THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF NETWORKING

Why would we no longer be capable of following the thousand paths, with their strange topology, that lead from the local to the global and return to the local? Is anthropology forever condemned to be reduced to territories, unable to follow networks?[1]

After a day of intense planning for the upcoming actions against the G8, several Catalan activists and I eagerly waited for punk rocker cum international pop star Manu Chao to take the stage at the Piazza Kennedy in Genoa. Suddenly the crowd roared as Manu burst onto the scene with his band Radio Bemba Sound System, featuring musicians from France, Senegal, and North Africa. It was July 18, 2001, and the immigrant rights march was set for the next morning. The siege of the red zone would take place the following day, but we were soon lost in a frenzy of singing and dancing. As police helicopters circled overhead, the shoulder-to-shoulder contact helped release some of the building tension, though perhaps foreshadowing the violent clashes to come. On this evening, however, we would celebrate our spirit of global solidarity.

Born to Spanish parents in a working-class *banlieu* on the outskirts of Paris, Manu Chao has long enjoyed popularity among young European radicals. His former band, Mano Negra, was famed for staging surprise concerts at squatted activist social centers in France, Spain, and Italy,[2] and its lyrics dealt with hot-button political issues such as racism, police violence, and militarism. However, it was only after the release of his widely acclaimed solo debut album, *Clandestino*, that Manu became a truly global figure. Inspired by his

travels in Latin America, where he came to know landless workers in Brazil, poor farmers and street children in Colombia, indigenous peasants in Chile and Bolivia, Zapatista communities in Chiapas, and undocumented border crossers in Tijuana, *Clandestino* provides an apt and touching portrait of the lives of those excluded from the global economy. Chao continued to give free concerts during political events and protests after taking residence in Barcelona, where he emerged as a hero among many anti–corporate globalization activists.

Manu Chao's popularity goes beyond political content. His rebellious character, hybrid style, and global vision reflect the ethos of a wave of protest against corporate globalization that achieved widespread visibility in Seattle but that many trace to the Zapatista uprising. Like his activist fans, Manu continually crosses borders, fusing sounds from North Africa, Latin America, and Europe while mixing traditional rhythms with ska, reggae, raï, rock, and punk. True to his diasporic roots, Chao exemplifies a grassroots genre called *musica mestiza*, popularized in the bars and squats of Barcelona, Madrid, and Bilbao. His lyrics combine Spanish, Portuguese, French, English, and Arabic while emphasizing marginal figures such as the immigrant. At the same time, Manu uses new digital technologies to create complex amalgams involving dubbed beats, melodies, and voice-overs. Indeed, like his anti–corporate globalization activist fans, Manu Chao reflects a seeming paradox: using the networking tools and logics of contemporary global capitalism to challenge global capitalism itself.

This book explores emerging norms, forms, and technologies within anti–corporate globalization movements based in Barcelona. Since November 30, 1999, when fifty thousand protesters converged on Seattle to shut down the World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings, anti–corporate globalization activists have organized protests against multilateral institutions in cities such as Prague, Barcelona, Genoa, Quito, and Cancún. Barcelona has emerged as a critical node, as Catalans have played key roles within the anarchist-inspired Peoples' Global Action (PGA) and the World Social Forum (WSF) process, both of which unite diverse movements in opposition to corporate globalization. Anti–corporate globalization movements involve an increasing confluence among network technologies, organizational forms, and political norms, mediated by concrete networking practices and micropolitical struggles. Activists are thus not only responding to growing poverty, inequality, and en-

vironmental devastation; they are also generating social laboratories for the production of alternative democratic values, discourses, and practices.

Grasping Networks in a Digital Age

I arrived in Barcelona on June 16, 2001, to conduct an ethnographic study of a network, an activist network to be precise. I had been organizing against corporate globalization for nearly two years, ever since the anti-wto protests in Seattle. Before then I had also been a longtime Latin America solidarity activist working in support of grassroots struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala. My time in Central America had taught me about the dire consequences of free trade and neoliberalism for poor and indigenous communities, and when I learned about the wto action, I was eager to join in. I was also a graduate student in anthropology at the time, searching for a dissertation project. I had since become interested in grassroots social movements in Spain and Catalonia and was familiar with previous anti–corporate globalization actions in Europe. But I never imagined the intense feelings of power, freedom, and solidarity I would experience on the streets of Seattle. When the wto meetings were delayed and a major police riot broke out, I knew something big was happening. That was when I decided to study this emerging global phenomenon ethnographically.

Over the next few years, anti–corporate globalization activism would spread around the world as the local and regional networks we built during the protests in Seattle increasingly used digital technologies to communicate with activists in other countries. Computer-supported networks, including activist media projects, Listservs, and websites, were mobilizing hundreds of thousands of protesters, constituting "transnational counterpublics" (Olesen 2005) for the diffusion of alternative information. Indeed, media activism and digital networking more generally had become critical features of a transnational network of movements against corporate globalization, involving what Peter Waterman (1998) calls a "communications internationalism." Moreover, emerging networking logics were changing how grassroots movements organize, and were inspiring new utopian imaginaries involving directly democratic models of social, economic, and political organization coordinated at local, regional, and global scales.

Not surprisingly, digital networking facilitated my entry into the field. In May 2000 I joined a Spanish-language Listserv created to plan solidarity

actions during protests against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings in Prague that September. The list was called *Resistencia-Mexico*, but most users were from Argentina and Spain, including activists from the Citizens Network to Abolish the Foreign Debt (RCADE) in Barcelona. "The Network," as it was known, had recently carried out a referendum against the debt during the March 2000 elections in Spain. Inspired by Seattle, RCADE would soon link up with Zapatista supporters, militant squatters, radical ecologists, and opponents of the European Union within a broad platform to mobilize for Prague called the Movement for Global Resistance (MRG). Barcelona, my primary field site, was quickly becoming a key locale within an emerging transnational anti–corporate globalization field. After I exchanged e-mails with Pau, whom I met on the *Resistencia* Listserv (and who would later become a key informant, colleague, and friend), MRG invited me to travel with them to Prague. I agreed, and after getting to know activists during the week of action, I decided to move forward with my plan to study anti–corporate globalization networks based in Spain and Catalonia.

