niche markets. Social proximity, enhanced by personal media, can expand or, in some cases, even substitute for the dynamics of geographic propinquity.

Beginning with Webber's description of *nonpropinquitous space* (Webber 1963, 1964) and building on B. Anderson's (1983) idea of imagined communities, a growing number of authors have been developing a core of research that investigates space as a dynamic and malleable social phenomenon. Some seek to identify the dynamics generated where physical place and virtual space connect such as *information space* (Janelle 1968, 1969, 1991; Batty and Miller 2000), *hybrid space* (Batty and Miller 2000), and *bridgespace* (Adams and Ghose 2003). Some address aspects of the social structures and patterns that form as our use of space transcends location resulting in *decentered attachments* (Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc 1992; Vertovec 1999), *communities of practice* (Wenger 1998; Coe and Bunnell 2003), and *heterolocalism* (Zelinsky and Lee 1998). Still others have developed concepts of shared space such as *ethnoburbs* (Li 1995), *pluri-local communities* (Pries 2001), *distanciated networks* (Amin 2002), *multistranded social relations* (Coe and Bunnell 2003), and *cosmopolitical space* (Entrikin 2004). All of these concepts seek to identify ways our memberships in multiple physical and relational spaces create even more complex social structures. So, what are the commonalities among these

conceptualizations, and is there still a place for . . . well, place?

Common Structures of Cumulative Communities

At first glance, it might appear that the relevance of spatial location fades in light of the seeming aspatial dynamics of innovative and mobile communications technologies. As individuals extend their networking beyond face-to-face interaction, they replace dependency on propinquity with dependency on access to and effective use of media. This is the basis for Friedman's flat world hypothesis, that certain technological innovations create a more even platform of opportunity to new segments of the world's population (Friedman 2006); but these technologies are not available to all either socially or regionally (cf. Chapman and Rhodes 1997). National or international regulations differentially affect communication systems, and socioeconomic status affects one's access to technology that might cause an MGC to develop unevenly, if at all. Furthermore, uneven levels of national development (access to electricity), infrastructural completeness (digital or wired networks), cultural traditions (oral vs. written communications), social hierarchies, and access to education can dramatically affect the opportunity and means for individuals to connect. Nevertheless, accessibility to the means of mediated interaction is increasingly becoming an important demographic characteristic, along with literacy, education, economic status, age, race, gender, class, ethnicity, and regional differentiation, that affects and is affected by societal opportunities. Communities are deeply structured entities, layered by the differential historic, cultural, economic, and political experiences, assumptions, freedoms, and social restrictions within which they develop. International relations, intra- and international communications regulations, geopolitical events, and migration flows also can affect the structure and pattern of communities. As Moss (1987) observed, regarding the operational boundaries of a city that "are no longer defined by geography or law, but by the reach of phone lines and computer networks" (536), the extent of communities today is limited only by the range of the technologies that link their members, whereas personal and flexible media reposition the immediacy of the personal and the intimate over distance. The form of communications technology (letter vs. e-mail, newspaper vs. Internet), of course, also affects how immediate and present that community is as part of one's mental map and information threshold.

As people create communities that use space, distance, location, and connectivity in new ways, the communities themselves become more flexible, defined by linkage not limited to specific time or place (Pred 1984), with their boundaries defined only by patterns of connection, identity, and usage. This collapse of space and time has led some within the discipline, as well as many outside (including some university administrators), to question whether geography as a discipline is still relevant in this new, more digital world. To be clear, what is happening today is nothing less than a deep shift in the structure of our spatial relationships altered by personal media and distanciated critical mass to an unprecedented level of mobility and complexity. The nexus of all of these factors, however, is *place*. Multiple belonging, transnationalism, regional integration, globalization—even terrorist cells—are the results of this spatial revolution that is affecting place at all scales, and the demassified communities that drive them are quintessentially geographic.

Metageographic Communities

The common denominator of these new communities is connection through mediated interaction (Janelle and Hodge 2000; J. W. Anderson 2007) and the reflexive spaces that connect them. An MGC is a multiscaled network of like-minded individuals, institutions, and organizations where physical nearness is not essential for the expression or maintenance of collective identity. It is the result of an intensity and frequency of interaction among members who use diverse communications media linking dispersed locations, which in turn form a single cumulative community larger than any one site. An MGC develops as members of a community maintain connections over distance in ways that are fundamental to the community's overall identity, persistence, and meaning. An MGC is metageographic because it exists only as the result of mediated interaction over distance; that is, it exists "above the map" in transmission that is not bound by the proximity of its members in localized physical space.

It would be tempting to assume that an MGC is a recent phenomenon that develops only with modern personal communications technologies (Brafman and Beckstrom 2006), but MGCs also could have developed based on earlier communications technologies, although perhaps more slowly. Historically, long-distance migration, regional integration, and global trade could

not have developed without networks of communication, however rudimentary and slow (Hugill 1993, 1999; Bossuyt, Boze, and Ginsburgh 2001). These networks, although technologically limited and exclusive to some groups over others, brought with them assumptions that conquering distance would be a tool of advantage. Pries (2001) noted that "pluri-local space, created by advancements in communication and transportation technologies, and credited with creating a new transnational dynamics, is something that historically has existed for hundreds of years" (6). He compared the spread of the Catholic Church with the dynamic networking of contemporary groups to suggest that differences between the past and the present today, such as opportunities for unification and influence, are not limited only to a few well-placed individuals or institutions at a limited scale; they are available to a broader range of people in varying circumstances. This argument would suggest, then, that foot messengers, handwritten letters, or even local ethnic newspapers sent home by ship could have provided the networks of community over distance in their day much as fax machines, e-mail, and cell phones do today (Casson 1974; Hugill 1993, 1999). Ancient trade routes and the well-worn roads of the Roman Empire were more than just transportation corridors; they also were examples of early communications networks, a sort of rudimentary Internet (Standage 1998). Gerber (2001) pointed out that many of the criteria defining transnationalism today also apply to historical European groups who migrated to the United States throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Gerber 2001, also see Laguerre 1998). Ostergren's (1988) study of chain migration from Sweden to the upper Midwest in the United States (1835–1915) is a clear example of this dynamic. The difference today is in the volume, speed, and immediacy with which the networking occurs; the extent of the opportunities it provides; and the networking options to which more segments of society have access. Contemporary transnationalism is certainly one social form that results from such networking, but earlier ethnic groups also built networks to share interests and coalesce around concerns.[2] If we look at who connected to whom for what reasons and with what results, we can find networking patterns among older European ethnic communities in the United States that are comparable in several ways to today's transnational populations.

In fact, a good overarching question to probe for the existence of an MGC is to ask who is connected to whom, over what distance, and with what spatial effect. To help answer this core question, I have divided MGCs into four distinct structural levels (Table 1). The first three levels have to do with the formation, scale, and permanence of social structures and the ways these use both location and distance as tools for building community. Level 1 is limited to the relative geographic propinquity of the localized site. Level 2 is the extended localized site where dyadic and informal

Table 1. Comprehensive metageographic community analysis matrix

	What is to be measured	
Metageographic community level	Examples of primary classifications	Secondary classifications
1 Localized site	Functional enclave Historical core Transnational site Individual	Generations Ethnic, transnationals, entrepreneurs, refugees, émigrés
2 Extended localized community (informal)	Extended family visits Voluntary associations Paired associations Local joint ventures	Cultural complementarity
3 Formalized network	Ethnic newspapers or other media networking Regional or national ethnic associations Political organizations Educational programs or institutions Regional business partnerships	Cultural simultaneity
4 Spatial signatures	Impact on or changes to the physical, cultural, or social landscape that reflect the presence of cumulative identity	Cultural Economic Political

or intermittent contacts develop between individuals or local groups at two (or more) separate localized sites (such as between family members living in different towns). Level 3 develops when there is an advantage for a group to formalize its nonpropinquitous mass by developing networks at a regional, national, or international scale. The fourth level has to do with an MGC's objective presence or impact that is measurable on the landscape (broadly defined) in some way. One can research an MGC at any of the four levels, and investigation at one level can lead to evidence in any of the other three.

Preliminary Test Groups and Methodology

An effective test of the MGC construct would be to look at very small and nearly "invisible" or well-assimilated ethnic groups in the United States that have little recognized propinquitous critical mass, yet they have been able to maintain their ethnic identity in place. Their persistence might indicate that they have developed a larger, more distanciated network that provides outside support to their localized community. I chose to evaluate contemporary Norwegian- and Lithuanian-American ethnic groups for this reason. The U.S. Bureau of the Census (2007) reported that individuals of Norwegian ancestry numbered 4,655,711, or 1.5 percent of the total U.S. population, whereas individuals of Lithuanian ancestry numbered 745,888 or 0.2 percent for the same year. There are few studies published about either of these as contemporary ethnic groups; significant periods of migration have ceased, and most traditional cultural indicators such as enclave development, language retention, and endogamy have become, with few exceptions, too attenuated to distinguish them from the larger heterogeneous American population. Nonetheless, Norwegian and Lithuanian Americans constitute the largest self-identified groups of the Scandinavian and Baltic ethnic categories, respectively, in the United States. Although both groups lack large population numbers and have limited visible ethnic landscapes, they have persisted over time. It is likely that this persistence might suggest the presence of MGCs.

