Book Review/Compte rendu

Jeffrey S. Juris, *Networking Futures: The Movement Against Corporate Globalization*. Experimental Futures Series. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008, 400 pp. $US 23.95 paper (978-0-8223-4269-4), $US 84.95 hardcover (978-0-8223-4250-2)

Networking Futures is the product of two years of "militant ethnography" by anthropologist and activist Jeffrey Juris. The text is a rich description of the ways that Barcelona-based activists against corporate globalization experienced and understood the network forms of organization they were developing in the local context, at street mobilizations in cities around Europe, and at international gatherings of activists. Juris argues convincingly that for these activists, networks are not only a means of organizing and communicating, but are also a prefigurative goal and a political identity.

The book begins with his theoretical discussion of the "Cultural Logic of Networking." Juris follows Castells, Hardt and Negri, and others in arguing that the increasing popularity of network forms of organization and political models in the current era is facilitated and shaped by the rise of new digital technologies. He posits that the anticorporate globalization movement is shaped by a growing confluence among networks as technology, organizational structure, and political model, and suggests that scholars have yet to explore the specific mechanisms through which such decentred networking logics are produced, reproduced, and transformed within particular social, cultural, and political contexts. This book shows the result of this exploration.

Juris operated as a self described "militant ethnographer," doing research while being an active part of the movement he is researching. He operated as a participant observer in the streets, in meetings, and online. He examined movement documents and conducted seventy qualitative interviews with Barcelona-based activists. This approach provides him with rich portrayals of movement activity. Juris does his ethnography within multiple sites, beginning with his experiences at the 1999 Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization as a way of outlining the context of the movement. From this starting point, he argues that anticorporate globalization activism can best be understood as a map of overlapping networks, rather than as a single, unified movement. He

then follows the activists in Barcelona as they participate and contribute to these networks. Two chapters follow on the organizing networks rooted in Barcelona, followed by two chapters on street protests in Prague and Genoa, and two chapters on the European summit of the grassroots global network People's Global Action and the World Social Forum at Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2002. A final substantive chapter highlights the particular role of political and technological experiments with alternative and tactical media by activists in these networks. Each chapter expresses different manifestations of the cultural logic of networks. These activists use networks not only as a way of building connections and coordinating activity amongst actors with different goals, priorities, and repertoires, but because they express a political vision that is unlike movements from the past in its emphasis on autonomy and difference.

The book is the first English language ethnography of the European global justice movement, and it is particularly good at articulating the practices and ideas of that movement in a way that moves beyond local-global divisions. Social movement theorists will find this book offers an in-depth case study that contributes to discussion of the ways that organizational form, political ideals, and collective identity are interwoven. Activist decision-making is revealed in all its messiness here. Some of the most fascinating material is included in detailed retelling of the debates and discussions around power, practice, and politics amongst and within activist groups. These discussions are unusual in the ways that they reveal the physical, emotional, and rhetorical struggles that lie behind activist praxis.

Juris is at his most passionate when he is at his most prescriptive. He argues that network forms and norms point to new models for reorganizing social, economic, and political relations, suggesting that understanding the way these networks operate is particularly important in the current moment, because new technologies offer a solution to the tension between democratic organization and political effectiveness. However, network politics are not celebrated unequivocally. In his chapter, "Spaces of Terror," he reflects on the weaknesses of the emphasis on autonomy and difference within network organizing. Looking at the organization of and repression of the protests against the G8 in Genoa in 2000, he warns that the network norms and forms used to organize those protests limited the ways that activists could question each others' tactics and thus avoid repression. His political concern is an interesting one, that comes out of activist discussions. He argues that within the network framework's emphasis on "diversity of tactics," the performative violence of some activists can lead to the repression of all activists. This is an important concern, especially in the context of the brutality in

Genoa. However, at times his argument about tactics distracts him from the more generalizable, and potentially politically innovative analysis of network organizing and its relationship with the state.

As a piece of ethnography, the goals are to get the details right, and to allow them to speak for themselves, rather than engage in a project of more abstract theory-building. Nevertheless, as a sociologist, I often found myself wishing that he generalized more from his case. While he clearly describes the movement's emphasis on network imagery, technology and practices, any causal relationship amongst these different components remains unclear. Juris speaks of inscription, reflection, and intervention, and indeed these terms reflect the ongoing reverberation between idea and practice, but I wondered if there was a way to schematize more succinctly the relationship between these different "networks."

I was intrigued by Juris's concept of militant ethnography. However, his description of what it is seems somewhat disconnected from what he ended up writing. Juris describes this method as one of collective reflection and analysis by activists about their practices, processes, power, and networks. While Juris explains that he facilitated all three modes of analysis to develop the work, the process by which he as the researcher/participant worked with these activists to develop this analysis is largely invisible. Instead we get a text that tells the story of activist theorizing from a single, invisible point of view. It would have been interesting to read Juris' reflections on the ways that his particular position as a white, American, male activist may have influenced such collective analysis. However, the concept is an intriguing one, and I suspect we'll see more from Juris about its operation in future work.

Unfortunately, the book seems as if it could have used a final edit. One occasionally gets the sense that chapters and sections had been rearranged at the last minute.

Overall, *Networked Futures* is a great read. Scholars of the global justice movement will appreciate its rich accounts of movement practices, and social movement scholars more generally can use it to develop our understanding of the symbolic, spatial and cultural dimensions of organizational forms, practices and identities.

York University Lesley J. Wood

Lesley J. Wood is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology. Her work on social movements has appeared in *Mobilization*, the *Journal of World Systems Research*, and *Qualitative Sociology*. ljwood@yorku.ca