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Abstract: The recent emergence of global justice networks (GJNs) to counter neoliberal globalization has been an important political and geographical phenomenon. Much has been written about the emergence of a new global civil society, centred upon a new 'network' ontology. In engaging with these debates in this paper, our purpose is to develop a more critical spatial perspective. We argue that issues of space and place are critical in understanding the operation of GJNs and their potential to contribute to an alternative global politics. Spatially, the global linkages of GJNs can be seen as creating cultural and spatial configurations that connect places with each other in opposition to neoliberalism. However, the individual movements that comprise networks, while not necessarily place-restricted, remain heavily territorialized in their struggles. Additionally, networks evolve unevenly over space. Some groups and actors within them are able to develop extensive translocal connections and associations whereas others remain relatively more localized. Potential conflicts arise from such complex geographies, which only become evident through analysing the operation and evolution of different networks. This leads us to focus not solely on the transnational character of networks but also upon how the global is enacted through the localized practices of movements within them, in considering the potential for GJNs to form more sustainable political alternatives to neoliberalism.

Key words: convergence space, global justice, networks, politics of place.

I Introduction

The forging of an alternative and more egalitarian politics to neoliberal globalization has become an increasingly urgent imperative. The emergence over the past decade of what the media has termed the 'anti-globalization movement' has excited much attention in political and academic circles. In particular, there has been considerable commentary and analysis of: the Zapatista rebellion against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Cecena, 2004; Baschet, 2005; Olesen, 2005); global days of action in Seattle, Genoa, Gleneagles and elsewhere against neoliberal institutions and governments (St Clair, 1999; Gill, 2000; Klein, 2002; Notes

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from Nowhere, 2003; Juris, 2004a); initiatives against transnational corporations (Klein, 2000; Starr, 2000; Gunnell and Timms, 2000); and the establishment of the World Social Forum and various regional forums (Sen, 2004).[1]

From a geographical perspective, these developments are important because they represent attempts to connect up territorialized struggles to broader global networks of support, action and debate. However, despite claims that such initiatives herald the creation of a global civil society, and pose significant challenges to global capitalism (eg, Brecher *et al*., 2000; Klein, 2002; Callinicos, 2003; Kaldor, 2003; Drainville, 2004), there has been a relative lack of detailed scrutiny about this 'movement's' component parts, its operational networks and their spatial dynamics, strategies and practices (but see Juris, 2004a, for an exception).[2] Indeed, many accounts consist of activist testimonies that, while valuable in providing grounded insights into particular struggles and mobilizations, tend towards hyperbole and inflated rhetoric about the capacity to achieve more sustainable and significant social change (eg, Notes from Nowhere, 2003).[3] There is, in short, a need for greater critical and conceptual clarity about the 'movement'.

We are unconvinced by the 'anti-globalization' terminology since many of the movements and organizations challenging neoliberalism articulate alternative globalizations rather than a more spatially defensive politics (Appadurai, 2000; Routledge, 2003). We are also sceptical that a coherent global 'movement' actually exists. Instead, we conceive of a series of overlapping, interacting, and differentially placed and resourced networks, or what we term here Global Justice Networks (GJNs). Through GJNs, different place-based movements become connected to more spatially extensive coalitions with a shared interest in articulating demands for greater social, economic and environmental justice. GJNs work together on particular campaigns, global days of action, social forums, etc, and in so doing constitute a somewhat amorphous 'movement', reflecting common interests in addressing the material inequalities and injustices produced by neoliberal globalization. Such networks comprise a range of different actors: social movements, trade unions, NGOs, leftist political parties, religious groups, etc.

Engaging with broader debates in the social science and activist literatures around the network concept, our purpose in this paper is to provide an initial conceptualization of GJNs by analysing some of their complex geographies. We argue that issues of space and place are critical to understanding the operation of these networks, and their potential to contribute to an alternative global politics. Contra, the celebration of flatter, decentred, topological networks in much of the literature about an emergent global civil society, we distinguish between networks and the movements that affiliate to them. Spatially, the global linkages of GJNs can be seen as creating cultural and spatial configurations that connect places with each other in opposition to neoliberalism. However, the individual movements that comprise networks, while not necessarily place-restricted, remain heavily territorialized in their struggles. Additionally, networks evolve unevenly over space, with some groups and actors within them able to develop relatively more global connections and associations, whereas others remain relatively more localized. Potential conflicts arise from such complex geographies, which only become evident through analysing the operation and evolution of different networks.

After a consideration of the way the network metaphor has been used, both theoretically and politically, to envisage an emergent 'global civil society', we develop a more critical interrogation of the operation and limits of GJNs in practice. We then draw upon and extend the concept of convergence space (Routledge, 2003), using recent work by Doreen Massey (Massey, 2004; 2005) to consider the entangled geographies within which GJNs are embedded. This leads us to focus not solely on the transnational

character of networks, but rather upon how the global is enacted through localized practices of movements within them, in considering the potential for GJNs to form more sustainable political alternatives to neoliberalism.

II The network as theory and political practice

The network has become a key concept in a broad range of debates concerned with globalization and its impact upon political, economic, social and spatial structures. It has, for example, been used in the business and economic geography literatures to rethink the relations between regions, places and economic actors within global business networks (eg, Coe *et al.*, 2004). It is also at the core of a new 'social physics', emphasizing the degree of connection existing between apparently disparate individuals and social groups (see Crossley, 2005, for a review). It has also taken centre stage within socio-logical debates, where its use depicts what are seen as flatter, dynamic and more fluid forms of economic and social organization, emerging to reflect the 'stretching out' of social relations under globalisation (Giddens, 1990; Castells, 1996; Melucci, 1996; Urry, 2003). The seminal work in this respect is Manuel Castells' Network Society trilogy (1996; 1997; 1998). For Castells, globalization and the information technology revolution are responsible for the emergence of a new set of social relations, whereby the 'space of places', in the territorially defined societies of nation states, is gradually giving way to a 'space of flows', in which locationally defined communities are being replaced by delocal-ized networks of association. Subsequently, other theorists have made even more gran-diose claims. John Urry, for example (2004: 110), talks of a 'shift from a heavy solid modernity to one that is light and liquid and where speed of movement of people, money, images and information is paramount'. The implication is that fixed and enduring rela-tionships centred on traditional communities

and hierarchical forms of organization, ter-ritorialized at the level of the nation state, are giving way to more fluid, unstable and deterritorialized social relations bound up in network forms (see also Urry, 2003; Walby, 2003).