My original idea was to examine transnational activism through ethnographic fieldwork among MRG-based activists involved with PGA, the transnational network that had inspired the first global days of action against capitalism, including the WTO protests in Seattle. Specifically, I would work with RCADE and also take part in broader networking activities with MRG and PGA. However, the situation soon proved more complicated. When I arrived in Barcelona, MRG was taking part in a larger campaign against a World Bank development conference, which also involved leftist parties, trade unions, and NGOs. At the same time, RCADE had splintered from MRG and many radical squatters had returned to their militant circles. I thus encountered a complex web of overlapping political spaces. MRG, my primary object of analysis, was seemingly coming undone.[3] Moreover, I soon learned that similar processes were occurring at the transnational scale. Just before leaving for the G8 protests in Genoa, Pau and I spoke to a Geneva-based PGA activist passing through Barcelona at the time:

Jeff: How is PGA going?
Laurent: It's the most interesting political process I've ever been a part of, but it's kind of ambiguous.

Jeff: What do you mean?

Laurent: Well, you never really know who is involved.

Jeff: How can that be?

Laurent: It's hard to pin down because no one can speak for PGA, and the ones who are most involved sometimes don't even think they are part of it!

Pau: Spanish networks are the same. This all started with RCADE. Then MRG formed during Prague, but now those who were most active in MRG are the main forces in the World Bank Campaign. The same people are at the center, but the networks keep changing around them.[4]

Now I was exasperated. I had taken excellent field notes during mobilizations in Seattle, Prague, and Barcelona, but I really wanted to study the networks behind these demonstrations during their visible *and* "submerged" phases (Melucci 1989). It seemed that if activists wanted to create sustainable movements, it was important to learn how newly emerging digitally powered networks operate and how periodic mass actions might lead to long-term social transformation. After several days, I finally realized what should have been apparent all along: my focus was not really a specific network, but rather the concrete practices through which such networks are constituted. Indeed, contemporary activist networks are fluid processes, not rigid structures. I would thus conduct an ethnographic study of transnational networking practices and the broader cultural logics, shaped by ongoing interactions with new digital technologies, that generate them. What is the cultural logic of networking, how is it distributed, and what kinds of resistances does it provoke? How do struggles over activist discourses, identities, strategies, and tactics constitute alternative networks within broader "movement fields" (Ray 1999)? How are activist networks embodied during mass actions, and to what extent have they made new struggles visible? How are networking logics expressed through experimentation with new digital technologies? Finally, what are the links among activist networking, political change, and social transformation?

To answer these questions, I turned to the traditional craft of the anthropologist: long-term participant observation within and among activist networks themselves. Indeed, rather than studying activist networks as an object, I wanted to understand how they were built in practice, which meant

becoming an active practitioner. My entry into these networks was facilitated by my past activist experience and my fluency in Spanish and Catalan. Over the next year and a half, I attended hundreds of meetings, protests, and gatherings and also took part in online discussions and forums. I lived the passion, excitement, and fear associated with direct-action protest, and the exhilaration and frustration of working with activists from such diverse backgrounds. I also became embroiled in movement debates, at times aligning myself with certain groups and against others. This often made me feel uneasy, given my dual role as activist and observer, but I came to realize that only by taking clear positions could I grasp the complex micropolitical dynamics of transnational activist networking. At the same time, I hope this book will prove useful for activists. What impressed me most about so many of those I came to know and respect during my time in the field was their fierce dedication to egalitarian, collaborative process, which demanded of me a politically engaged mode of ethnographic research.

Contesting Globalization

"Antiglobalization" is not a particularly apt label for a movement that is internationalist in perspective, organizes through global communication networks, and whose participants travel widely to attend protests and gatherings. Moreover, most activists do not oppose globalization per se, but rather corporate globalization, understood as the extension of corporate power around the world, undermining local communities, democracy, and the environment.[5] Indeed, naming is an act of power, with profound implications for how activists see themselves and are understood. An ongoing debate has thus raged between those who identify as "anticapitalist" and others who reject corporate globalization, but not capitalism. At the same time, some activists and observers speak of the "global justice" or "alternative globalization" movements.[6] In this book, I refer to anti–corporate globalization movements in the plural, reflecting linguistic practice in Barcelona, while also distinguishing among various forms of globalization and recognizing the diversity of movement actors.

Globalization's cheerleaders, such as the *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, have attempted to stigmatize anti–corporate globalization protesters as backward "flat earthers."[7] If globalization means growing interconnectedness based on technological innovation and the plummeting cost of

communication and travel, who could be against that? Most activists would agree. Rather, they are specifically challenging a concrete political and economic project and a discourse that denies the possibility of an alternative (Weiss 1998). In examining anti–corporate globalization movements, it is thus important to consider how globalization operates along several distinct registers.

At the broadest level, globalization refers to a radical reconfiguration of time and space. It is thus a multidimensional process encompassing economic, social, cultural, and political domains.[8] With respect to the economic sphere, the current phase of globalization features several defining characteristics.[9] First, there has been an unprecedented rise in the scope and magnitude of global finance capital facilitated by digital technologies and market deregulation. Second, economic production and distribution are increasingly organized around decentralized global networks, leading to high-volume, flexible, and custom commercialization. Finally, the global economy now has the capability to operate as a single unit in real time. More generally, contemporary globalization generates complex spatial patterns as flows of capital, goods, and people have come unbound, even as they are reinscribed within concrete locales.[10]

At the same time, globalization should also be understood as a powerful discourse that produces specific effects.[11] On the one hand, globalization discourse is often used to legitimate neoliberal policies and practices, thus aiming "to propose the teleology of the market" as the dominant ideology of our times (Trouillot 2003, 48). Indeed, globalization discourse plays "a key role in defining and delimiting the terrain of practical action and the formation of political identities, thereby actively shaping the very processes they purport to describe" (Hart 2002, 12). On the other hand, globalization also provides a concrete enemy and symbolic framework, generating metonymic links among diverse struggles. In this sense, anti–corporate globalization networks such as PGA or the WSF help forge a global frame of reference. As the PGA slogan declares: "May the struggle be as transnational as capital!"