Using the comprehensive MGC matrix shown in Table 1 as my guide, my research methodology of these two groups included several on-site interviews with Norwegian Americans in the Ballard district of Seattle combined with an extensive questionnaire administered to the broader Norwegian-American Puget Sound population, investigation of historical documents and U.S. Census Bureau data, and by previous trips to Norway. I also conducted interviews with business people who were part of the support structure for Norwegian entrepreneurs in downtown Seattle, contacted representatives of local universities, and obtained data from a research marketing firm located in Seattle regarding Norwegian-owned businesses in the area. I conducted participant observations of the Lithuanian-American enclave in Omaha, Nebraska, conducted extensive interviews with descendants of Lithuanian immigrants and refugees, mapped Lithuanian-American residential settlement in Omaha, traveled to Lithuania, and conducted historical research using the archives of the local Omaha church parish as well as the Nebraska State Historical Society. In addition, I compared my analysis of the Lithuanian Americans in Omaha with an extensive study of the Lithuanian Americans in Kansas City, Kansas (Kelly 1996). I researched and mapped more than 1,000 Norwegian-American and Lithuanian-American Web sites and compared my Norwegian-American Web site data with data collected by the Washington State Ethnic Heritage Council. I have gathered the pertinent data for each group in support of my first hypothesis that the persistence of these two ethnic groups could indicate the presence of an MGC and loaded these data across the four levels of the MGC analysis matrix. I further have hypothesized that if these two groups have developed MGCs, it is likely that their MGC patterns will be distinct from one another.

Level 1: The Localized Site

In line with many ethnic geographic studies, Level 1 addresses identity expressed at a unique place and at a local scale. I have organized the spatial patterns at this level to include a functional enclave, historical core, transnational site, and residences of isolated individuals not living in close proximity to any identifiable ethnic neighborhoods or clusters. These four patterns are not mutually exclusive, but one function typically will stand out as the prevalent one for the site; functions also can also change over time. To simplify this discussion, I use *ethnic population* or *ethnic group* more inclusively to refer to all individuals who maintain an ethnic identity. This includes descendants of the late nineteenth-century "first wave" or subsequent waves of immigrants and their generations, as well as current waves of transnational migrants, émigrés, expatriates, or refugees, and their generations. I use the term

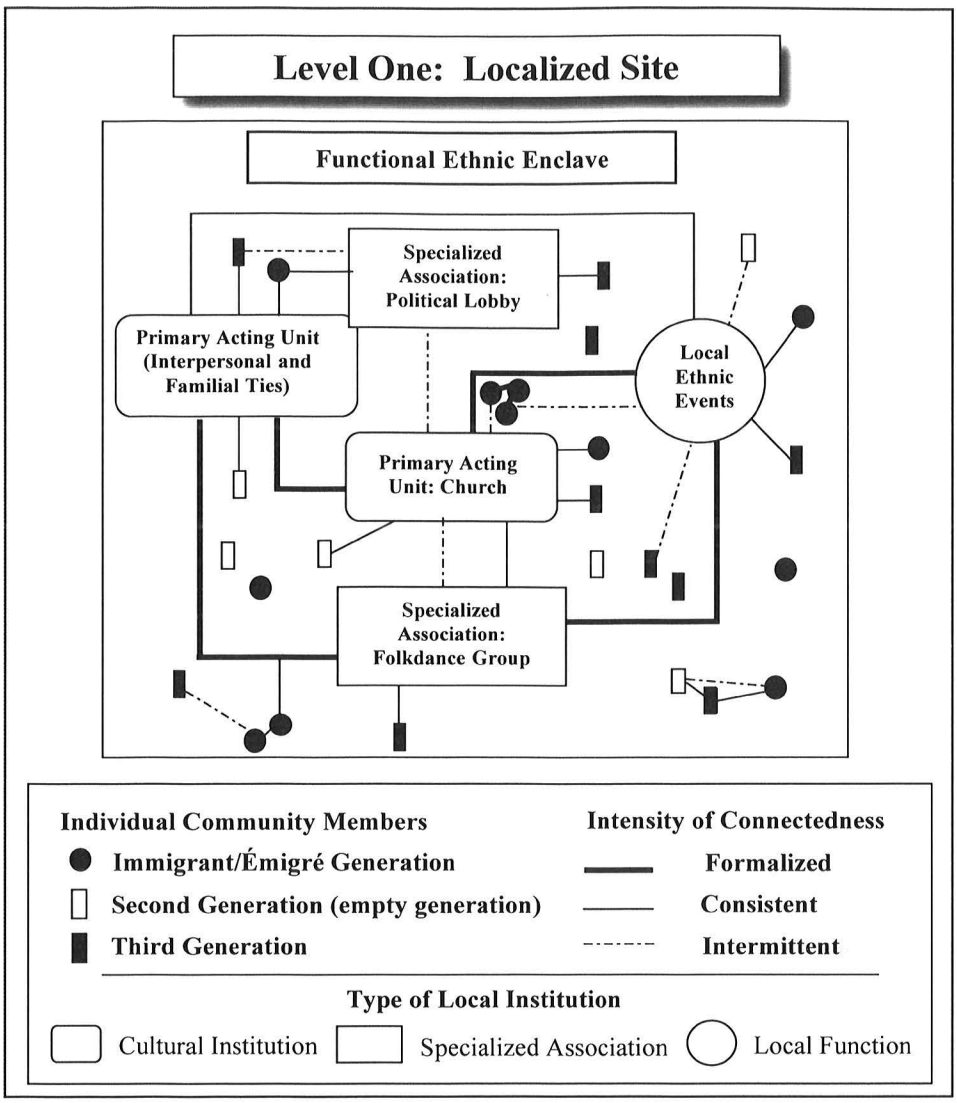

Figure 1. Level 1 of a metageographic community: The localized site (functional ethnic enclave).

localized site at this level because, although a functional enclave more closely approximates a traditional form of ethnic community, a historical core, transnational site, or isolated individuals typically might not. In addition, site does not run the risk of confounding the larger concept of community (writ large) I am distinguishing in this study. Each localized site, from individual to transnational, contributes its uniqueness of place to the cumulative whole, and the mining of unique site characteristics can reveal the potential richness and regional variations of an MGC's cultural and social complexities.

It is likely that the most commonly studied localized site is the *functional enclave* (Figure 1). Borrowing from Norton's (1987) functional region analysis, a functional enclave includes interactions among individuals, families, and institutions as reflexive networks expressed through formalized, consistent, or intermittent ties. By extension, it also includes ethnic residential patterns and evidence of institutional completeness such as churches, voluntary associations, businesses, and social clubs that contribute to the maintenance of an ethnic culture (Breton 1964). Any research that specifies a city or town as an organizing scale of study for an ethnic group and is relatively limited to characteristics within that place would be a Level 1 study. This level incorporates much of the excellent work of traditional ethnic geographies such as those by Jordan (1966), Jakle and Wheeler (1969), Rice (1973, 1977), Marston (1988), and Hardwick (2000), among many others.

The second primary category at Level 1 is a *historical core* that provides a nostalgic or other rooted connection to the history and identity of the group, or it might be the basis for an ethnic tourism industry or pilgrimage site. Investigating activities and visitor records at such a

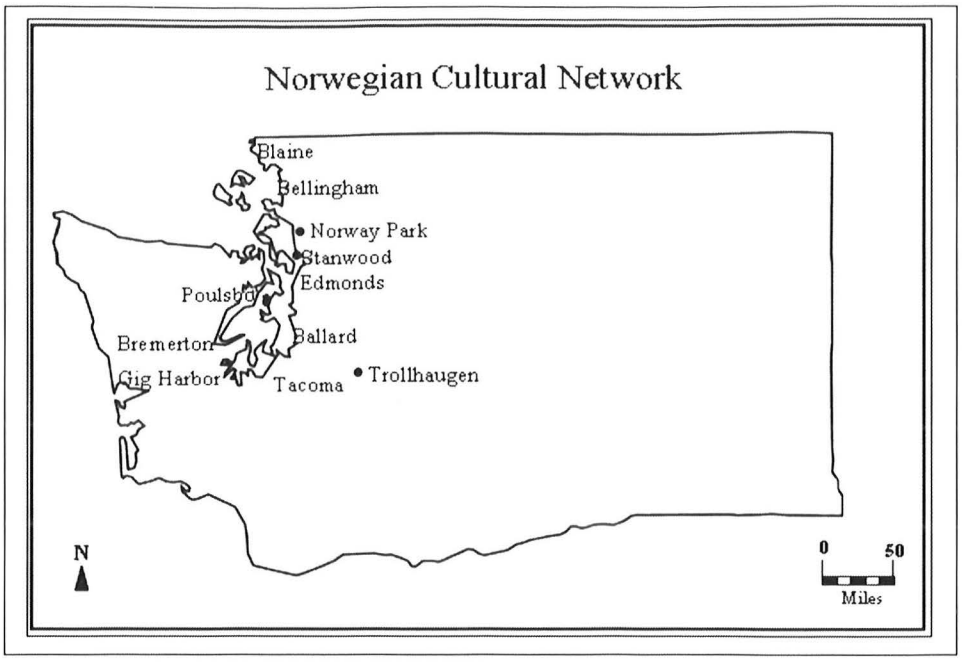

Figure 2. Norwegian-American Puget Sound network.