While there are detailed critiques of these literatures elsewhere (eg, Thompson, 2004; Crossley, 2005), our focus here is upon the way network imagery has been adopted in relation to global civil society and the emergence of what we have termed here GJNs (eg, see McDonald, 2002; Anheier and Katz, 2005). As Juris (2004a) has noted, the study of networks has increased in importance in recent years, analyses in-cluding the influence of digital technologies upon networks (Castells, 1997; Cleaver, 1999; Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001; Bennett, 2003; see also Juris, 2005a); the linguistic and textual practices of networks (Riles, 2001); how cultural codes, information and other resources are distributed and or-ganized through network infrastructures (Diani, 1995; Keck and Sikkink, 1998); and how interactions between networks and locally situated actors can create networks (Escobar, 2001).

Because capitalism has itself changed, through information technology and the realities of globalization – Hardt and Negri talk of an 'empire' based upon a decentred and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm – the social movements that emerge to resist it will also be decentred, bound up in the notions of the 'multitude' (Hardt and Negri, 2000; 2004); and 'swarm' (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001; Klein, 2002; Notes from Nowhere, 2003). Networks are used in this sense to emphasize the shifting and tempor-ary nature of many connections. For some, this decentred network form is encapsulated in a shift from a politics of solidarity asso-ciated with traditional social movements, based around a more permanent sense of collective and shared identities associated with ongoing struggles, to one of 'fluidity'

(McDonald, 2002; 2006) and 'dynamic spatial rootedness' (Maffesoli, 2003). In temporal terms, this means that GJNs are non-permanent and unstable assemblages, where there are no clear beginnings and end points. They can be conceptualized as systems of multiple temporalities with chaotic and multiple branching points, so that people, actions and ideas spill from one network to another.

Network imagery has also been adopted by activists who are challenging neoliberalism. Indeed, Juris (2004a; 2005a) argues that for many activists the network has become an important political and cultural ideal. For example, the editorial collective behind the book of activist 'stories', Notes from Nowhere (2003), speak of:

> horizontal, as opposed to pyramidal structures of power, dispersed networks rather than united fronts. [...] Capital's dream of super-fast networks that will spread consumerism across the planet was turned on its head. For while the networked money markets were tearing the planet apart, our grassroots networks were bringing us together. People were using the global communications infrastructure for something completely different – to become autonomous, to get the state and corporations off their backs. (Notes from Nowhere, 2003: 63)

Reference is made to a global movement without leaders that emerges spontaneously, that is constantly evolving and takes place simultaneously in a multitude of different places. Metaphors of ants and birds – swarming in a self-managed but decentred manner, connecting with others in an un-regimented and ungoverned fashion – are used to encapsulate the ability of one individual to make contact with any other in the network, independent of organizational or collective influence.

Networks involve the ability for individuals to become connected (while at the same time retaining their autonomy) (cf. Juris, 2004a; 2004b), but also potentially disconnected when they decide to join other movements and alliances, as needs change or

different issues assume greater importance (McDonald, 2002). Network activism is viewed as involving a more personalized and hybrid sense of self-identity; tied in with broader shifts towards a postindustrial society, where more traditional class politics – which involves submerging one's identity within a larger mass and developing a collective consciousness – gives way to an activism that takes more contingent forms.

The accent on self-identity reinforces the notion of activism around looser networks, rather than submission to one totalizing ideology and struggle. This discourse has also been extended to trade unions, where there has been a lively debate about the need for unions themselves to become more diverse in their make-up if they are to survive under networked capitalism. The shift towards a more fluid, flexible and decentred workplace requires a move away from a territorially based unionism, centred upon the factory and the industrial worker, towards a social movement unionism that appeals to more diverse social groups, and develops a broader 'world of work' agenda (see, for example, Wills, 2002). Additionally, it is argued that a new trade union internationalism is needed that transcends the nationally centred unions of the past towards organizational forms that are both more transnational and at the same time devolve more power down to grassroots activists (Moody, 1997; Waterman, 1998; Lee, 2004); in effect more networked forms of organization.

Owing to the diversity of their participants, GJNs contain operational, as well as political and ideological faultlines. Simon Tormey (2004a; 2005) argues that there are two contrasting logics of operation within GJNs, a tension Juris (2004a; 2004b; 2005b) refers to as a split between 'horizontal networking' and 'vertical command' logics. First, in the more traditional movements (eg, political parties, trades unions, etc), a 'verticalist' logic of modernity predominates, where organizations display conventional hierarchical structures, with a recognized leadership, vertical social relations based

on delegation and formal organizational processes. Verticalist accounts of political action are premised on the necessity for the development of a programme, for the building of a party to win supporters to the programme and to capture power to maintain a particular conception of how 'we' should live.[4] The fact that there is a clear programme pushes parties and movements in an 'oligarchical' direction (Michels, 1998). It is easier to pursue power if the lines of power and accountability are clear, with a single leader able to project the message of the party without contradiction or mixed messages occluding the minds of potential supporters or voters. It is easier once in power to maintain power where decision-making is confined to a small numbers of officials.