Finally, globalization can also be conceived as a concrete political and economic project enacted by governments, businesses, and financial elites. Specifically, corporate globalization or neoliberalism refers to a set of free market policies commonly referred to as the Washington Consensus, which are imposed through trade agreements and multilateral institutions including the World Bank, IMF, and WTO. These include privatization, trade liberalization,

devaluation, deregulation, export-oriented production, and fiscal austerity measures, such as reductions in social expenditures and basic subsidies. Neo-liberal projects have facilitated the penetration of corporate capitalism across space, bringing new areas into global production, consumption, and labor circuits while commodifying healthcare, education, the environment, and even life itself.

The results have been disastrous: growing poverty, inequality, social dislocation, and ecological destruction within and across developing and industrialized worlds. During the 1980s, many poor countries became trapped in an "infernal spiral of debt" (Toussaint 2005), as slow growth, devaluation, and falling commodity prices forced states to borrow increasing sums to meet their obligations. The situation improved little during the 1990s, when the number of people living in poverty around the world increased by nearly one hundred million, even as world income grew by 2.5 percent per year.[12] Meanwhile, the 1999 UN Human Development Report indicates that more than eighty countries had per capita incomes lower than in the previous decade.[13] Inequality has also increased between and within states. According to the 2003 World Bank Development Report, the average income in the richest twenty countries is thirty-seven times that in the poorest twenty, double the ratio of forty years ago. In the United States, the top 1 percent earns 17 percent of total income, a level not seen since the 1920s.[14] Moreover, 51 of the 100 largest economies in the world are transnational corporations.[15]

Over the past ten years, however, corporate globalization projects have faced increasing opposition. At least since the Zapatista uprising against the Mexican government on January 1, 1994, the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect, activists have forged an alternative project of "grassroots globalization" (Appadurai 2000), combining placed-based resistance and transnational networking (cf. Escobar 2001). Anti–corporate globalization movements have mounted a highly effective symbolic challenge to the legitimacy of neoliberalism. As the former World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz (2002) suggests: "Until protesters came along there was little hope for change and no outlets for complaint. . . . It is the trade unionists, students, and environmentalists—ordinary citizens—marching in the streets of Prague, Seattle, Washington, and Genoa who have put the need for reform on the agenda of the developed world" (9).

Stiglitz is not alone among global elites in supporting activist demands. The international financier George Soros has consistently denounced "market fundamentalism" while the Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs has been a vocal critic of the Bretton Woods institutions. Moreover, leftist political parties in France, Spain, Italy, Brazil, and elsewhere have embraced the popular slogan of the World Social Forum: "Another World Is Possible." On the other hand, as we shall see, the relationship between movement organizing and policy change is less clear. Panels at the World Economic Form (WEF) in Davos now routinely address the social impact of globalization, and the July 2005 G8 Summit in Scotland focused on debt relief and poverty reduction in Africa; but whether such rhetorical shifts translate into action, let alone structural change, remains to be seen.

However, this book is not about the politics of globalization. Rather, it explores emerging forms of organization among anti–corporate globalization movements, particularly in light of recent social, economic, and technological transformations. Although the activists explored in this book seek to influence contemporary political debates, they are also experimenting with new organizational and technological practices. In this sense, they enact a "dual politics" (Cohen and Arato 1992), intervening within dominant publics while generating decentralized network forms that "prefigure" the utopian worlds they are struggling to create.[16] In the 1960s, the New Left was similarly committed to building nonhierarchical structures that were consonant with its egalitarian values (cf. Polletta 2002). Indeed, as Wini Breines (1989) puts it, "prefigurative politics was what was new about the New Left" (xiv). At the same time, while these experiments in direct democracy were often successful at the local level, they were limited in scale. The rise of new digital technologies has profoundly altered the social movement landscape. Activists can now link up directly with one another, communicating through global communications networks without the need for a central bureaucracy. In what follows, I examine how activists are building local, regional, and global networks that are both instrumental *and* prefigurative, facilitating concrete political interventions while reflecting activists' emerging utopian ideals.[17]

Social movements are cyclical phenomena.[18] As discussed in chapter 1, anti–corporate globalization movements entered a highly visible phase starting with the anti-WTO protests in Seattle in November 1999. This stage of

growing mobilization lasted through the siege of the G8 in Genoa in July 2001, when massive police violence produced a dampening effect. The attacks of September 11, 2001, complicated matters further, making confrontational protest increasingly risky. Since then activists have continued to organize large demonstrations, including the half-million-person march against the EU in Barcelona in March 2002, the anti-WTO action in Cancún in September 2003, and the anti-G8 protests in Gleneagles, Scotland, in July 2005; but the world and regional social forums and other grassroots networking processes have increasingly come to the fore. Although not as spectacular as direct actions, these projects have provided relatively sustainable platforms for generating alternative ideas, discourses, and practices, allowing activists to pursue their strategic and prefigurative goals in more lasting ways.