core could provide researchers with access to the multiple localized sites this core serves. It would be interesting to investigate whether all historical cores always incorporate a functional enclave in the same location. If not, how are such historical cores maintained, who maintains them, and from what distance will contributions and visitors come to support these sites? In addition, what influences do such historical sites have on the larger heterogeneous population in the area? As a result of the initial Norwegian-American settlement along the Puget Sound in 1889 (Figure 2), Stanwood was the site of first effective settlement and has become a contemporary historical core whose annual Founders Day celebration draws Norwegian Americans from Blaine to Tacoma. Other towns in the area have developed somewhat differently. On Vashon Island, located on the west side of Puget Sound, the residents of Poulsbo consciously chose to capitalize on their Scandinavian heritage to develop a tourist industry, mixing Swiss ski chalet façades fronting European souvenir shops with Scandinavian-sounding names, similar to the one in Figure 3. In contrast to these, Ballard, a suburb of northwest Seattle, maintained an active, functionally integrated enclave where ethnic shops intermixed with a culturally heterogeneous downtown area (Figure 4). All of these examples are typical of Level 1 and represent evidence of localized ethnic critical mass. These landscapes indicate that there are (or historically were) sufficient numbers of residents who contribute both personal interest in and financial support for the maintenance of ethnic traditions, commerce, and institutions in that place.

The third primary category for Level 1 identifies a *transnational site*, broadly defined. Transnationalism is identified as a way of living in several places continuously where individuals "experience multiple loci and layers of power and are shaped by them, but they can also act back upon them" (Levitt and Schiller 2004, 1013). Travel paths are continuous rather than discrete, and migration patterns often correspond to shifts in a family's life cycles (Kobayashi and Preston 2007). Individuals "never quite arrive at a destination because they never really quite leave home" (Ley and Kobayashi 2005, 113). Between the 1980s and early 1990s, downtown Seattle experienced an increased immigration of Norwegian business professionals who wanted to invest, develop businesses, or participate in trans-Atlantic joint ventures. They did not want to create a cultural ethnic enclave, and they had little or only sporadic contact with the Norwegian Americans in Ballard or other ethnic Norwegian-American localized sites. By contrast, the Norwegian Americans in Ballard derived their identity from the Norway they or their ancestors left many years before and their goal was to preserve the ethnic culture they remembered with folk dances, language classes, and ethnic parades. The Norwegian language spoken in Ballard dated from World War II, when the majority of the last immigrant wave arrived. The contemporary Norwegians in Seattle were committed to extending their trans-Atlantic businesses and

Figure 3. Although this shop is in Ballard, it is typical of the many Norwegian specialty shops, large and small, found in Poulsbo. This was the only Norwegian specialty shop in Ballard.

investments while their active cultural, familial, and national identity remained secure in their country of origin. They relied on a specialized network of bilingual professionals in Seattle: lawyers, business consultants, accountants, and investment advisors (*Norwegian Enterprise in the U.S.A.* 1988) who were fluent in contemporary Norwegian and English, and they had some difficulty understanding the Norwegian spoken by residents of Ballard. They would, on occasion, shop in Ballard for imported Norwegian specialty items and holiday foods,

Figure 4. Located on Market Street, the main street through Ballard, Johnsen's Scandinavian Foods was mixed in with a majority of nonethnic shops.

and they would contribute to art and education projects such as those sponsored by Ballard's Nordic Heritage Museum (Marianne Forssblad, Director of the Nordic Heritage Museum, interview 8 September 1989 and follow-up telephone interview with author 16 March 2005).

The final primary category for Level 1 identifies *individuals* who might periodically or routinely link to one or more enclaves but they do not live in close proximity to or interact consistently with a residential cluster or enclave. Geographers typically have refrained from studying such individuals, as Adams (1995) has pointed out, because "the mappings of these 'decentered' persons onto geographic space are as unfulfilling as they are problematic" (267); then he suggested ways individuals can become important in geographic studies. In light of the accelerated connectivity of today's personal media, and the geographic flexibility of belongingness, an isolated individual can be as important to broader spatial relationships as clusters, aggregates, or enclaves can. MGCs do not require their members to cluster in any particular kind of spatial configuration, so there are no spatial outliers in an MGC. Uncovering data in this category, however, might be more challenging than for the other primary levels, but the MGC model offers an approach. Once the patterns of functional enclaves, historical cores, and transnational sites for a community have been established and mapped, one could begin searching for locationally unaffiliated individuals. By cross-referencing regional or national ethnic newspaper subscriber lists, museum memberships, visitor records, or contributor lists for various culture centers, one could plot ZIP codes. Then, a geographic information system (GIS) analysis might be able to highlight those vectors representing individuals who are locationally unaffiliated from other localized sites in general proximity.[3] The scale would be crude, at least initially, but researchers might discover at least some individuals who connect to the overall MGC by other than membership within one of the other three categories. We then could investigate how strongly individuals are connected or how influential they might be within the MGC. The resulting database and its analysis could suggest a new way to think about the locus of ethnic identity; that is, identity based on linkage over distance might be stronger and more widely practiced than we suspect.

Secondary Category Classification at Level 1: Cohort Groups. The four primary categories of Level 1 can further be refined according to subcategories that provide greater sensitivity to, and more specific divisions within, the particular group itself. Certainly, the mixture of first through third or even fourth generations in a particular enclave will have an effect on how the structures and dynamics of that enclave evolve.[4] Other subcategories might distinguish between immigrants, émigrés, refugees, expatriates, members of diasporas, or transnationals. Researchers can distinguish the ways these cohorts interact with each other and their respective institutions or distinguish language fluencies, socioeconomic status, gender, or residential segregation patterns, if these were dominant characteristics for the specific group. Each of these identifiers can affect localized sites differently and comparing multiple localized sites in this way could provide a more sensitive, comprehensive pattern of an ethnic group that the study of a single site cannot.

For example, the Lithuanian-American enclave in Kansas City, Kansas, is almost entirely composed of Lithuanian immigrants and their generations from the first wave of migration that occurred between 1880 and the U.S. immigration restrictions of 1924. Their ethnic activities are similar to those of the Norwegian Americans in Ballard, promoting folk culture activities such as dancing, cooking classes, and Lithuanian folk crafts. In contrast, the Lithuanian-American enclave in Seattle has been composed nearly entirely of refugees and their generations. Their activities include language classes, formal educational programs, and political action groups, as well as recruiting business and educational consultants for Lithuania. On the other hand, the Lithuanian-American enclave in Omaha has had a mixture of both immigrants and refugees that effectively split the localized site into competing groups. An MGC analysis of the Lithuanian-American community[5] writ large, by analyzing aggregates of localized sites, would provide baseline spatial or regional patterns relative to the distribution of immigrant, refugee, and mixed enclaves. Should outside forces threaten Lithuania's continued sovereignty, it might also provide insights to or enable us to predict regional responses in the United States. Researchers interested in collaborating on the same ethnic group can use the MGC model to build an interdisciplinary database across multiple localized sites (and levels) to analyze cumulative spatial patterns based on differences in primary and secondary characteristics. Level 1 provides a structure for evaluating the rich cultural characteristics and dynamics that derive from multiple local scales and it provides a framework within which to define aggregates differently.

Level 2: Extended Localized Sites

Most members of ethnic populations have choices among a variety of ethnic and nonethnic groups with which they can become associated (Waters 1990), although members of some ethnic groups have more freedom of choice in this regard than do others. The ability of a localized site to attract those who share ethnic identity largely depends both on the needs of the individual and on the localized site's ability to meet those needs through its degree of institutional completeness. The specific population at any given localized site, of course, differentially affects the types of institutions and overall institutional completeness that serve that population, as we saw at Level 1. But what happens when residents at one localized site interact with residents who share the same ethnic identity at another localized site, and another, and another? Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller (2003) suggested in regards to transnationals that the individual is not the only active agent in transnational migration; members of families or households residing in more than one country also maintain steady relations with each other. Family members provide economic, social, and emotional support and keep family relations, loyalties, and obligations strong across borders. Community implies connection; therefore, we can look more closely at who can and does connect to whom and how and over what distances they connect regardless of location. Furthermore, if we acknowledge that ethnic groups choose to maintain important connections over distance, we can look for the reasons individuals would seek ethnic contacts outside their localized sites and how far outside their localized sites such choices might lead. Once individuals make meaningful connections outside their own localized sites, the foundation for Level 2 of an MGC is established.