Verticalism is, from this point of view, an exclusionary and alienating mode of politics. The more ideas, people and variables are excluded, the more 'effective' vertical politics becomes. This contrasts with a second and more 'horizontalist' operational logic, (Tormey, 2004a; 2005; Juris, 2004a; 2004b; 2005b), where groups engage in a decentred, non-hierarchical network of horizontal, rhizomatic relations. These are characterized by flow, multidimensionality, varying intensities of affect and affiliation, unpredictability and contingency; as opposed to stasis, hierarchy, loyalty, obligation and a predictability of the kind we find in representative structures (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 3–24). Such an operational logic strives to work outside of formal political structures, eschew leadership roles and party structures, and represent active challenges and alternatives to formal ways of decision-making (eg, through governments), emphasizing the need to accept responsibility for acting. This is exemplified through the practice of direct action, which implies taking responsibility for change yourself (eg, through the blockading of military bases or the occupation of land), rather than relying upon elected representatives (Carter and Morland, 2004) and is argued by some to

be more effective than conventional party politics.[5]

From a horizontalist perspective, a network model points to the need to generate spaces in which people can interact to mutual benefit, as opposed to the annual congress mechanism of traditional parties, designed to create a line to which members will adhere.[6] Therefore, in contrast to more established social movements that have fixed organizational structures, clear lines of command from the top downwards and representative democratic processes, GJNs are conceived as being more fluid, decentralized and participatory, disavowing traditional roles of leadership and supporters. For example, Naomi Klein, discussing the protests against neoliberalism, argues that 'this movement doesn't have leaders in the traditional sense' (2002: xv), while McDonald (2002: 118) goes even further, arguing that 'in the direct action model, the idea of the leader or spokesperson, who in some sense incarnates or represents the group, is rejected'. There is a clear rejection here of earlier (verticalist) models of revolutionary politics, centred upon a vanguard or revolutionary cadre (eg, Leninist, Trotskyist) that leads the struggle through fomenting ideas and providing leadership for the masses. This rejection is symbolized by the Zapatistas and their struggle through the mechanism of Autonomous Communities.[7] As their spokesperson, Subcommandate Marcos puts it: 'I shit on all the Revolutionary vanguards' (cited in Tormey, 2004a: 132). Instead, radicalism emerges from the grassroots itself, out of the experience of repression, while all voices are given an equal hearing.

Key to the 'horizontalist' perspective on the operation of networks is the internet (Cardon and Granjon, 2003). The internet is seen as radical and democratic because it enables equal access to information, compared with traditional forms of communications that would have been channelled through key gatekeepers within movements. The implication is that everybody is involved as

equals in decision-making and that the priority given to communication results in a more participatory politics. The internet therefore helps to maintain non-hierarchical, horizontal relations within networks, while at the same time permitting more open and unrestricted dialogue about strategies and tactics (Juris, 2004a; 2005a). The enhanced ability for movements to communicate with distant others has undoubtedly been empowering for locally based struggles facing more powerful and less territorially bound actors such as states and corporations. Moreover, the ability of local activists to use the internet as 'an early warning system', to relay information about corporate or state malfeasance to a multitude of others in distant places, and the development of open publishing and alternative media sites, such as Indymedia, which critically challenge establishment media outlets and sources (as well as grassroots websites and discussion forums), have certainly created new and less 'regulatable' networks of association. However, as we discuss below, a spatially sensitive analysis that recognizes issues of power and information control within networks, problematizes the horizontalist perspective.

III A constructive critique of networks
There is much to be said for the networks discourse in understanding the potential of GJNs. It is becoming increasingly difficult for ruling elites, usually located at the national scale, to play the gatekeeper role, through traditional territorialized hierarchies, with regard to information and communication flows across space. This is most evident in the emergence of some of the internet-driven networks that connect local trade union activists and shop stewards with their counterparts in other parts of the globe to discuss common enemies in the form of particular multinational corporations (Lee, 1999). The network discourse is itself important in contrasting more participatory and decentred forms of politics with comparatively undemocratic practices at work in many

older forms of social movement, notably trade unions, non-government organizations, and certain peasant movements, where a culture of passivity among the membership (often fostered by elites) has developed through bureaucratic and hierarchical forms of organization (Cumbers, 2005).

Methodologically, 'network analysis' is useful for thinking through the emergence of transnational social relations in an era of globalization. Thus, Anheier and Katz (2005) identify five principles of networks: cohesion, where ties are relatively dense across a network of activists; equivalence, where social relations are relatively similar and equal between members of the network; prominence, where certain actors are empowered through multiple connections, whereas others are marginalized through fewer linkages; and range and brokerage, which relate to situations whereby certain actors bridge different networks or communities. However, we would emphasize the utility of network analysis in mapping and categorizing different forms of social relations and connections that are emerging across space, rather than as a theory explaining the workings of global society itself. While the notion of decentred and networked forms is a useful heuristic device in thinking through the potential for GJNs in delivering new forms of political activity, it has its limitations as a concept for understanding the operation of GJNs in practice. These limitations, we would argue, can be overcome if networked accounts are situated within a more spatially sensitive analysis.

Such an analysis raises questions of power and information control within networks (cf. Juris, 2004a). Although the ideal network imagines the free flow of information between all participants in all directions, the reality is invariably compromised by various factors and existing sets of social relations evident in capitalist society, centred upon class, gender, ethnicity, etc, which continue to shape the functioning of networks. While the internet acts as a communicative and coordinating thread for movements, weaving

different people, groups and struggles together so that they may converge in virtual space, it cannot be described simply in horizonalist or topological terms (Amin, 2002; 2004), as it is still underpinned by various topographies of social power. Indeed, network discourse, as it is applied both to GJNs and global social relations more generally, tends towards a rather westernized, and elitist, vision of globalization. For example, the principles of fluidarity (Nelson, 1999) ('networks of flow') may apply to an elite of middle class activists from the Global North, or those able to sustain themselves in alternative lifestyle politics linked to (direct action orientated) affinity groups, but they are unlikely to apply to the majority of grassroots activists who are materially embedded and entangled in particular local contexts in the Global South.[8]

Hence, Anheier and Katz's (2005) study of networks participating in the World Social Forum at Mumbai (2005), and different groups' connections with other movements, emphasizes the global reach of northern NGOs against the more localized connections of many southern NGOs. Moreover, within movements in both the Global North and South, certain (rather than all) activists possess the cultural capital of (usually) higher education, and the social capital inherent in their transnational connections and access to resources and knowledge (Missingham, 2003; Juris, 2004a; Routledge *et al*., 2007; 2008). They may also possess differential access to resources and mobility (eg, time and finances to travel internationally) compared with others in the network (see Routledge, 2003). The existence of such 'informal elites' can also be partly due to the attitudes of grassroots activists themselves, who, at times, tend to defer authority to key movement activists (allowing them to get on with the work of international networking), which leaves grassroots activists free to build and sustain local bases of movements (see Routledge *et al*., 2007; 2008).