Technology, Norm, and Form

Shortly after the Bolshevik revolution, the Russian anarchist Voline outlined a bold vision for an alternative, directly democratic society: "Of course . . . society must be organized. . . . the new organization . . . must be established freely, socially, and, above all, from below. The principle of organization must not issue from a center created in advance to capture the whole and impose itself upon it but on the contrary, it must come from all sides to create nodes of coordination, natural centers to serve all these points."[19] What strikes today's reader about this passage is its resonance with the contemporary discourse of activist networking. Although the top-down Leninist model of organization won out in the Soviet Union, consolidating a revolutionary paradigm that would be exported around the world, the past few decades have witnessed a resurgence of decentralized, networked organization and utopian visions of autonomy and grassroots counterpower. As we will see, these emerging network forms and imaginaries have been greatly facilitated by the rise of new digital technologies. Shaped by the networking logic of the Internet and broader dynamics associated with late capitalism, social movements are increasingly organized around flexible, distributed network forms (Castells 1997; cf. Bennett 2003; Hardt and Negri 2004). Observers have pointed to the rise of "social netwars" (Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001) or an "electronic fabric of struggle" (Cleaver 1995), but such abstract depictions tell us little about concrete networking practices. Manuel Castells has more generally identified a

"networking, decentered form of organization and intervention, characteristic of the new social movements, mirroring, and counteracting, the networking logic of domination in the information society" (1997, 362). However, scholars have yet to explore the specific mechanisms through which decentered networking logics are produced, reproduced, and transformed within particular social, cultural, and political contexts.

This book outlines a practice-based approach to the study of networks, linking structure and practice to larger social, economic, and technological forces.[20] I employ the term "cultural logic of networking" as a way to conceive the broad guiding principles, shaped by the logic of informational capitalism, that are internalized by activists and generate concrete networking practices.[21] Networking logics specifically entail an embedded and embodied set of social and cultural dispositions that orient actors toward (1) the building of horizontal ties and connections among diverse autonomous elements, (2) the free and open circulation of information, (3) collaboration through decentralized coordination and consensus-based decision making, and (4) self-directed networking. At the same time, networking logics represent an ideal type. As we shall see, they are unevenly distributed in practice and always exist in dynamic tension with other competing logics, generating a complex "cultural politics of networking" within particular spheres.[22]

In what follows, I argue that anti–corporate globalization movements involve a growing confluence among networks as computer-supported infrastructure (technology), networks as organizational structure (form), and networks as political model (norm), mediated by concrete activist practice. Computer networks provide the technological infrastructure for the emergence of transnational social movements, constituting arenas for the production and dissemination of activist discourses and practices.[23] These networks are in turn produced and transformed by the discourses and practices circulating through them.[24] Such communication flows follow distinct trajectories, reproducing existing networks or generating new formations. Contemporary social movement networks are thus "self-reflexive" (Giddens 1991), constructed through communicative practice and struggle. Beyond social morphology, the network has also become a powerful cultural ideal, particularly among more radical activists, a guiding logic that provides a model of, and model for, emerging forms of directly democratic politics.

In *French Modern*, Paul Rabinow explores the "diverse constructions of norms and the search for forms adequate to understand and to regulate what came to be known as modern society" (1989, 9).[25] My own book is similarly concerned with norms and forms, but I am interested less in how specific configurations of knowledge and power produce and regulate society than in how contemporary norms and forms are shaped by technological change and, further, how they reflect emerging utopian imaginaries. The following chapters explore the complex interactions among these domains within diverse realms of anti–corporate globalization organizing, paying particular attention to how transnational activist networks are generated through communicative interaction and struggle. Different chapters place greater emphasis on one or another domain, but together they demonstrate a growing confluence among norm, form, and technology, mediated by activist practice.

Computer-Supported Social Movements

By enhancing the speed, flexibility, and global reach of communication flows, computer networks provide the technological infrastructure for the operation of contemporary transnational social movements. Barry Wellman (2001) has argued that "computer-supported social networks" are profoundly transforming communities, sociality, and interpersonal relations. Although the widespread proliferation of individualized, loosely bounded, and fragmentary social networks predates cyberspace, computer-mediated communication has reinforced such trends, allowing communities to sustain interactions across vast distances. The Internet is also being incorporated into more routine aspects of daily social life as virtual and physical activities are increasingly integrated.[26] The Internet thus facilitates global connectedness even as it strengthens local ties.

New technologies have also facilitated new modes of political engagement, including the emergence of computer-supported social movements. Powered by the Internet, anti–corporate globalization movements operate at local, regional, and global scales, while integrating online and offline activity. Building on the pioneering use of digital technologies by the Zapatistas, as well as early free trade campaigns,[27] anti–corporate globalization activists have used computer networks to organize actions and mobilizations, share information and resources, and coordinate campaigns by communicating at a distance. At

the same time, the Internet complements and reinforces, rather than replaces, face-to-face interaction.[28]

Indeed, although the Internet circulates information rapidly and circumvents hierarchies, it also has disadvantages as a communications medium. Electronic distribution lists can become saturated with irrelevant posts, and nuances are often lost because of a lack of physical contact and interactivity. In addition, given the highly impersonal nature of e-mail lists, users tend to anger easily, which can lead to heated arguments and flame wars. The Internet can also produce a sense of information overload. Meanwhile, the digital divide remains a significant obstacle to the free flow of information in poorer regions, particularly in the Global South (see chapter 6). Computer-mediated communication is thus most effective when it is moderated, clearly focused, and used together with traditional modes of communication. Accordingly, activists generally use e-mail to stay informed about activities and perform concrete logistical tasks, while complex planning, political discussions, and relationship building occur within physical settings.

In addition to electronic Listservs, anti–corporate globalization activists have also used interactive web pages to facilitate planning and coordination. Particular networks, such as PGA or WSF, have their own home pages. At the same time, activists often create temporary websites during mobilizations to provide information, resources, and contact lists; post documents and calls to action; and, increasingly, house real-time discussion forums and chat rooms.[29] Moreover, activist networking projects, such as the Infospace in Barcelona, have begun to collectively produce and edit documents online using new wiki open editing technology, reflecting a growth in computer-based networked collaboration (Juris 2005a). Similarly, Independent Media Centers (IMC or Indymedia) have been established in hundreds of cities around the world, providing online forums that allow activists to post their own news stories, constituting a self-managed communications network that bypasses the corporate media.[30]

Network-Based Organizational Forms

Beyond providing a technological medium, the Internet's reticulate structure reinforces network-based organizational forms. New social movement (NSM) theorists have long argued that feminist, environmental, and student

movements were structured around horizontal networks.[31] Similarly, the anthropologists Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine pointed out in 1970 that grassroots movements are decentralized, segmentary, and reticulate. At the same time, digital technologies have significantly enhanced the most radically decentralized "all channel" formations (Kapferer 1973),[32] greatly facilitating transnational coordination and communication. Network designs are thus diffusing widely as digital technologies power the expansion of globally connected yet locally rooted social movements, which are increasingly organized around flexible all-channel patterns, rather than traditional top-down political formations.