In one way, we can think of Level 2 as a simple physical extension of Level 1, measuring family and local institutional networking beyond a single localized site; however, the strengths, requirements, or deficiencies that occur at any given Level 1 site are what drive the development of Level 2. This is why the composition and institutional completeness at Level 1 sites are such key elements for the overall metageographic community. Furthermore, the connections that develop across multiple localized sites can be more than just a desire to connect with family or share ethnic identity in general but to share specific ethnic affinities such as dance associations, political groups, handcraft clubs, or other interests (Figure 5). The map in Figure 2 is the result of an extensive questionnaire given to Norwegian Americans living in the Puget Sound area in which, among other things, respondents were asked why they traveled to Ballard and to what other towns they traveled for what reasons. Three hundred and fifty-three respondents specifically indicated the towns identified on this map as those they frequented to purchase Norwegian goods, participate in activities, and avail themselves of institutional variety on a regular basis.

At first glance, the map in Figure 2 would appear to show that Norwegian Americans have built a chain of

Figure 5. This is a visiting Norwegian folk dance group from Wisconsin performing at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Ballard, Washington.

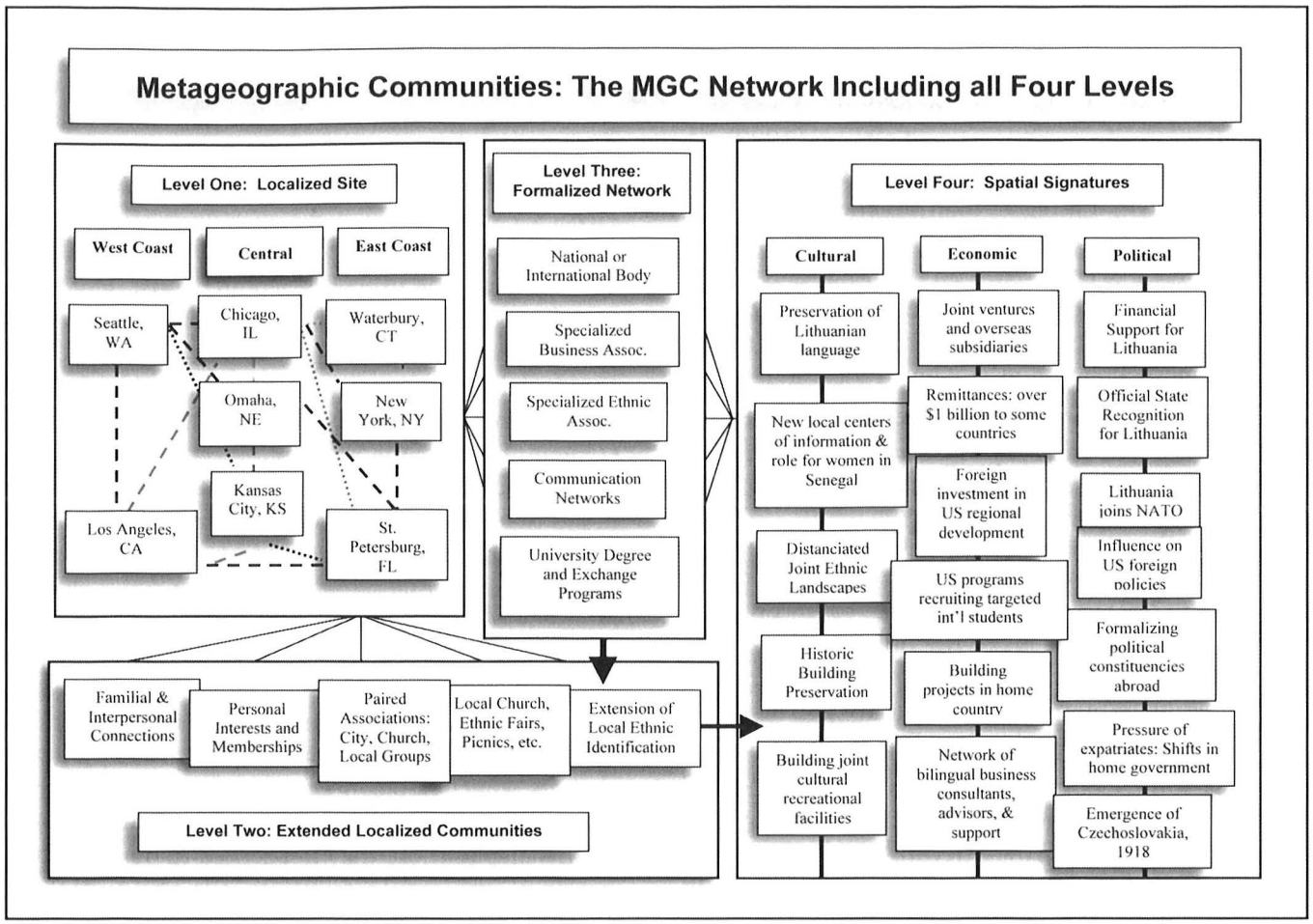

Figure 6. Comprehensive metageographic community diagram. A highly stylized schematic of what a metageographic community network might look like. The importance of specific locations of each localized site is specific to the members' interests, composition, and contributions; but these are secondary (in this example) to the way they are connected and to the measurable outcomes or spatial signatures of those connections.

communities or urban ethnic islands and archipelagos (Zeigler and Brunn 1985) along the Puget Sound, but there is something additional happening here. These localized sites are within driving distance of each other, which provides selective elements of institutional completeness (with some overlap) across locations. What each of these sites does not supply, it can rely on the resources of other localized sites to provide. That is, they all rely on a larger cumulative community, amplifying and supporting the identity of the whole as they interconnect in formal and informal ways for their mutual benefit. What is important for the Norwegian Americans along the Puget Sound, and is a key feature for Level 2, is that no one site is responsible for providing all of the cultural activities, support, or reinforcement for its residents. Viewed in this way, we can begin to recognize the implied dynamics of a broader, more dispersed ethnic community composed of multiple enclaves, historical cores, transnational sites, and individuals; and we can begin more clearly to conceptualize the informal and symbiotic networking that occurs at Level 2.

So, what might an MGC at Level 2 look like? For the sake of space, Figure 6 illustrates all four levels of the MGC model, and I refer to this figure throughout the rest of the article. Level 1, simplified in the large box in the upper left of Figure 6, represents multiple localized sites across the country. The lines between these sites indicate networks of connectivity that are created by extensions at Level 2, and the bar directly below Level 1 represents some of the ways individual members or institutions within a localized site become part of an extended community. Places become integrated and community becomes more of a working association

or operating system based on extensions of proximity that we can map. Looking at communities from the standpoint of the MGC model (i.e., who is connected to whom, over what distance, with what spatial effect), researchers can look for locations of activity places at Level 2, trace the networks that link them, and identify the participants who frequent them or are otherwise involved from whatever distance. At Level 2, we can analyze how and why participants choose to connect, and how the needs, interests, or deficiencies at specific localized sites drive this linkage. Then we can analyze some of the broader implications of Level 2 associations as they contribute to the building of the overall MGC. The comprehensive MGC analysis matrix (Table 1) provides the generalized primary and secondary categories by which we can assess a community's Level 2 development. Here we can begin to see the potential of a single flexible community emerging as individuals at multiple localized sites connect and share in myriad ways, building a broader functional community in contrast to the more traditional and propinquitous community writ small that is limited to a single place.

Level 2 characteristics also are consistent with Webber's (1964, 95) description of a community composed of the "invisible relations that bring the various interdependent business establishments, households, voluntary groups, and personal friends into working associations with each other—into operating systems." For an MGC analysis, these must be categories of linkage we can observe or record in some way. Extended family ties clearly are important due to the ways in which these perpetuate ethnic identity and they also can reinforce or reinvigorate the respective localized sites; but they might not be easy to document without engaging in extensive qualitative research. Kelly's (1996) interviews in the Lithuanian enclave in Kansas City, Kansas, for example, revealed that it was a thriving enclave until its decline with the closure of St. Casimir's Catholic Church in the 1940s. Without a Lithuanian Catholic parish in Kansas City (Level 1 institutional completeness), refugees did not relocate there at the end of World War II. After thirty years, it appeared that there were few Lithuanians or Lithuanian Americans in Kansas City. Then, in the 1980s, a reunion of a single Lithuanian family in Kansas City and a subsequent picnic to which all local Lithuanians were invited produced surprising results. Organizers expected fewer than fifty people to attend the picnic, but over 500 people from the surrounding area gathered that day. Participants then decided to organize The Lithuanians of America in Kansas City that same year. The Lithuanian Americans in Omaha helped with the organization of this group and paid complementary membership dues in a show of support. A single-family linkage at Level 2 and subsequent support through a distanciated network reinvigorated the entire ethnic enclave, which continues to be a viable center for many Lithuanian activities in Kansas City today.