This certainly applies to the international operations of most global union federations where the head offices of national union affiliates are the key nodal points for both communication and decision-making, and can also apply to grassroots-based peasant movements in the Global South where similarly hierarchical topographies of power exist at national, regional and local scales (Routledge *et al*., 2007; 2008). An added problem for grassroots activists in the Global South is varying and often limited access to electricity, let alone computer technologies. Such concrete realities lead them to be more dependent upon key nodal points (eg, regional or national offices of particular movements) than in the Global North, where access is more widespread and therefore information less susceptible to selective filtering by gatekeepers.

In this sense, the idea that no dominant group or person controls decision-making within GJNs is far from the truth. In terms of effectiveness, Thompson (2004) notes a 'tendency for networks to create hubs as these provide more stability and robustness. Hubs establish a kind of "hierarchy" within networks and this in turn gives a certain advantage to key positions of players' (2004: 418). Ironically, many of the people that proclaim the leaderlessness of the 'anti-globalization movement', such as Naomi Klein or Walden Bello, are proclaimed as leaders or spokespeople by the media, and command positions of discursive power. Practically, at the level of individual networks, few people can assume the necessary social position from which to make effective 'interventions' (King, 2004). As Jo Freeman (1970) noted from her experiences in the feminist movement, there is no such thing as a 'structureless' group. Indeed, 'structurelessness' itself becomes a way of 'masking power' (Juris, 2004a: 427). It is usually most strongly advocated by those who are the most powerful (whether they are conscious of their power or not). In any set of collective social relations, a set of informal conventions and rules emerge that govern decision-making and influence the value system of the group (Veblen, 1899;

Commons, 1931). Such institutional rules are, in practice, made and known only to a few and awareness of power is curtailed by those who know the rules, as long as the structure of the group is informal.

The reality is that within networks decision-making often devolves to a surprisingly small elite of individuals and groups who make a lot of the running in deciding what happens, where and when. Although the degree to which they will 'speak for others' will depend upon the type of movements they emanate from and, not least, their diverse geographies, 'much unofficial doctrine nonetheless emanates from them' (King, 2004: 7; see also Juris, 2004). Such transnational activists have been termed 'rooted cosmopolitans' (Tarrow, 2005) because while they move physically and cognitively outside their origins they nevertheless draw on, and are constrained by, the resources, networks and opportunities of the places/societies in which they live. Within GJNs, such individuals and groups (often from better-resourced organizations in the Global North), because of their structural positions, communication skills and experience in activism and meeting facilitation, tend to wield disproportionate power and influence (Juris, 2004a). In his analysis of the PGA network in Europe, for example, Juris (2004a) further builds on the work of Jamie King (2004), who updates Freeman's critique of informal hierarchies for the information age. In this sense, influential activists, referred to as 'supernodes' by King, dominate both the flow and content of information within networks. King argues that 'such groups and individuals ... not only [route] more than their "fair share" of informational traffic, but actively determine the "content" that traverses them' (2004: 7). King continues that such people 'do not (necessarily) constitute themselves out of a malicious will to power: rather, power defaults to them' through the characteristics noted above and 'personal qualities like energy, commitment and charisma, and the ability to synthesize politically important social moments into identifiable ideas and forms' (2004: 7). Moreover, what King (2004) terms crypto-hierarchies can occur whereby a core group, through its longevity in working together within a network, forms an unintentional elite.

Networks are, at the same time, dynamic entities that will change their shape and focus according to the evolving social relationships between the groups and individuals within them. Perhaps the networks that function most efficiently are those that, over time, take on more conventional organizational structures and either democratically, or through conflict, lead to the emergence of a vanguard or elite within a more defined political project. In this respect, Chris Harman points out that decentred forms of political networking are nothing new, but have been characteristic of many resistance and oppositionist movements throughout history, from French Jacobins to British Chartists, with correspondence through letter writing, the modern communication of the time. However, 'when people wanted to move from decentralised propaganda and agitation to any serious sort of struggle to break the concentrations of power, they had to look to more centralised forms of organisation' (Harman, 2000: 35).[9] Indeed the new 'social movements' of the 1960s, noted at the time by theorists such as Alain Touraine (1978) for their radical democracy and grassroots participation, evolved into more formal structured organizations with 'leaders' or 'organizers' who increasingly set agendas, and 'members' whose role was more passive (Mayo, 2005).[10] Although the emergence of more hierarchical forms of organization may result in more effective decision-making, it can also be at the expense of internal democracy, grassroots participation and more radical visions (Michels, 1998). An attractive feature of the network concept worth retaining, therefore, is its vision of a more decentred set of power relations.

In relation to power, a contrast should be made between different kinds of networks: from northern activist-based networks that

often number less than a few dozen dispersed members across continents; NGOs that vary from small, relatively isolated groupings to more powerful and almost corporate organizations, such as Oxfam; global union federations that are run by a small international cadre with a relatively passive locally rooted membership; to mass social movements such as the Sem Terra in Brazil, which has a third of a million members regarded 'not as a passive, card-carrying membership but one defined by taking action' (Mertes, 2002: 102). Once a network reaches a certain size, some measure of organizational structure, delegation and leadership become critical to its functioning and without it there is the danger of disintegration into its constituent parts.

