

Here, There, Everywhere ... or Anywhere?

Life-place theory and “Relocalisation” in a Globalising World

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Tomorrow’s regional landscapes and communities will reflect an unknown mix of global and local influences. While globalising economies and homogenising cultures seem to be the unstoppable norm, there are documentable regional trends and phenomena that point toward a significant “relocalisation” of culture, landscapes and systems. One such powerful trend can be referred to as life-place theory and practice, or, in more academic jargon, bioregionalism.

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IMPORTANT QUESTIONS surround this trend: Is life-place theory and practice merely a reactionary, impotent movement incapable of stopping or mitigating the steamroller of globalism? Or, is it a genuine, alternative armature around which future culture and landscape can be moulded? Or is it something in between?

There are perhaps, at minimum, three different versions of the future:

- one where resources are harvested, products are produced, shipped across vast distances, consumed, and wastes disposed of globally, where ownership of means of production is shared by a globalised network of investors.
- one where resources are harvested, products produced, consumed, and recycled locally, but where capital ownership of means of production is shared globally and consolidated within a few giant corporations in each sector.
- one where resources are harvested, products produced, consumed, and recycled locally, and where capital ownership of means of production is also localised within naturally definable regions concurrent and coincident with local cultures and economies.

Each of these scenarios paints different implications for the landscape and for local communities. This address will discuss the relative likelihood of these three scenarios and how each scenario might be influenced by the relative nature of matter, energy, and information as different influences informing the physical landscape of the world’s natural regions.