Critical Mass at a Different Scale. As we think about extended localized sites at Level 2, we can begin thinking about critical mass differently as well. The traditional role of critical mass at Level 1 is to support and maintain the institutional completeness of a local enclave or site. If multiple sites share the responsibilities for this institutional completeness across distances, all of the localized sites together support the community's critical mass. In this way, critical mass becomes more widely comprehensive and cumulative. Once localized sites begin linking along any of the primary categories at Level 2, additional reciprocal relationships can develop. This cumulative critical mass, composed of long-term distanciated ties (R. C. Smith 1998; Amin 2002; Coe and Bunnell 2003), provides the framework for *cultural complementarity*. As demonstrated by the Puget Sound Norwegian Americans, members of a distanciated ethnic community might visit Town A for one type of celebration and Town R for another, and Town K might have still other activities or supply other needs. Although one might argue that the locations identified on the map of the Puget Sound respondents in Figure 2 are in regional proximity, the point here is that these are not isolated cultural enclaves; they each depend on a larger communal network to survive and replenish themselves. All of these towns together make up the Puget Sound Norwegian-American community and together, they all contribute to collective cultural complementarity. At Level 2, location is still important: What one location cannot provide, another one can. Investigating how localized sites maintain such connections over time and distance enables us to begin measuring an ethnic group's determination to perpetuate its identity and traditions regardless of the possible attrition, assimilation, or spatial dispersion of its members. In fact, the more limited the population is at any one site, the stronger could be their development of Level 2 connections. One question at this level might address at what distance regional proximity becomes less important than connectivity over greater distances.

As a community becomes increasingly demassified, its institutional completeness becomes more spatially cumulative, and its cultural critical mass becomes

cumulative as well. The distributions of individuals and enclaves can increasingly disperse over distance while they also can become more concentrated in intent, identity, and objectives. This functional interdependency can take place only as individuals connect to other localized sites, institutions, and organizations through distanciated networking. As a single community develops across multiple sites, distance no longer is antithetical to community development. Complementarity actually requires more than one site and, by uncovering a group's complementarity network, we are likely to find indicators of the larger MGC as well. The hypothesis that drives the MGC model at Level 2 is, that if critical mass is not sufficient within a single localized site alone to maintain the institutional completeness that exists or is desired there, then critical mass must come from somewhere else. Marsh (1987) suggested that a similar process was operating for aging anthracite towns in northeastern Pennsylvania. He pointed out that not only was there a strong identification with place, but members who had moved away continued to provide financial support to the facilities and institutions in their old hometowns. If the financial and cultural support needed is stronger than one would expect to come from the population at a single localized site, we can hypothesize that support must be coming from outside; that is, it can suggest the presence of an MGC.

The MGC construct does not suggest that networks maintained over long distances will result in exactly the same sense of ethnic identity as would an enveloping local enclave. Making connections over distance and by conscious choice, however, is an increasingly common mode for many people, and it is clearly geographic behavior to use distance to enhance alternative and concurrent communities at an extended scale. Once we allow that such an extended ethnic community is viable over distance, its only boundary is the extent of the communications systems to which its members have access. Webber (1964) cautioned, however, that sometimes the strongest linkages and the ones that have the greatest significance might, in fact, be those that are most infrequent. Frequency of contact could be one indicator of Level 2 development, recording numbers of visits or cell phone calls or percentage of Internet usage, but importance and meaning are other indicators that are not necessarily correlated with frequency. As more people connect through mobile personal communications networks, the communities and spaces they create become increasingly fluid and spatially quite complex.

Level 3: The Formalized Network

At Level 2, it is easy to suspect that interest, commitment, and involvement can wax and wane, so what happens to a community that depends on such networking when the network shifts, when members change locations, jobs, or interest? Level 3 capitalizes on the networking and complementarity that develops at Level 2 by linking localized sites more formally by means of regional or national associations, newsletters, and Web sites regardless of changes at Levels 1 and 2. At Level 3, the community becomes a fluctuating matrix less dependent on specific location than on connection; it is here that a community begins to build its strongest metageographic presence irrespective of the specific locations or mobility of its members, and it is here that virtual communities and MGCs meet in the building of nonpropinquitous critical mass.

Cultural Simultaneity at Level 3. The formalized memberships at Level 3 reaffirm the same standards, ethnic practices, and traditions across all locations. This is the concept of *cultural simultaneity* by which members share a consistent group identity that is larger than any one localized site and remains relatively unvaried between them (see Levitt and Schiller 2004). Cultural simultaneity refers to those ethnic traditions, lifestyles, or other ethnic expressions practiced at the same time of year, in the same ways, and for the same reasons no matter where members of the group are located. Individuals who move from one ethnic enclave to another are assured of cultural continuity in their new locations, and they can settle with some assurance of familiarity. On the other hand, individuals who move to locations where there are no other ethnic enclaves or sites nearby not only can observe their own traditions, but they also are cognizant that residents of ethnic enclaves in other locations are doing the same. In addition, they can access distanciated venues based on networks at Levels 2 and 3. Cultural complementarity builds on the distinctiveness of sites at Level 2, whereas at Level 3, cultural simultaneity usually includes the perpetuation of a more universal ethnic identity across all sites.

So, what does Level 3 of an MGC look like? Referring back to Figure 6, the vertical bar to the right of Level 1 represents this formalized network. Unlike virtual communities, Level 3 of an MGC commonly is an outgrowth of the spatially based structures developed at Levels 1 and 2. Whereas Level 2 represents the relationships or needs that emanate from a localized site and extend to others in limited physical or social

proximity, Level 3 coordinates wider, more deliberate, and less spatially constrained patterns at a regional, national, or international scale that provides reaffirmation to localized sites. This is where we find the formal national ethnic associations, expatriate or political action groups, media networks, and some of the most striking differences between the MGCs of different ethnicities.

Certainly, forms of media will differentially affect the development, distribution, and efficacy of formalized networks at Level 3. For example, the ethnic press traditionally has been instrumental in building networks of subscribers, contributing to both cultural simultaneity and cultural complementarity. Today, access to and facility with mobile and more personal technologies provides new opportunities. In his study of new information and communication technologies in Senegal, Tall (2004) reported that SONATEL (the national telecommunications company of Senegal) estimated that Senegalese abroad accounted "for nearly 400 telephone lines (or half of the subscriptions) in Kébémer [City]." He further observed that "It is as if the telephone were a means of *extending the home space in the new country*—and this among people for whom the family structure is 'traditionally' based on oral communication" (Tall 2004, 33, emphasis added). Émigrés are instrumental in developing Senegal's telephone networks (Level 3 structures) to enhance their own Level 2 interaction. Furthermore, Senegalese abroad have access to local home FM radio stations via World Space, they listen in real time, and they participate in political debates and exchange of opinions by calling into the shows from abroad:

> With the telephone, radio is no longer merely an instrument for providing information, but is also a tool for communication, i.e., for establishing an interactive and dynamic process of information exchange and communication. Émigrés have begun to create *venues for dialogue* in their host countries in order to preserve identity and create Senegalese "islands" within their adopted country. (Tall 2004, 37, emphasis added)

With the increased speed and availability of electronic communication and transportation options, today even a local press or local broadcast station can have national or transnational distribution. Web sites with hyperlinks to other sites including embassies, businesses, international cultural exchange programs, and direct access to a host of institutions across the country and around the world (Eriksen 2007) provide ubiquitous Level 3 simultaneity without boundaries.

But what constitutes Tall's "venues for dialogue . . . in order to preserve identity" in a host country? Localized sites certainly are venues, and as cell phones, videocassettes, and DVDs become more accessible, even in rural villages that have limited access to electricity, venues are expanding in significant ways. Increasingly for many groups, powerful search engines make an ethnic community's electronic networks easily accessible as resource venues as long as members of the community have the knowledge, skill, and interest to create and maintain them (this would make another interesting study of generations in the use of personal media). I conducted extensive Internet searches mining more than 1,000 Norwegian-American and Lithuanian-American Web sites, collecting and extrapolating data from newsletters, annual reports, press releases, announcements of activities, and public service announcements. I did not test all Web page links to determine if they were active sites, although I tested quite a few. Similar to evaluations of historical or relict landscapes in physical space, I assumed that if these Web sites were on the Internet, and especially if they offered additional, functional links, they still provided evidence of the ethnic community. The Web sites I searched provided a rich and dense data set for each ethnic group (see Table 2). I compared my Web site mining for Norwegian Americans with the data published in *The Directory of Ethnic Organizations in Washington State*, published by the Ethnic Heritage Council of Washington State (1991, 2005), and found the entries were nearly identical. This suggests that such Web site mining can be reasonably accurate and could be used as an initial survey tool for an ethnic group's Level 3 networks. The Web sites I surveyed included formal associations such as Sons of Norway, *Nordmanns Forbunet*, Knights of Lithuania, and the Lithuanian-American Association (with their various regional and local branches). Web sites also included folk dance, choir, and theater groups; media outlets (newspapers, newsletters, radio, and television

Table 2. Survey of Web sites for Lithuanian-American and Norwegian-American ethnic groups

Group	Total states	Ethnic organizations	Folk dance	Media	Schools	Other	Totals
Lithuanians	30	123	36	30	25	106	320
Norwegians	43	438	57	16	67	180	758