Academic and activist discourses' omission of the social power and organizational realities residing in networks also reveal a surprising lack of research into the actual functioning of networks, or discussion about the particular forms and characteristics they take. Thus, the revolutionary potential of the internet is theoretically asserted rather than empirically demonstrated in most accounts. Some notable exceptions include the work of Jenny Pickerill on environmental cyber-protest (2003), Eric Lee (2004) on union activism on the internet and Jeffrey S. Juris on digital networking among global justice activists. Lee notes that, while the internet has the potential to revolutionize activist communication and action, current practices represent no more that the extension of traditional forms; email (telegrams), guestbooks (rallies, messages of support); rather than qualitatively new forms of communication and action:

> No website has yet proven itself a substitute for a picket line, no web forum has replaced the need for union meetings and no one has been recruited to a trade union by clever marketing through the web. Unions are gaining strength or declining due to numerous other factors and the Internet remains insignificant compared to those. (Lee, 2004: 74)

He also makes the point that use of the internet has been more important incrementally, in improving and deepening day-to-day routine communications within networks during periods of relative calm, rather than being pivotal at moments of crisis and rapid change. This is also the case for the *Dissent* network, which was responsible for protests and actions against the G8 in the UK in 2005. Although the internet provides an important forum for communications, ultimately the key decisions and actions revolve around placed events and meetings, such as monthly mass meetings held in different cities, plus convergence around days of action at particular sites of protest. This is not to detract from the possibilities of political action through the virtual space of the internet. Arquilla and Ronfeldt (2001) show how the direct action tactic of 'swarming' at demonstrations is partly organized through the internet. Similarly, global days of action have been initiated over the internet, ranging from the simultaneous demonstrations against the World Bank and the IMF in Prague in 2000 in 40 different countries, to the even more significant protests worldwide against the war in Iraq in February 2003. Additionally, many global campaigns have taken on an increasingly 'placeless' character, such as the network mobilized to support the release of Ghazi Falah.[11] The point to make is that place-based events or 'real space' remains critical in developing trust, understanding and deeper affinities, as well as organizational coherence for more sustained translocal interactions between activists. Recent research into the operation of two GJNs – a grassroots peasants organization, Peoples' Global Action (PGA) and a global union federation, the International Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Federation (ICEM) – is illustrative in this respect (Routledge *et al.*, 2007; 2008). Although the emergence of PGA since 1998 has, in large part, been facilitated by the internet, the more meaningful interactions between activists still take place through conferences and caravans that offer

the opportunity for deeper face-to-face engagement, discussions of shared experiences and the development of strategies (Juris, 2004a). Similarly, within ICEM the internet has offered enhanced opportunities for communication, particularly for the dissemination of information of worker exploitation at a global scale. However, the key organizational resources and decision-making powers are still operationalized through particular placed events, such as annual general meetings of the executive committee and a four-year World Congress.

At a more theoretical level, networks are something of an idealized construct. As Thompson has noted, the problem with much of the network discourse is that it insufficiently theorizes the social (and we would add spatial) context from which networks emerge (Thompson, 2004), the implication being that networks in practice vary enormously in their make-up (Anheier and Katz, 2005). Each network will have its own 'organizational culture' and politics, reflecting the uneven power relations between its constituent parts (cf. Juris, 2004a). In this sense, there is a need for further theorization of the spatial and historical contexts of GJNs. Too little time is spent exploring and assessing the importance of the contexts from which different actors and groups have emerged. While networks may be unstable and subject to shifting coalitions and alliances, the movements that inhabit them are often not, remaining firmly rooted spatially and temporally in particular settings. For example, the Zapatista rebellion emerged out of the protection of the historic rights of indigenous communities in Mexico to communal land, which subsequently became articulated within a broader critique of, and resistance to, NAFTA. Indeed, their name refers to the revolutionary leader, Emilio Zapata, whose original movement, as part of the Mexican Revolution in the first two decades of the twentieth century, was rooted in historical claims to land (Baschet, 2005). Thus, while there may well be networks of fluidity in McDonald's sense

(particularly direct action and autonomous groupings in the Global North), characterized by individuality, mobility and more unstable forms of identity, with temporary and ever-changing coalitions of actors; the majority of GJNs are composed of movements that have more collective, stable and historically embedded senses of identity (Harman, 2000; Wallerstein, 2002), many of which were also involved in earlier moments of transnational political resistance, such as the upheavals across the globe in 1968.

IV GJNs as convergence spaces

Following on from the comments above, our starting point for thinking through the spatialities of GJNs is to consider them first and foremost not as totalities, but rather as 'convergence spaces' (Routledge, 2003) for actors, movements and struggles at particular moments in time. Participation in GJNs allows activists embedded in territorial (and often historically rooted) struggles to expand their spatial horizons (Reid and Taylor, 2000). Although such network interaction may itself serve to redefine constituent movements, not least through the active role of materials of association such as the internet (Latour, 1993; Murdoch, 1998), movements remain territorialized through their ongoing, day-to-day struggles. The centrality of place in this sense remains inescapable. Through the concept of convergence space, developed below in terms of seven key characteristics, we can think of GJNs as spatially dispersed social coalitions of territorially rooted actors.

(1) Convergence spaces are comprised of place-based, but not necessarily, place-bound movements. Most of the actors and movements that constitute GJNs derive their principal strength from acting at the local and national scales, rather than at the global level (Sklair, 1995). Hence, for many grassroots activists, whether it is in peasant or indigenous people's movements, trade unionists or even consumer activists, it is their own locality, sense of community, or even a national or ethnic collective consciousness that remain

the most important (but not necessarily only) source of collective and individual identities (Routledge *et al.*, 2007; 2008). In this respect, Valins (1999) refers to 'stubborn chunks' of territorialized identity. Indeed, it is this local diversity and differentiation that is often under threat from capitalist modernization. As Cecena has put it, again with regard to the Zapatista uprising: 'Territory comprises ancestors, knowledge, the use of plants, their evolution, the perception of the cosmos, customs and community and living history' (2004: 361). More prosaically, the realities of making a living, social reproduction and links to family and community structures continue to embed movements in particular places. Also, even those actors whose lifestyles engender high degrees of mobility – eg, certain movement leaders and NGO workers from the Global South who regularly attend international conferences and social forums – are never completely disembedded from these sorts of place-based social relations. While there may be varying relations of connection to distant others, the continuing reality that everyday life is meaningfully territorialized is difficult to escape. But, crucially, immediate issues of survival and livelihood can act as motivations for people to participate in GJNs (see Routledge *et al.*, 2007; 2008). Hence, GJNs must negotiate between action that is deeply embedded in particular places and the fostering of coalitions that are more spatially extensive, and the impacts that such coalitions have upon the political identities of those involved. It should be recognized that the particularities of place may also vitiate against broader spatial mobilization and pose important problems for the development of GJNs.