Networking logics have given rise to what many activists in Spain and Catalonia refer to as a "new way of doing politics." By this they mean a mode of organizing involving horizontal coordination among autonomous groups, grassroots participation, consensus decision making, and the free and open exchange of information, although, as we shall see, this ideal is not always conformed to in practice. While the command-oriented logic of traditional parties and unions involves recruiting new members, developing unified strategies, pursuing political hegemony, and organizing through representative structures, network politics revolve around the creation of broad umbrella spaces, where diverse collectives, organizations, and networks converge around a few common principles while preserving their autonomy and identity-based specificity. The objective becomes enhanced "connectivity" and horizontal expansion by articulating diverse movements within flexible, decentralized information structures that facilitate transnational coordination and communication. Key "activist-hackers" (Nelson 1999) operate as relayers and exchangers, receiving, interpreting, and routing information to diverse network nodes. Like computer hackers, activist-hackers combine and recombine cultural codes—in this case political signifiers, sharing information about projects, mobilizations, strategies, and tactics within global communication networks.[33]

At the same time, discourses of open networking often conceal other forms of exclusion based on unequal access to information or technology. As a grassroots activist from India suggested to me at the 2002 wsf in Porto Alegre, "It's not enough to talk about networks; we also have to talk about democracy and the distribution of power within them." Furthermore, a given

cultural logic always exists in dynamic tension with other competing logics. Even when particular cultural forms predominate, they never achieve complete hegemony. Indeed, what many observers view as a single, unified anti–corporate globalization movement is actually a congeries of competing yet sometimes overlapping social movement networks that differ according to issue addressed, political subjectivity, ideological framework, political culture, and organizational logic.

Social movements are complex fields shot through with internal differentiation (Burdick 1995). Struggles within and among specific movement networks shape how they are produced, how they develop, and how they relate to one another within broader movement fields. Cultural struggles involving ideology (antiglobalization versus anticapitalism), strategies (summit hopping versus sustained organizing), tactics (violence versus nonviolence), organizational form (structure versus nonstructure), and decision making (consensus versus voting), or what I refer to as the cultural politics of networking, are enduring features of anti–corporate globalization landscapes. In the following chapters, I thus emphasize culture, power, and internal conflict.[34] As we shall see, discrepant organizational logics often lead to heated struggles within broad "convergence spaces" (Routledge 2003), including the "unitary" campaigns against the World Bank and EU in Barcelona or the World Social Forum process more generally.

Networks as Emerging Ideal

Expanding and diversifying networks is more than a concrete organizational objective; it is also a highly valued political goal. The self-produced, self-developed, and self-managed network becomes a widespread cultural ideal, providing not only an effective model of political organizing but also a model for reorganizing society as a whole. As we shall see, the network ideal is reflected in the proliferation of decentralized organizational forms within anti–corporate globalization movements, as well as the development of new self-directed communication and coordination tools, such as Indymedia, or the countless electronic Listservs created over the past few years. The dominant spirit behind this emerging political praxis can broadly be defined as anarchist, or what activists in Barcelona refer to as libertarian.[35] Classic anarchist principles such as autonomy, self-management, federation, direct action, and direct democracy

are among the most important values for today's radicals, who increasingly identify as anticapitalist, anti-authoritarian, or left-libertarian.

These emerging political subjectivities are not necessarily identical to anarchism in the strict ideological sense. Rather, they share specific cultural affinities revolving around the values associated with the network as an emerging political and cultural ideal: open access, the free circulation of information, self-management, and coordination based on diversity and autonomy. Despite popular conceptions, anarchism does not mean complete disorder. Indeed, anarchists specifically emphasize the importance of organization, but of a particular kind: organization based on grassroots participation from below rather than centralized command from above. As Bakunin once wrote: "We want the reconstruction of society and the unification of mankind to be achieved, not from above downwards by any sort of authority, nor by socialist officials, engineers, and other accredited men of learning—but from below upwards" (Ward 1973, 22).

The networking logic within contemporary movements involves precisely this conception of horizontal coordination among autonomous elements. In a similar vein, Arturo Escobar (2004) has drawn on complexity theory to argue that anti–corporate globalization movements are emergent in that "the actions of multiple agents interacting dynamically and following local rules rather than top-down commands result in visible macro-behavior or structures" (222).[36] This is a compelling depiction of how anti–corporate globalization networks operate from a distance, but a slightly different perspective emerges when we engage in activist networking firsthand. Transnational networking requires a great deal of communicative work and struggle. Complexity theory provides a useful metaphor, but given its emphasis on abstract self-organizing systems, it tends to obscure micropolitical practices.[37] Rather than reject the notion of self-organization, however, I recast it here as part of a wider network ideal, which inspires concrete networking practices within specific social, cultural, and political contexts.

In this sense, influenced by their interaction with new technologies, many activists view the Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) development process—where geographically dispersed computer programmers continuously improve, adapt, and distribute new versions of computer software code through collaborative networks—as a model of political organizing and a potential

harbinger of postcapitalist forms of economic, social, and political organization. The self-generating network has thus become a powerful model for (re)organizing society based on horizontal collaboration, participatory democracy, and coordination through autonomy and diversity.[38] At the same time, activists increasingly express their emerging utopian imaginaries directly through concrete organizational and technological practice. As Geert Lovink (2002) suggests, "Ideas that matter are hardwired into software and network architectures" (34). This helps to explain why ideological debates are often coded as conflicts over organizational process and form.