Table 3. Sampling of special interest Norwegian-American and Lithuanian-American organizations

Norwegian-American organizations	Lithuanian-American organizations
Cultural organizations	Cultural organizations
Fishing Clubs – 6 of these	American-Lithuanian Council
Hardanger Fiddle Mastery Class	Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies
Norge Ski Club	*Auksuciai* Foundation
Norse Study Circle	Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture
Norwegian Elk Hound Club of America	Knights of Lithuania
Norwegian Folkdance Society	Lithuanian-American Bar Association
Norwegian Immigration Association	Lithuanian-American Club
Norwegian Seamen War Veteran's Association	Lithuanian-American Council, Inc.
Norwegian Rose Painting *(Rosemaling)*	Lithuanian Children's Hope
California Rosemaling Association	Lithuanian Country Club
Norsk Rosemalers Association	Lithuanian Heritage Club
Norse Rosemalers Association	Political organizations
Norsk Rosemaling Society	Baltic American Freedom League (BAFL)
Western Rosemalers Association	Baltic Assembly
Scandinavian Club	Central and East European Coalition
Scandinavian Collector's Club (Stamps)	Council of Baltic Sea States
Scandinavian Genealogic Society	ExpandNATO.org
Scandinavian Heritage Association	Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC)
Sporting Club Gjøa	Lithuanian Affairs Committee
Symra Literary Society	Regional business partnerships
Viking Age Club	Baltic American Enterprise Fund
Young Scandinavians Club	Baltic American Partnership Fund
Service organizations	
The Norwegian Hospital Association	
Norwegian Children's Home Association	
Ski for Light	

programs); and schools (language classes, language institutes, and formal cultural institutes) across the country. These categories would probably be common to many ethnic groups in the United States, but qualitatively they are quite different for each ethnicity. The Lithuanian Americans appear to have more media outlets and schools than the Norwegians, and both groups have active folk dance groups either locally or regionally.[6] I did not distinguish foreign-language versus English media outlets although I noticed there were far more Web sites in Lithuanian than in Norwegian. I also did not include the Web sites themselves in this category because they were too numerous and would have obscured the other media types.

The category "Other" was by far the most interesting and layered but was the least generalizable across groups. Additional research of more ethnic groups will help to refine sufficiently generalizable categories here while still being reasonably definitive within groups. For Norwegian Americans, the "Other" category includes several affinity groups, such as specialized painting and crafts, cooking classes for Norwegian specialty items (such as lefse), and Norwegian Elk Hound breeding. It also included several groups that met monthly to extol the virtues of cod, outdoor groups, and associations for individuals who came from the same districts in Norway.[7] In contrast, Lithuanian Americans had fewer cultural affinity groups at Level 3 than did the Norwegian Americans. There were a few local handcraft groups, but I found no regional handcraft associations, clubs dedicated to ethnic food, or the raising of ethnic purebred pets (Table 3). There were, however, Web sites dedicated to all known locations across the United States selling Lithuanian beer or bread. Although there must be sufficient numbers at a localized site to support local activities, national associations and networks support many localized sites; Web sites are adding an additional layer to Level 3 of unbounded organizations that support a universal ethnic identity. The specific location of any localized site usually is not critical to the functioning of the whole; however, the pattern of this larger whole can provide insight into the characteristics and interests of the localized sites.

Religious organizations and grassroots political groups do make up a common pattern for Lithuanian Americans. Most typically, the religious organizations

are associated with the Catholic Church and the Knights of Lithuania. The grassroots political groups are, by nature, local and loosely organized, but core members can quickly mobilize the greater number of silent and rear guard members[8] when needed, at the direction of regional or national-level political organizations such as the Baltic-American Freedom League (BAFL) and the Joint Baltic American Committee (JBANC). These two associations are themselves part of a network of lobby groups that inform the U.S. Congress of events abroad. In some cases, they attempt to influence foreign policy decisions in Washington, DC, or position themselves as unofficial contacts for formal or informal government or business organizations in the home country (Higham 1978; T. Smith 2000). More generally, depending on the country of origin, long-term émigrés, naturalized citizens, expatriates, or other nongovernmental individuals can achieve positions of influence based on the value of their networking (the influence of Iraq's Ahmed Chalabi on President Bush's decision to invade Iraq comes to mind here).

The movement and placement of MGC members in ways that can influence the internal politics of another country set up another interesting dynamic of a demassified community and raises questions regarding the sovereignty of the state. The metageographic network ensures the existence and functioning of the whole by facilitating the maintenance of individual localized communities and encouraging their connections with each other in ways not always easy to monitor or regulate. If there is a broad spatial distribution of individuals and enclaves actively engaged at this level and the network is sufficiently well organized, a state itself could become virtually *ubiquitous;* that is, it could loosely exist wherever a citizen is located. An MGC is a community that manifests at the point of connection. It could have strong political implications when considering global shifting migration patterns or refugee resettlements (whether the catalyst of this movement is political, economic, or environmental). Its potential ubiquity also has important ramifications for the sovereignty of states as they, too, increasingly use the power of MGCs and cumulative critical mass as a way to expand or weaken boundaries and influence.

Some countries actually capitalize on this cumulative critical mass and ubiquitous community when they claim identity, autonomy, and even legal presence wherever their citizens reside. For example, Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller (2003) described several small minorities of transmigrants who remain politically and socially active across borders, reproducing abroad the political dynamics of their home countries (also see Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). Shain (1999–2000, 667) reports that "some home countries are *investing directly* in kin-communities abroad to enhance sentiments of national affinity, with the purpose of creating a bridgehead for the promotion of commercial and political activities in their host countries" (emphasis added). Clearly, intentionality here is different from typical diasporic groups, and home countries are not establishing colonial enclaves. They are not seeking to conquer or lay claim to a new region and its people, but instead are establishing "branch enclaves" in other countries to take advantage of tax codes, resources, and political influence. Some countries have even changed their rules regarding absentee citizenship, and diasporic groups are gaining greater political recognition at home:

> In their rush to gain the financial, organizational, and political support of the diaspora, which sends home over $1 billion a year in remittances (the Dominican Republic's largest single source of foreign exchange) . . . [political] candidates went to the extent of endorsing special legislation that would enable Dominican expatriates to vote in consulates abroad. Candidate Peña also announced that he would sponsor legislation enabling the election of congressional deputies as direct representatives of the New York-based diaspora. Larry Rother of the *New York Times* wrote that if the plan to allow Dominicans abroad to vote is implemented, the proposal would immediately "transform the New York City metropolitan area into the second largest concentration of votes in future Dominican presidential elections, exceeded only by the Capital." (Shain 1999–2000, 668)

The sovereignty of the state versus the growth of unrestrainable demassified groups or the influence of well-placed individuals connected to grassroots networks is one of the more serious implications of MGC development and portends a deeper significance regarding the distinction between domestic and foreign.

Consistent with the recommendations of Batty and Miller (2000) calling for a model that recognizes a new hybrid space, the MGC model combines elements of communities based in location (Level 1) sustained through linkages that maintain informal and formal connections over distance (Levels 2 and 3). It accounts for the sustained meaning individuals ascribe to local places and their extended personal networks, and it incorporates formalized linkages over distance using communications media as a reciprocal dynamic reinforcing local identity. Another important dimension here grounds the MGC and cumulative critical mass once again within traditional geographic approaches to

place: the equivalent of landscape evidence and ways by which we can measure the presence or influence of a nonpropinquitous community. Level 4 addresses the "landscape" of an MGC in ways we can see and map, and it is to this level I turn next.

Level 4: Spatial Signatures

Geographers traditionally have looked to local landscapes for evidence of an ethnic group's critical mass (residential clustering, ethnic businesses, churches, institutions). Although localized critical mass and cultural landscapes give evidence of an enclave's existence at a particular location (Level 1), personal media are redefining or even demassifying society. These new media are the very tools of Toffler's (1980) Third Wave society in which demassification creates porous national boundaries because the state cannot regulate and control all levels of personal interaction, even those that cross national boundaries. In this regard, Toffler addressed the same concern of national permeability, from the standpoint of personal communication or *demassed* media, as Taylor (1994) addressed from the perspective of the state when he asked if the state, as container, is now leaking. Taylor (2000) observed, "People's lives are structured by norms and institutions that are obviously features of the place within which they experience their everyday lives. But social practices are also structured by more distant and intangible relations" (336). The sociospatial forms that result from demassification are exactly what the MGC model highlights. In fact, the formation of MGCs might actually be an outgrowth of Third Wave social demassification: The technology by which society is becoming demassified is the same technology that is allowing individuals to create cumulative critical mass over distance (Gladwell 2000). This demassified society is not flying off into untrackable virtual space; it is deeply bounded by the dynamics of spatial association and spatial relationships.