This emphasis upon 'place', as the cornerstone of lived material existence, does not mean that we hold to a closed or territorially bounded view of the 'local'. Rather, we would concur with Massey's view of places as open and relational, such that 'each local struggle is already a relational achievement, drawing from both within and beyond "the local"'

(2005: 182). David Harvey argues that 'it is only when relationality connects to the absolute spaces and times of material and social life that politics comes alive. To neglect that connectivity is to court political irrelevance' (2006: 293). Indeed, Featherstone (2005) has pointed out that even 'militant particularisms' (Williams, 1989; Harvey, 1996) – ideals forged out of collective action in particular places – are relational in the sense of being formed out of broader non-local connections.

(2) Convergence spaces articulate certain collective visions (ie, unifying values, organizational principles and positions), which generate sufficient common ground to generate a politics of mutual solidarity (see below). These collective visions are representative of a 'prefigurative politics' (Graeber, 2002), prefiguring not a future ideal society but a participatory way of practising effective politics, articulating the (albeit imperfect) ability of heterogeneous movements to be able to work together without any single organization or ideology being in a position of domination. Collective visions approximate the universal values that Harvey (1996) discusses, recognizing differences between participants within convergence spaces, but attempting to provide common platforms of collective action. While united in broad common desires for economic and environmental justice, perhaps the strongest collective vision in GJNs is that of opposition to neoliberalism. However, contrasting, but not necessarily disabling, tensions exist between the articulation of a universalist politics and the militant particularisms of movements within the functioning of convergence spaces. Differences between movements concerning practices of gender, class, caste and ethnicity may also generate conflicts, not least if the collective visions of the convergence create homogenous activist environments that elide important issues of diversity. In addition, the immediacy of place-based concerns – such as movements' everyday struggles for survival under conditions of limited resources – can mean that the

global ambitions articulated by GJNs remain unrealized.

(3) Convergence spaces are relational achievements (Massey, 2005; Latour, 2006), involving a practical relational politics of solidarity. Such solidarity takes place in the form of changing and overlapping circuits of relations that are enacted both virtually through the internet and materially in particular forums (see above), where connections are grounded in place- and face-to-face based moments of articulation. These grounded interactions facilitate mutual solidarity, constructing the grievances and aspirations of geographically, culturally, economically and at times politically different and distant peoples as interlinked (see also Juris, 2004a; 2004b). Mutual solidarity across place-based movements enables connections to be drawn that extend beyond the place-based and particular. Such mutual solidarity recognizes differences between actors within networks, while at the same time recognizing similarities (for example, in people's aspirations). The creation of solidarities as part of the constitution of networks helps to reconfigure distance in different ways, emphasizing commonalities rather than differences (Olesen, 2005).

Convergence spaces are those of variation and flux, where the links between various intermediaries tend to be in process and are contestable. Networked actors fashion their political identities through the way that they engage with, and struggle against, different spatial configurations of power. Rather than being fixed or predetermined, political identities are crafted through the connections, associations and solidarities made in active struggles, and the multiplicities within which such identities are formed. Hence convergence spaces can be seen as generative, actively shaping political identities, rather than merely bringing together different actors (activists, movements) around common concerns. Forms of solidarity are thus diverse, multiple, productive and contested (Braun and Disch, 2002; Featherstone, 2003). The

various components of the network continually renegotiate with one another, forming variable and revisable coalitions, and assume ever-changing shapes (see Murdoch, 1998; Juris, 2004a; 2005a).

Understanding the potential for GJNs to develop a sustainable politics of mutual solidarity involves not just appreciating the way places are enmeshed in wider spatial relations, but also, and perhaps more critically, assessing how the 'global' is invoked in struggles that take place 'locally'. Massey (2004; 2005) attempts to recast the politics of place, by considering how local political interventions might develop against global neoliberalism. She uses the phrase 'geographies of responsibility' (2004) to make the point that, because places are relational and social relations flow through them, connecting us up increasingly to 'distant others' in complex ways, we should think more about the broader political impacts of our own local actions and interventions. Of course, this type of spatial consciousness has been the motif of the environmental movement for some time: to think globally and act locally. But there are two other interesting implications. The first relates to how different places have different capacities for resistance to neoliberalism, reflecting the uneven power geometries described earlier:

> a local politics of place that took seriously the relational construction of space and place […] would understand that relational construction as highly differentiated from place to place through the vastly unequal disposition of resources. This is particularly true of capitalist globalisation. The mobilisation of resources into power relations between places is also highly differentiated and a local politics of place must take account of that. (Massey, 2004: 13)

The second is the question of how a wider spatial imaginary, in other words a broader 'global' consciousness and understanding, is embedded in the activities of place-based or territorial struggles. In other words, to what extent do resistance movements against

neoliberalism foster a spatially extensive mutual solidarity rather than pursuing a more reactionary and defensive politics? As Massey (2004) argues '"challenging globalisation" might precisely in consequence mean challenging rather than defending, certain local places' (Massey, 2004). At root here is the need to develop a more self-reflexive local politics that recognizes global responsibility with 'distant others'. Interestingly, it is this type of perspective that fuelled the development of the socialist internationals from the time of Marx onwards. The construction and nurturing of mutual solidarities between workers, peasants, indigenous peoples, etc, are likely to be predicated upon the common experiences of alienation and exploitation through the workings of capital (Harvey, 2003), and how movements in their everyday practices attempt to take account of, or are reflexive about, responsibilities to distant others. Crucially, the development of an effective and sustainable politics of mutual solidarity will necessitate sustaining effective place-based politics. Much ultimately depends on the ways in which a more 'global' consciousness is fostered among the grassroots of movements to the extent that broader spatial imaginaries become embedded in everyday actions.