Before moving on, it is important to sound a brief cautionary note regarding the liberatory potential of networks. Networks are not *inherently* democratic or egalitarian, and they may be used for divergent ends. The network technologies and forms explored in this book were initially developed as a strategy for enhancing coordination, scale, and efficiency in the context of post-Fordist capital accumulation. As we are reminded nearly every day, terror and crime outfits increasingly operate through global networks as well. Meanwhile, police and military forces are building their own transnational networks of surveillance, repression, and control (see chapter 5).[39] Despite their libertarian outlook, even the most radical activist networks thus have to contend with the state. The differences among these networks are related not so much to the technologies or forms as to the *norms*: their guiding values and goals. While capital is oriented toward maximizing profit and the state is concerned with maintaining order, activist networks employ similar tools and logics to build mass-based movements for social, economic, and environmental justice while emphasizing egalitarianism and openness. Unlike networks of capital, repression, and terror, anti–corporate globalization networks are committed, at least in principle, to democratic process, stressing the consonance between means and ends.[40]

Moreover, while networks more generally are not *necessarily* democratic or egalitarian, their distributed structure does suggest a *potential* affinity with egalitarian values—including flat hierarchies, horizontal relations, and decentralized coordination—which activists project back onto network technologies and forms. At the same time, networks should not be romanticized. In practice, activist networks involve varying degrees of centralization and hierarchy, ranging from relatively horizontal relations within radical networks

like PGA to more centralized interactions in the context of the world and regional social forums. In addition, the absence of formal hierarchical designs does not prevent, and may even encourage, the rise of informal hierarchies. What many activists now call "horizontalism" is best understood as a guiding vision, not an empirical depiction (see chapter 6). In sum, given that this book is concerned with emerging network norms and forms, it must also confront their multiple contradictions.

Multiscalar Ethnography

The ethnographic approach developed here moves across various physical and virtual sites to examine transnational flows of people, ideas, strategies, and tactics while also remaining situated in a specific locale. It thus combines multisited and grounded ethnography to explore networking practices at local, regional, and global scales. On the one hand, my research involves what George Marcus calls "multi-sited" ethnography, which "moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space" (1995, 96). I specifically employ two tracking strategies: following activists to mobilizations and gatherings, and monitoring discourses and debates through electronic networks. However, whereas Marcus emphasizes the multiple, temporary, and discontinuous, my strategy is more rooted, as I situate myself within a specific locale, or node, and follow the network connections outward, constituting an example of what Burawoy (2000) calls a "grounded globalization."[41] I thus conducted long-term research at my primary field site, Barcelona, while traveling with activists to various protests and events. Since I am mainly concerned with networks that are locally rooted, yet globally coordinated, my research design reflects this tension as well. [42]

My primary stint in the field involved fourteen months of ethnographic research among MRG-based activists in Barcelona from June 2001 to September 2002. This allowed me to take part in local campaigns against the World Bank and EU as well as mobilizations and actions in Barcelona (World Bank, June 2001; EU, March 2002), Genoa (G8, July 2001), Brussels (EU, December 2001), Zaragoza (EU, March 2002), Madrid (EU, May 2002), and Sevilla (EU, June 2002). I also traveled with Barcelona-based activists as part of the MRG International Work Group to several international gatherings, including the

WSF in Porto Alegre (January–February 2002), Strasbourg No Border Camp (July 2002), and PGA European Conference in Leiden (September 2002). I had also previously conducted intermittent research from November 1999 to June 2001, including mobilizations in Seattle (WTO, November 1999), Los Angeles (Democratic National Convention, July 2001), and Prague (World Bank/IMF, September 2000), as well as ongoing organizing in San Francisco. Finally, I subsequently attended the European Social Forum in London in October 2004 and the WSF in Porto Alegre in January 2005.

During my time in the field, I employed diverse ethnographic methods. First, I conducted participant observation among activists at mass mobilizations, actions, and gatherings; meetings and organizing sessions; and informal social settings. Second, I made extensive use of the Internet, which allowed me to participate in and follow planning, coordinating, and political discussions within Catalan, Spanish, and English-language Listservs based in Europe, Latin America, and North America. Third, I conducted seventy qualitative interviews with Barcelona-based activists from diverse backgrounds. Fourth, I collected and examined movement-related documents produced for education, publicity, and outreach, including flyers, brochures, reports, and posters. Finally, I also collected articles and texts within mainstream and alternative media.

Practicing Militant Ethnography

As Marc Edelman suggests, the need to situate ourselves as authors within the research and writing process has more to do with the nature of fieldwork, particularly when studying social movements, "than from a preexisting or abstract commitment to reflexivity" (1999, 6). Edelman (36–7) thus turns to Bourdieu, for whom reflexivity refers to the "bending back of science upon itself," which reinforces rather than undermines "the epistemological security" of the social sciences (Wacquant 1992, 36). Another level of complexity emerges when our political and intellectual commitments coincide. What is the relationship between ethnography and political action? How can we make our work relevant to those (with whom) we study? I believe it *is* possible to produce ethnographic accounts that are rigorous *and* useful for activists. I also believe transnational networking and ethnographic practice are complementary. To illustrate this point, I address three areas of concern raised by

Bourdieu: the social origin of the researcher, intellectualism, and the relation of the researcher to the academic field (Wacquant 1992, 39).