Level 4 addresses the question of what constitutes evidence of cumulative critical mass when a community becomes increasingly demassified. Statues, street signs, house types, or ethnic shops will not likely symbolize nonpropinquitous critical mass as it does an ethnic functional enclave or historical core. Instead, the evidence we look for will be some cumulative shift in *spatial associations* that we can record, map, or measure. We can think of the potential impact of nonpropinquitous communities as somewhat analogous to a radio telescope. Satellite dishes, located at disparate sites, triangulate and coordinate over distance such that they become a single, collective tool with far greater power and capacity to penetrate space than any single instrument. Similarly, an MGC incorporates the contributions of even very small groups or individuals at disparate sites and brings them into relational association, creating a single cumulative mass that can inform, protest, capitalize, or influence in ways none of the components could accomplish alone.

Instead of landscapes and evidence of localized institutional completeness, I call the observable evidence of an MGC at Level 4 its *spatial signature*. This signature undoubtedly will exist at a localized site (evidence will always exist in place); however, scale and meaning will be very different. The spatial signature is not designed to support a localized site, but supports the needs of a broader spatial association or is an ancillary effect of these needs. Spatial signatures are situational changes such as an impact on business investment patterns, changes in political leadership, or boundaries redrawn on a map, all of which derive from networked, nonpropinquitous, and distanciated sources rather than a single local one. Unwin (1992, 169) observed that "explanations of surface phenomena can be achieved through description of the underlying structures" and in this case, the underlying structures are located within the first three levels of the MGC, and the surface phenomena are the shifts in spatial dynamics somewhere that we map. The sources of the signatures are virtually nonpoint; that is, they are a result of distanciated networking with flexible access to resources and the collective power and intention that amplify action. The spatial signature can occur in one place even though those who are instrumental in its development or contribute to its change can be in several locations far removed from the site itself. The final three columns in Figure 6 represent various types of spatial signatures. For simplicity's sake, I have categorized these as cultural, economic, or political[9] and I have attempted to provide a range of examples in addition to the two I present in more detail later. In some way, each of the examples of spatial signatures is an extension, in measurable form, of the dynamics found at the first three levels.

How to Measure Level 4. As mentioned earlier, contemporary Norwegian businesses have been actively investing in the Seattle region from at least the 1960s,[10] and this growth of business provides a good example of an economic spatial signature. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, several governmental agencies, as well as commercial organizations such as the

Norwegian Vice Consul for Commercial Affairs in Seattle, the Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce, the Norwegian-American Foundation, as well as the Trade Commission of Norway (Level 3), actively encouraged and promoted Norwegian investment in the Puget Sound area. In fact, the Washington State Department of Economic Development and Trade (now called Enterprise Seattle) sought to increase Washington's employment and export activities by specifically recruiting Norwegian companies to develop joint ventures with Washington companies. As a result, international investment by Norwegian firms in the Puget Sound region grew the economy (Level 4) by approximately $700 million during this period: $400 million in fishing and commercial manufacturing industries; $200 million in real estate and investment (apartment construction, small shopping centers, warehouse operations); and $100 million in miscellaneous categories. Between 1988 and 1989 there also were more than 287 small businesses owned or operated by Norwegians along the Puget Sound; nearly one third of these were located in Ballard.[11] There also were more than thirty Norwegian-owned investment companies, joint ventures, or partnerships located in the larger Seattle area. These were supported by an in-place bilingual professional structure that was part of the institutional completeness of Level 1. As of 2005, there were still 1,200 Norwegian-owned businesses in the state of Washington (according to a report by Inside Prospects, a market research firm; telephone interviews with author, 17 and 22 March 2005). Although I was unable to obtain statistics by county, it is likely the majority of these businesses are in King County, where Seattle and Ballard are located. It is also important to note that a number of the remaining companies continue to support Norwegian-American cultural organizations in the area (see Table 4).

Table 4. Additional Norwegian-American enterprises

Norwegian business organizations	Norwegian distanciated landscapes
Brekke Tours and Travel	Camp Norge
House of Norway	Clan of the Axe
Midnight Sun Public Relations	Folklore Village
NorAm Foundation	Hauge Log Church Preservation
Norse Home	Heritage *Hjemkomst* Interpretive Center
Norway House Bed and Breakfast	Immigration History Research Center
Norwegian-American Orthopedic Association	Little Norway (outdoor museum)
Norwegian Commercial Club	Nordic Heritage Museum, WA
Norwegian Outdoor Exploration Camp	Norwegian Language Village at Concordia Language Camp
Norwegian Shipping Club of Miami	Norwegian Seaman's Churches
Norwegian Trade Council	Norwegian-American Genealogical Association
Norwegian Trade Council of FL	Scandinavian Center at Nansen Field, CA
Norwegian-American Chamber of Commerce	Scandinavian Living Center
Norwegian-American Technical Society	Trollhaugen, WA
Scandinavian Language Institute	Vesterheim (museum)
Scandinavian & Baltic Trade Association	
U.S.-Norway Forum	

Other spatial signatures might be more political than economic. Clearly, ethnic political activism is not a new phenomenon in the United States (Marston 1988), but in a world of demassified societies, shifting boundaries, and multiethnic loyalties, this activism takes on a special importance for the political mainstream in Washington, DC:

> The wholesale depoliticization of ethnicity is no longer possible, particularly in the United States. The immigrant experience has created solidarity groupings of mutual assistance that for generations have had basic and explicit political consequences at the state and local levels especially. . . . The end of the Cold War has weakened the American state relative to the society so that in many domains interest groups are gaining in strength. And conflicts in the world outside have repeatedly reminded many American ethnics of their transnational identities, their multiple loyalties as "peoples." (T. Smith 2000, 30)

Lithuanian Americans across the country have consistently supported Lithuanian independence movements and lobbied for international recognition of Lithuania through both World Wars, the Cold War, and beyond. They have organized rallies, smuggled videos, and provided finances while consolidating efforts domestically by pressuring Washington and supporting underground groups in Lithuania. They even were partly responsible for preserving the Lithuanian language when, during Lithuania's Book Smuggling period (1864–1904), they managed to smuggle in Lithuanian-language newspapers published in the United States. The Lithuanian-American press was filled with discussions calling for regime change and the democratization of Lithuania. According to Stražas (1996), a

significant part of the illegal press smuggled into Lithuania during this time came from the United States carrying these themes. The Lithuanian-American press not only affected the development and protection of the Lithuanian language; it was inexorably tied to the development of a Lithuanian national consciousness that flowered during Lithuania's short independence between World War I and World War II. If the Lithuanian immigrant enclaves in the United States were too small and isolated from each other, with few resources to spare, they would not have been able to provide such united support on Lithuania's behalf, with such results. Today,

> Given the potential power of ethnic voting blocs, both the Republican and the Democratic national parties since the 1880s have both had what may be called "nationalities sections" (their exact titles have changed over time) designed to capture ethnic votes by staying in touch with ethnic group leadership. . . . [S]ince the 1940s . . . candidates and their staffs have taken such voting power seriously. Today there is an "ethnic outreach" section in the White House with liaisons to every organized ethnicity in the country. (T. Smith 2000, 98)

The Lithuanian Americans have such liaisons in Washington, DC, as members of two Level 3 lobby groups, JBANC and BAFL (discussed at Level 3). Both of these lobby groups are members of the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), an umbrella organization representing eighteen different national groups. The strength of these lobby groups derives from their ability to mobilize grassroots organizations at localized sites (Level 1) across the country to promote their agendas in Washington. When Baltic membership in NATO was ratified in 2003, Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR), Co-Chairman of the Senate Baltic Caucus declared,

> As Co-Chair of the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus, I would be remiss to not express particularly ardent support for the accession of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to NATO. Through working with groups like the Baltic American Freedom League, the U.S.–Baltic Foundation and the Joint Baltic American National Committee, I have first-hand knowledge of the large grassroots pubic support across the U.S. for inclusion of these . . . nations in NATO. These organizations deserve recognition for their decades of work to help liberate and secure the future of the Baltics. (www.jbanc.org)

The ability to organize a single intent from such distanciated parts in this way has special implications when countries claim that their identity, autonomy, and even legal authority exists wherever their citizens might reside (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003) and when those citizens choose to remain politically and socially active with their country of origin from within their host countries. Many expatriates find that they have significantly more freedom to work for change within their home country by remaining outside of it and organizing influence remotely. In addition, uncovering and documenting patterns of influence for "invisible ethnic groups" in the United States (especially those without significant clusters in a recognized localize site with identifiable ethnic landscapes) is, as yet, an unwritten chapter in American ethnic geography that has new implications for nationhood and the autonomy of the state.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in these pages for both the Norwegian-American and Lithuanian-American communities, an MGC analysis can reveal surprisingly strong networks and lead researchers to evidence of remarkable economic and political spatial signatures. An MGC study provides new tools for studying ethnic communities by revealing patterns of discontinuous ethnic landscapes and dynamics of spatially complex community membership. Evidence suggests that the Norwegian-American and Lithuanian-American communities do appear to load differently on the MGC analysis matrix across all levels. There are strong cultural and political influences from Lithuanian-American refugees who came after World War II, and enclaves with both refugees and immigrants become more easily factionalized than those with only immigrants or refugees. Localized sites reflect these differences and create a ripple effect throughout the MGC. Lithuanian Americans have been at least partially responsible for effecting political change not only historically but, more recently, they have actively lobbied on Lithuania's behalf. Norwegian Americans did not have a period in their history where they were forced to flee their country for political reasons; they have maintained strong connections with Norway and have developed rich layers of affinity groups across the country. Norwegian Americans along the Puget Sound created a solid infrastructure of institutions, educational programs, and cultural landscapes attractive to Norwegian-American professionals who chose the Puget Sound region to settle and raise their families. It also was attractive to companies who thought to take advantage of the long history of

Norwegian culture here, the situational advantages and physical characteristics of the region, as well as the deep cultural and professional infrastructure. Both Norwegian and Lithuanian Americans maintain strong ethnic identification through multiscaled networking despite very small numbers (1.5 percent and 0.2 percent of the U.S. population, respectively), locational dispersion, and geographic fragmentation. Norwegian Americans have more specialized regional and national organizations than do Lithuanian Americans, and they have more deeply layered cultural structures that draw people from a wide area. Lithuanian-American networks, in contrast to those of Norwegian Americans, are primarily associated with the church or broader lobbying groups connected to Washington, DC caucus groups and more directly with events in Lithuania. Lithuanian Americans have fewer businesses or business associations than Norwegian Americans, who have a variety of locally owned businesses from import stores and travel agencies to various other commercial trade enterprises (Tables 3 and 4).