(4) Convergence spaces facilitate spatially extensive political action by participant movements. Locally based movements increasingly participate in forging non-local networks with other movements. Indeed, particular local movements may develop transnational networks of support as an operational strategy for the defence of their place(s) (Escobar, 2001). However, the practices of solidarity-building in convergence spaces are uneven from the outset because of the inequalities between the constituent movements (eg, the different resources available to movements), and because of the different geographies within which these movements are located (Bob, 2001; Anheier and Themudo, 2002). Movements will vary enormously in their spatial reach and ability

to generate support and political legitimization, with implications for political outcomes. Some movements remain relatively 'localized', others become linked into national coalitions, while others develop more transnational and even global networks of support. Particular places and movements become empowered while others remain marginal within the operations of GJNs. Indeed, a range of place-specific conditions enable or constrain movements in their capacity to organize their struggles and participate within GJNs. Place-specific conditions – particularly the availability and deployment of financial, human, organizational, political, informational or cultural resources – are crucial in movement mobilizations. Moreover, transnational alliances are facilitated when movements possess significant mobilization capacities already under way; when they have the capacity for regular communication with other movements and when each organization's members take some responsibility for brokering bonds of solidarity (Bandy and Smith, 2005). In this way, networks are both influenced by and replicate the existing 'power geometries' (Massey, 1999) that distinguish connections between places under economic globalization. Within a particular network, one would expect an activist grouping operating from London to have potentially greater global connectivity and reach than one operating out of Dhaka.

Moreover, rather than fostering broader networks of mutual solidarity, some convergence spaces may over time become dominated by the politics of particular movements, which might cause a retreat into a more narrowly defined and more conservative territorial politics. In addition, while convergence spaces are spatially extensive in their operation, many of their participant movements (particularly in the Global South) may see defence of particular places, and opposition to national governments (pursuing neoliberal policies) as their most appropriate sites of political action (Mertes, 2002). As a result, geographical dilemmas arise in the

attempt to prosecute spatially extensive politics, compounded by uneven processes of interaction and facilitation.

(5) In order to 'ground' the idea of a convergence space within the communities that comprise the active membership of participant movements, it is essential to have 'grassrooting vectors'. These vectors work to intervene in the work of translation by which networks are formed and developed, acting to further the process of communication, information sharing and interaction within grassroots communities. Such vectors include the work conducted between activists at conferences, meetings in which conference delegates provide feedback to the grassroots communities in which they work, and activist caravans. Grassrooting vectors constitute the embodied, articulated moments in the social relations of convergence spaces (Massey, 1994; Juris, 2004a). They generate the 'communicative infrastructure' (Juris, 2004a) necessary for the operation and sustainability of convergence spaces. The most important grassrooting vectors are what we term 'imagineers'[12] who conduct much of the organizational work of convergence spaces – preparing, organizing and participating in discussions, meetings, conferences and campaigns. These key activists organize conferences, mobilize resources (eg, funds) and facilitate communication and information flows between movements and between movement offices and grass-roots communities. The imagineers attempt to 'ground' the concept or imaginary of the network – what it is, how it works, what it is attempting to achieve – within grassroots communities who comprise the membership of the participant movements. Moreover, crucially, imagineers serve to embody the networks in which they work (see Olesen, 2005). The imagineers represent the connective tissue across geographic space working as activators, brokers, and advocates for domestic and international claims (Tarrow, 2005).

(6) Convergence spaces are characterized by a range of different operational logics, spanning from more horizontal (decentred, non-hierarchical) to more vertical (hierarchical, centralized) operational logics (Juris, 2004a; 2004b; Tormey, 2004a). The networking logic of GJNs is always entangled with more verticalist practices as a result of traditional movement structures, power relations inherent within and between participant movements, and the role played by key network actors within convergence spaces. As a result, operational dilemmas arise in the attempt to prosecute spatially extensive politics, compounded by uneven processes of interaction and facilitation.

(7) Convergence spaces are sites of contested social and power relations, because the diversity of groups that comprise them articulate a variety of potentially conflicting goals (concerning the forms of social change), ideologies (eg, concerning gender, class and ethnicity), and strategies (eg, institutional [legal] and extra-institutional [illegal] forms of protest) (Juris, 2004a; 2004b). Moreover, unequal discursive and material power relations exist that result from the differential control of resources (Dicken *et al*., 2001) and placing of actors within network flows (Massey, 1994). These in turn may give rise to problems of representation, mobility and cultural difference, both between the social movements that participate and between activists within particular movements. The alliances forged necessarily involve entangled power relations, where relations of domination and resistance are entwined, that create spaces of resistance/domination (Sharp *et al*., 2000). The construction of mutual solidarities is therefore not a smooth process. It involves antagonisms (often born out of the differences between collaborators) as well as agreements and is always, to a degree, fraught with political determinations (Featherstone, 2005).

Ultimately, we conceive of GJNs in both vertical and horizontal terms, and argue that it is essential to consider how and why territorially based movements become involved in GJNs, and how the convergence of differently resourced and placed actors

in such networks are played out in practice. GJN imaginaries at the grassroots remain uneven and potentially 'biodegradeable' (Plows, 2004: 104), ie, they may dissipate without sufficient and constant nurturing. Conversely, effective and sustainable mass mobilization can only come about if global networks themselves continue to relate to the direct and lived experience of exploitation from those communities at the sharp end of neoliberalism (Burawoy, 2003).