As a white middle-class male activist and practicing anthropologist, I occupy a position of privilege, in many ways a typical one within northern academic and social movement circles.[43] Still, the opportunity to study activism in Barcelona allowed me to link my intellectual and political concerns. Since I had already spent a year living and conducting prior field research in Barcelona and spoke fluent Spanish and Catalan, the context was ideal. At the same time, I was anxious about being accepted within Catalan and Spanish movement circles. However, my past anti–corporate globalization organizing experience facilitated a relatively smooth transition. Moreover, because contemporary activists frequently cross borders, I was able to link up with an emerging network of political circulation and exchange among activists and researchers.[44]

The ethnographic methodology developed here, which I call "militant ethnography," is meant to address what Wacquant (1992) calls the "intellectual bias": how our position as outside observer "entices us to construe the world as a spectacle, as a set of significations to be interpreted rather than as concrete problems to be solved practically" (39). The tendency to position oneself at a distance and treat social life as an object to decode rather than entering the flow and rhythm of ongoing social interaction hinders our ability to understand social practice.[45] To grasp the concrete logic generating specific practices, one has to become an active participant. With respect to social movements, this means organizing actions and workshops, facilitating meetings, weighing in during strategic and tactical debates, staking out political positions, and putting one's body on the line during direct actions. Simply taking on the role of "circumstantial activist" (Marcus 1995) is not sufficient; one has to build long-term relationships of commitment and trust, become entangled with complex relations of power, and live the emotions associated with direct-action organizing and transnational networking. Militant ethnography thus refers to ethnographic research that is not only politically engaged but also collaborative, thus breaking down the divide between researcher and object.[46]

Furthermore, militant ethnography also generates embodied and affective understanding. As anyone who has participated in mass direct actions or demonstrations can attest, such events produce powerful emotions, involving

alternating sensations of anticipation, tension, anxiety, fear, terror, solidarity, celebration, and joy. These affective dynamics are not incidental; they are central to sustained processes of movement building and activist networking. In this sense, I use my body as a research tool, particularly during moments of intense passion and excitement, to generate what Deidre Sklar (1994) calls "kinesthetic empathy."[47] As Margaret Meade once pointed out, "In matters of ethos, the surest and most perfect instrument of understanding is our own emotional response, provided that we can make a disciplined use of it" (Jacknis 1988, 172).

The relationship between the researcher and the broader academic (and social movement) field is more complicated. If ethnographic methods driven by political commitment and guided by a theory of practice largely break down the distinction between researcher and activist during the moment of fieldwork, the same cannot be said for the moment of writing and distribution, when one has to confront vastly different systems of standards, awards, selection, and stylistic criteria. As Paul Routledge (1996) suggests, "When it comes to researching resistance, there has traditionally been what de Certeau refers to as a gap between the time of solidarity and the time of writing. The former is marked by docility and gratitude toward one's hosts, while the latter reveals the institutional affiliations, and the intellectual, professional, and financial profit for which this hospitality is objectively the means" (402).

An anecdote illustrates the point. In January 2004, some of my former MRG-based colleagues organized a conference in Barcelona to explore the theory and practice of what they called "activist research." The idea was to create an open space for reflection and debate among activists and those conducting research within and for social movements. During one session, a British activist mounted a harsh attack on academics studying movements from the outside. He was somewhat appeased when we explained our politically engaged practice, but he remained skeptical about how the research would be used: "You go back to the university and use collectively produced knowledge to earn your degrees and gain academic prestige. What's in it for the rest of us?" The issue was not so much the kind of knowledge produced but rather how it is presented, for which audience, and where it is distributed. These questions cut to the heart of the network-based cultural logics and practices explored throughout this book.

Part of the issue has to do with how we understand the nature and role of the intellectual. In exploring the difference between academic and movement theorizing, for example, Barker and Cox (2002) have criticized traditional objectivist paradigms that are *about*, rather than *for*, social movements. They specifically distinguish between academic intellectuals, who operate according to dominant interests, and movement intellectuals, who write in support of subaltern groups. In my experience, however, this distinction breaks down in practice. Moreover, the relationship between activists and intellectuals within contemporary anti–corporate globalization movements is more complex. When so many activists practice their own theorizing, self-publishing, and electronic distribution, the traditional functions of Gramsci's organic intellectual—providing strategic analysis and political direction—are undermined.[48] In this sense, militant ethnography refuses to offer programmatic directives about what activists should or should not do. Rather, by providing critically engaged and theoretically informed analyses generated through collective practice, militant ethnography can provide tools for activist (self-) reflection and decision making while remaining pertinent for broader academic audiences. I thus hope to contribute to strategic debates, but always from the partial and situated position of the militant ethnographer.

Anthropologists have proposed several strategies for making ethnography useful for activists, which can be incorporated into a militant ethnographic praxis. Working with U.S.-based activists, for example, David Graeber (2004) similarly notes the embattled role of the vanguard intellectual, positing ethnography as a potential alternative, which would involve "teasing out the tacit logic or principles underlying certain forms of radical practice, and then, not only offering the analysis back to those communities, but using them to formulate new visions" (335). In this register, ethnography becomes a tool for collective reflection about activist practice and emerging utopian possibilities. Julia Paley (2001) enacts another kind of critically engaged ethnography, working with urban community groups in Chile to analyze power relations and political processes that shape and constrain their strategic options at particular historical junctures. In this mode, ethnography becomes a tool for collective analysis about the outside world. Finally, in his study of gender, race, and religion within Afro-Brazilian movements, John Burdick (1998) suggests that ethnography can help movements represent themselves in order to cap-

ture the social and cultural heterogeneity among mobilized and unmobilized constituencies. Practicing militant ethnography can thus help activists carry out their own ethnographic research.

For Burdick, this involves supporting movements in their efforts to reach out to a wider audience. But it might also mean helping activists analyze diverse movement sectors, understand how they operate, and learn how to most effectively work together. In my own case, for example, I spent hours talking to MRG-based colleagues about diverse movement sectors in Barcelona and elsewhere and how they might best coordinate through flexible, decentralized structures. I also participated actively in debates concerning protest tactics and violence, organizational forms, and political strategy. In this sense, transnational activist networking always already involves a form of militant ethnography, while practicing militant ethnography within contemporary local/global movements necessarily requires transnational networking.