The observable changes at Level 4 bring us full circle to the importance of place for an MGC. The characteristics I discussed for the localized site at Level 1, the mixture of generations, migration waves, or other representative cohorts can suggest a level of connection to country of origin that can strongly influence the spatial signatures an MGC creates. An MGC exists when data can load according to the criteria set forth primarily in Levels 1, 3, and 4. First, this requirement ensures that the MGC is anchored in place and that it has sufficient spatial breadth. Second, members of an MGC must communicate regularly in ways that enhance or reinforce their identity through space and over time; that is, the MGC must use communications media to enhance its presence and persistence. Third, the viability and efficacy of an MGC correlate with its levels of connectivity over distance rather than with the direct size of its membership or its concentration in any one place. Fourth, measurement of an MGC's complementarity and simultaneity, as well as its critical mass over distance, correlates with its ability to amplify its presence in spite of small numbers or nonpropinquitous spatial distributions. If critical mass is not sufficient within a localized site alone to maintain the institutional completeness that exists (or is desired) there, then the critical mass must come from somewhere else. Finally, an MGC's spatial signatures are essential to provide evidence of its cumulative critical mass. Although these spatial signatures cannot pinpoint the locations of an MGC, they do provide evidence that an MGC exists.

Because the MGC model is nonlinear, one can "triangulate" from any of the four levels to find an ethnic group's nonpropinquitous networking. Scholars can collaborate from multiple disciplines and from different levels, each adding to the work of the others. With growing multistate economic integration, multiscale transnational identities are becoming more common with surprising and sometimes volatile implications. How do we structure the myriad transnational networks that seem to be appearing and disappearing with increasing speed and complexity? How do we track and measure the impact such transnationalism has on invisible ethnic or stable and mutually exclusive national identities? How do we evaluate the penetration of these identities beyond traditional borders in consistent and meaningful ways that can allow us to make comparisons across groups? How do the invisible patterns of strong MGCs influence political and economic systems, and how might the MGC model apply to other than ethnic groups? As environmental conditions change in the coming years, how will citizens reorient their connection to each other and retain their history, traditions, and meaning when their countries are flooded or they must abandon their lands in search of water? What changes in spatial associations might we expect to accompany environmental refugees? Within the structure of a globalized economy, increased transnational migration also has begun to set up new interaction patterns of flexible and dynamic communities that either can expand the reach of a state or threaten its stability. The burgeoning and diverse literature on transnationalism would suggest populations are becoming more mobile and less restricted to place than ever before, which has led Vertovec (1999, 448) to predict that the study of transnationalism will incorporate "phenomena of very different natures, requiring research and theorization on different scales and levels of abstraction" than we have seen before. Undeniably, location and place will be *more critical* to this understanding than ever before. We are living in an increasingly demassified society and, as a result of faster and more accessible personal media, we are using space and distance in new ways as tools for social organization rather than allowing space and distance to be barriers to it. This usage might have always been part of the human condition, in concentrations and at speeds that did not command much attention; but today there clearly are new social forms taking shape and there are new relationships and new spatial dynamics to explore. These new social forms are not only quintessentially geographic; they will propel geography into the fore of the revolution in spatial dynamics

taking place today as well as open up new pathways to the past.

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Notes

1. In 1997, I presented a version of my research to the Association of American Geographers at the annual conference in Fort Worth, Texas, defining and highlighting the MCG I had observed in Ballard, built by linkage and accessibility over distance. Later in that same year, Lewis and Wigen (1997) published *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*. Here the authors were trying to break the assumption that traditional geographic boundaries are inviolate units of reference, and they addressed misleading assumptions regarding the naming and partitioning of the world in convenient but often Eurocentrically labeled regions. In this application, metageography often was used almost synonymously with macrogeography, especially when referring to the implications of world regional categorizations writ large; however, their notion that geographic boundaries can be permeable and flexible holds relevance for the work I propose. Beaverstock, Smith, and Taylor (2000) began to come closer to the way I used the term *metageography* in 1997. They identified the linkage between certain world cities as metageography and defined metageography as a new functional space outside the state. Their focus was on the relationships between these cities, and they hinted at the structures that might lie beneath. My research began much more modestly in scope, investigating underlying structures in persistent ethnic communities. In the process, I found a larger metageographic community of which these structures were the core.
2. See Shain (1994–1995) regarding the pivotal role Czech and Slovak Americans played in the dissolution of the Hapsburg Empire and the creation of modern Czechoslovakia in 1918.
3. Although most organizations are reluctant to provide complete membership lists with street addresses, they might be willing to provide a list of ZIP codes for each subscriber or member with no names or addresses attached. Some are even willing to send out questionnaires supplied by a researcher to their members if the questionnaire does not ask for name or street address.
4. Following the thinking of Portes and Rumbaut (2001) and Rumbaut and Portes (2001), who focused on segmented ethnic assimilation and generational differences, Figure 2 represents Level 1 as it distinguishes an ethnic group's generations. The Hansen (1937a, 1937b) thesis specifically distinguishes characteristics of the second generation that typically strives to break with the ethnic identity of the parents, whereas members of the third generation more typically look to reaffirm their ethnic ties. Sometimes referred to as the "empty" generation, the model shows an open square to identify the second generation in Figure 2 and a filled square to represent the third generation.
5. When I refer to the Lithuanian-American community or Lithuanian-American enclave, I am speaking of Lithuanian Americans as members of an ethnic classification or specific clustering of Lithuanian Americans at a localized site. The Lithuanian-American Community (LAC) is a formal ethnic organization to which Lithuanian Americans can choose to belong.
6. Of note, however, is the *Western Viking*, a daily Norwegian paper established in Seattle in 1889, which still has an international subscriber base. Although the *Western Viking* and several local and regional organization newsletters publish in English, I counted at least sixty-seven schools, language programs, course offerings, and language institutes across the forty-three states. These either offer classes or specialize in the teaching of Norwegian at the high school, college, or university level.
7. In Norway, people live in districts called *bygde*. Historically when rural people migrated to larger towns or cities, they often organized into regional societies called *lags*. Members shared common cultural traits, customs, and traditions; they also shared a regional dialect and histories; and they shared in maintaining the same regional dances, music, games, painting and woodcarving styles, food, and costumes. As Norwegians migrated to the United States, they brought their *bygdelags* with them; for others, their *bygdelag* identity developed after reaching their new destinations (Lovoll 1975). These organizations give Norwegian Americans additional avenues for building networks with each other across the United States. Moreover, just as today's Norwegian ethnic press tries to maintain active links with Norway, so the local *bygdelags* maintain contact with their regional counterparts in Norway. I counted thirty-five *bygdelags* across the United States, some of which have their own Web sites, whereas others depend on other organizations to provide links to them.
8. Shain (1994–1995) identified three groups within a political diaspora: core members who are organizing elites deeply involved in promoting the interests of the group; rear guard members who have drifted away; and the silent members who are potential recruits, part of the grassroots base that could be mobilized when necessary.
9. Itzigsohn and Saucedo (2002) listed three fields of social action: economic, political, and sociocultural.
10. Initially, restrictions on foreign fishing in the United States within the 200-mile limit, and later, more stringent restrictions imposed on direct foreign ownership of processing ships and trawlers, prohibited Norwegian companies during the late 1960s and early 1970s from investing directly in the U.S. market. They could, however, provide support services for businesses already established. Norwegian firms entered the marketplace

as suppliers of support services and equipment such as refrigeration units, winches, and shipping containers for the Alaskan fishing fleet that wintered in Seattle. Other firms entered the market through joint partnerships with American companies, bought out companies that had licenses to produce other products in the United States such as pharmaceuticals, or invested in real estate.

11. Seattle/Puget Sound Norwegian-American Business Directory (1988–1989).

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