Perhaps more fundamentally, we might ask, following Ettlinger and Bosco (2004) whether a network is really a single network or, rather, a federation of cells. From this perspective, cells or movements may share common strategic goals and coalesce into temporary networks for individual campaigns, only to dissolve and form again in another constellation for the next campaign. In this sense, we might make a distinction between GJNs as the discursive and convergent spaces within which what Olesen (2005) terms 'transnational counterpublics' (Juris, 2004a) meet to challenge dominant neoliberal discourses and practices; and their participant movements as the territorially based organizations that are able to mobilize (or not) for particular struggles both within and without GJNs. In the short term, the success with which GJNs are able to foster and sustain the involvement of territorially based movements in broader struggles, outwith a movement's immediate ('local') interests, will depend upon the organizational make-up of GJNs. In particular, the extent to which GJNs are based upon the existence of a stable core and a periphery of temporary activism, that reinforces it at crucial times, and the spatial politics within which such cores are situated. In the longer term, if we accept that GJNs are ultimately more temporary and contingent associations, developed for particular needs and circumstances, the pursuit of a sustainable counterhegemonic politics to neoliberalism depends on the territorially based constituent movements and their continued ability to forge a progressive and outward-looking politics of place.

V Conclusions
In this paper, we have set out to untangle the geographies of GJNs. Our guiding theme here has been to avoid some of the more celebratory rhetoric of global civil society enthusiasts in highlighting some of the tensions, contradictions and opposing subject positions that characterize them. While it is important to highlight the novelty of GJNs in bringing about the convergence of hitherto disaggregated territorial struggles into a collective opposition to neoliberal globalization, we have also highlighted their uneven and entangled geographies as a prelude to conceptualizing their dynamic and spatial logics and operation. In this respect, our purpose has been to critically interrogate the concept of networks as a metaphor for understanding the operation of the different constituent parts of GJNs and to emphasize the importance of a geographical perspective in this task.

Although critical of the way network discourses have been deployed theoretically to make claims about transformations in global social relations and more importantly here to inflate claims about new forms of decentred and horizontal forms of resistance formations, we nevertheless have retained the term, Global Justice Network, to think through the ways in which resistances to neoliberalism operate across space – bringing together diverse place-based movements into a series of spatially extensive alliances and coalitions. However, in contrast to some of the network discourses, we have been keen to re-insert the realities of uneven development, space and power relations into our understandings of the operations of GJNs. While the networked form offers a challenge to more traditional and hierarchical forms of social movement, in terms of developing more effective democracy and participation, it contains its own tensions and conflicts.

As part of this critique, we have attempted to think through the spatialities of GJNs.

This has involved deploying and elaborating upon the concept of convergence space (Routledge, 2003) to consider how differently located movements are drawn into broader spatial connections and relations in struggles against neoliberalism. Drawing upon Massey's work, we emphasize the importance of considering how a broader spatial politics becomes embedded in local political struggles and resistances. While accepting Massey's insight about the relational nature of space in understanding the operation of GJNs, our conclusions here also point us towards the continued importance of places in forging the collective identities of movements that make up networks. Without essentializing place, it is critical in this respect to recognize the importance of territorially based, historically constructed, social identities, which are at the same time themselves always contingent and in some senses temporary social constructions (see Paasi, 2004; Jones, 2005), in facilitating struggles and collective resistance. A key theme in this respect for the sustainability of GJNs and their ability to mount effective challenges to neoliberalism is the way that such networks are imagined, constructed and reproduced in more 'local' contexts (see Routledge *et al*., 2007; 2008).

Notes

1. Mobilizations concerned with globalization can be dated back to at least 1986 – when over 80 000 people protested against an IMF meeting in Berlin (see Gerhards and Rucht, 1992). In the early 1990s struggles emerged in the USA against GATT, as well as protests by movements such as *Reclaim the Streets* in Britain (Brecher and Costello, 1994; Juris, 2004a).

2. However, see Della Porta *et al*. (2006) for an analysis of two events of transnational protest, the G8 protests in Genoa in 2001, and the European Social Forum in Florence in 2002 that begins to address this issue. They argue that 'global' events such as global days of action, counter-summits and campaigns have been sustained over time, and 'condensed' the diversity of networks resisting neoliberalism thus contributing to an evolving global movement. They argue that many activists identify themselves with such a movement, and that this movement is acknowledged by the press, opponents and sympathisers. They also argue that there is increasing evidence of transnational coalitions of social movements and a growing number of locally active networks structured around global issues.

3. However, see Featherstone (2003) and Routledge (2003).

4. This idea is based on an image of power as a macro-social resource that one can possess, rather than as a microsocial relation which 'circulates' in social networks (Foucault, 2001).

5. James Scott recounts how peasants act in effective and concerted fashion against powerful forces without formal organization of the party kind (Scott, 1987; 1992). Rick Fantasia demonstrates how unionized and non-unionized worker resistances operate on the basis of informal alliances and associations (Fantasia, 1988). Piven and Cloward show how informal networks are often capable of generating more effective forms of collective action than political parties seeking to represent the poor and needy (Piven and Cloward, 1988).

6. For example, the World Social Forum creates spaces of discussion, of comparison, of affinity and affiliation. The social forums facilitate ways in which networks can coalesce, develop, multiply and re-multiply – or they would do if the horizontalist vision of social forums held sway (Juris, 2004a; 2005b; McLeish, 2004; Sen, 2004; Tormey, 2004b).

7. These are based upon the notion of creative self-organization of communities, eschewing traditional political organizational forms.

8. However, certain movement leaders, and NGO workers from the Global South do enjoy a certain degree of transnational mobility (eg, attending international conferences and social forums).

9. The weakness of the Chartists in achieving their immediate demand for universal suffrage in the 1830s and 1840s was arguably due to their fragmented nature – with significant mass mobilizations at the local level but weak relational linkages within the broader network preventing it from coalescing into a coherent national movement (Foot, 2005).

10. For example, Greenpeace and Amnesty International.

11. Ghazi Falah is a Professor of Geography, specializing in Middle East geopolitics, at the University of Akron. Falah, a Palestinian Arab, was arrested in July 2006 by the Israeli state on suspicion of links to Hizbollah, but, after a global campaign centred on the internet, was released without charge.

12. Juris similarly refers to 'activist hackers'.

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