Militant ethnography thus includes three interrelated modes: (1) collective reflection and visioning about movement practices, logics, and emerging cultural and political models; (2) collective analysis of broader social processes and power relations that affect strategic and tactical decision making; and (3) collective ethnographic reflection about diverse movement networks, how they interact, and how they might better relate to broader constituencies. Each of these levels involves engaged, practice-based, and politically committed research carried out in horizontal collaboration with social movements.[49] I have tried to incorporate all these modes throughout the book. Indeed, many of the ideas presented here were developed collectively. At the same time, the resulting account involves a particular interpretation produced with the practical and theoretical tools at my disposal and offered back to activists, scholars, and others for further reflection and debate.

Finally, the question remains as to the most appropriate context for practicing militant ethnography and how to distribute the results. One obvious place is the academy, which, despite increasing corporate influence and institutional constraints, continues to offer a critical space for collective discussion, learning, and debate. Indeed, as Scheper-Hughes (1995) suggests, those of us within the academy can use writing and publishing as a form of resistance, working within the system to generate alternative politically engaged accounts. Moreover, as Routledge (1996) points out, there are no "pure"

or "authentic" sites, as academia and activism both "constitute fluid fields of social action that are interwoven with other activity spaces." Routledge thus posits an alternative "third space," "where neither site, role, or representation holds sway, where one continually subverts the other" (400). The utopian alternative is suggested by the rise of free university projects and autonomous research networks, such as the activist research conference mentioned earlier. Indeed, such grassroots endeavors embody the networking logics and practices I explore throughout the book. By examining emerging network norms and forms within anti–corporate globalization movements, I thus hope to contribute to both academic and activist theorizing by exploring, as the Argentine Colectivo Situaciones (2001) puts it, the "emerging clues of a new sociability within concrete practices" (39).

The Book Ahead

The following chapters explore the complex interactions among network technologies, organizational forms, and political norms within diverse realms of anti–corporate globalization activism. Chapter 1 provides a historical account of anti–corporate globalization movements, examining their emergence as a transnational phenomenon. I begin with an ethnographic vignette from the WTO protests in Seattle and then shift backward to consider the genealogy of diverse processes that converged there, including grassroots struggles in the Global South, student-based anticorporate activism, campaigns against structural adjustment and free trade, anarchist-inspired direct action, and global Zapatista solidarity networks. I then go on to trace the growth and expansion of anti–corporate globalization movements after Seattle, before concluding with an analysis of their major defining characteristics.

Chapters 2 and 3 consider how anti–corporate globalization movements articulate with local dynamics, specifically examining the production of competing movement networks in Barcelona and the cultural politics surrounding them. Chapter 2 outlines diverse movement sectors in Barcelona and traces their historical roots, including the region's strong culture of opposition forged through decades of nationalist and anti-Franco struggle and its powerful anarchist legacy. Chapter 3 examines contemporary networking politics among anti–corporate globalization activists, revolving in part around two distinct forms of practicing democracy: one based on political representation

within permanent structures, and another rooted in flexible coordination and direct participation through decentralized networks. The conflict between networking and traditional command logics forms part of a broader series of struggles involving competing visions, ideologies, and practices, leading to a complex pattern of shifting alliances driven by networking politics at local, regional, and global scales.

The following two chapters explore how alternative activist networks are embodied during direct-action protests, which provide physical spaces where activists meet, meanings are produced and contested, and political imaginaries are enacted through mass-mediated symbolic performance. Chapter 4 considers the affective and spatial dynamics of mass anti–corporate globalization mobilizations, paying particular attention to how networking politics are performed through activist bodies and inscribed onto urban space. Chapter 5 explores protest violence as a potential limit to network norms and forms through an ethnographic study of the G8 protests in Genoa. This chapter specifically examines the dynamic interplay between performative violence, state terror, media images, and activist tactical debates. Moreover, as we shall see, the prevailing "diversity of tactics" ethic among radicals reflects the cultural logic of networking itself.

Chapter 6 explores the transnational dimension of activist networking within Peoples' Global Action. PGA was founded in February 1998 as a flexible space for communication and coordination among grassroots struggles against free trade and corporate globalization, and activists have since defined the PGA network as anticapitalist, forging a more radical current within a broader movement field. In chapter 6, I examine how PGA activists in Europe have struggled to build horizontal organizational forms that correspond to their emerging political norms.

Since January 2001, when the World Social Forum was first organized in Porto Alegre, the WSF has provided a broader space for diverse movements and organizations to discuss, develop, and exchange information about alternatives. Local and regional forums have also been held in Europe, South Asia, and Latin America, transforming the WSF into a sustained process driven by NGOs, trade unions, and the traditional Left. Through ethnographic accounts of meetings and forums in Leiden, Porto Alegre, Barcelona, and London, chapter 7 analyzes how network norms and forms are reproduced and

contested within and around the forums through alternative spatial discourses and practices.

Chapter 8 goes on to explore emerging forms of grassroots media activism within anti–corporate globalization movements. Activists have used e-mail lists, web pages, and open-editing software to organize actions, share information and resources, collectively produce documents, and coordinate at a distance. At the same time, Indymedia has provided an online forum for autonomously distributing news stories, constituting a self-managed communications network outside the corporate press. Activists have thus not only employed digital technologies as tools, they have also used them to practice what I call "informational utopics," physically embodying alternative political visions based on a horizontal network ideal.

Finally, the conclusion considers the impact of anti–corporate globalization movements. On the one hand, activists have pursued symbolic tactics, organizing mass actions to elicit media attention, make hidden conflicts visible, and challenge hegemonic meanings. Changes in media coverage and political rhetoric have not yet translated into concrete policy change, but they do indicate that tacitly accepted notions are increasingly subject to debate. On the other hand, activists are also seeking to build grassroots "counterpower" through strategic networking and experimentation with new technologies, which might one day lead to broader social and cultural transformation.