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Assembling Social Space

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Assembling Social Space

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Theories of social space and place have become problematic in light of the imbrication of places within regional and global networks; the disembedding, distantiation, and technological mediation of social relations; the expansion of global media and information networks; and the mobility of people, things and resources. This article draws on assemblage theory to develop a non-Euclidean model of the production of social space and applies the model in an analysis of three case studies from ethnographic fieldwork and interviews conducted in Concepción, Chile.

Supplementary material is available for this article. Go to the publisher's online edition of The Communication Review *for the following free supplemental resource:* A Conceptual Model of Social Space. Source: Wiley, S., Sutko, M., Moreno Becerra, T. (2010).

Modern theories of communication and culture have become problematic in light of four interrelated features of late modernity: the imbrication of places and territories within regional and global networks (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999; Sassen, 2000a, 2000b; Wiley, 2004); the disembedding, distantiation, and technological mediation of social relations (Adams, 2005; Appadurai, 1990; Castells, 1996, 2009; Giddens, 1991; Rouse,

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1995; Sinclair, 1999); the expansion of global media, communication, and information networks (e.g., see Castells, 2009; Hargittai & Centeno, 2001; Herman & McChesney, 1997; Mowlana, 1997; Robertson, 1999; Schiller, 1992; Sussman & Lent, 1991); and the mobility of people, things, and resources. In light of these historical developments, late modernity is said to entail the restructuring of space and place (Castells, 1996, 2009; Giddens, 1991; Massey, 1993; Morley, 2000; Morley & Robins, 1995; Sassen, 2000a, 2000b, 2007) and to be accompanied, at least potentially, by changes in people's sense of place and belonging (Berman, 1982; Clifford, 1992; Escobar, 2001; Hall, 1997; Meyrowitz, 1985; Meyrowitz, 2005; Nowicka, 2007; Pred, 1984; Sinclair and Cunningham, 2000; Sinclair & Cunningham, 2000, Tomlinson, 1994). The resulting work in economics, sociology and anthropology, postcolonial theory, cultural studies, and, of course, geography has generally been recognized as symptomatic of a *spatial turn* in social theory, heavily influencing the writings of Manuel Castells, Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja, David Harvey, Doreen Massey, and others (e.g., see Crang & Thrift, 2000; Falkheimer & Jansson, 2006; Wiley, 2005).

The spatial turn has been followed, more recently, by a *mobilities turn* (Brown & Durrheim, 2009; Büscher & Urry, 2009; Elliott & Urry, 2010; Sheller & Urry, 2006) that calls on us to rethink place, space, and belonging in light of the ways in which power works through differential mobilities and emplacements (Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006; Sheller & Urry, 2006; Sheller, this issue). The mobilities turn is in part a new focusing of attention on mobility itself—migration, travel, automobility, and aeromobility—but its deeper implications for social theory are far more radical. If people, and hence society and culture, can no longer be defined by place and territory (Clifford, 1992; Marcus, 1995; Sheller & Urry, 2006), then the production of social space itself must be radically rethought, along with the methods we use to map it analytically. After the spatial turn and the mobilities turn, we are faced with new questions and methodological challenges: How are places and territories produced out of the heterogeneous elements and flows of transnational capital, communication, trade, and migration? How are social subjects produced in this context, how do they navigate that social and cultural terrain, and how do they construct a sense of place, space, and mobility? How do they experience the global, and how do they situate themselves, and the places with which they identify, in relation to the known world beyond? And as theorists and methodologists, how can we conceptualize and study social space, place, and belonging when both places and people are understood to be networked and mobile?

Despite the complexity of the new context and the need for new approaches (or perhaps because of that complexity), debates about globalization, mobility, and place have often remained at a metatheoretical or metahistorical level. Much work on place and space advances universalizing

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claims about the defining characteristics of modernity and postmodernity or focuses on the ontological and epistemological assumptions undergirding theory. There have been too few empirical, contextualized studies of actual practices and experiences to determine whether the utopian and dystopian narratives and counternarratives of late modern theory are in fact descriptive of actual processes (Couldry, 2000; Sassen, 2007; Tomlinson, 1994). As John Tomlinson (1994) noted, "Our day-to-day experience of locales is certainly structured by forces which are, ultimately, global. But does this imply that our phenomenal worlds are global?" (p. 153). In such a context, it becomes increasingly important to conduct new empirical research aimed at discovering how real people are practicing and living the historical shift toward greater mobility and connectivity: how their social space and sense of place are constituted at the intersection of their spatial practices, their social networks, and their communication and how—or whether—they are experiencing an altered sense of place (see Murphy, 2005; Murphy & Kraidy, 2003, 2006).

In a recent article on the implications of the mobility turn for research methods, Büscher and Urry (2009) invoked, in passing, the concept of *assemblages* as a way of defining the appropriate objects of analysis for studies of space and mobility (p. 102). Our work develops that line of thinking by drawing on assemblage theory (DeLanda, 2006; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Marcus & Saka, 2006; Massumi, 1992; Ong & Collier, 2005; Wiley, 2005; Wise, 1997, 2000, 2005) to construct a non-Euclidean model of social space. We then use that model in the analysis of recent ethnographic fieldwork and interviews conducted Concepción, Chile (also see Wiley, 2004, 2006a, 2006b). In the proposed model, the social space of a given individual is not assumed to be the legal or politically recognized territory within which he or she was born, nor is it seen as the immediate geographical locale in which an individual is currently living. Rather, we define an individual's social space as the sum of the social relations, geographical mobilities and emplacements, and communication networks that link that individual into a specific constellation of assemblages. Although an individual's networks may link him or her to assemblages that do correspond to the familiar modern spatial containers (the family/home, the organization, the city, the nation), that eventuality is not taken for granted. Instead, the model allows us to *discover* what assemblages matter in the production of social space for a given individual, rather than presuming that his or her social space is coterminous with the city, region, or national territory in which he or she is currently found or was born—or that it is reducible to geographical space at all. To discover the salient assemblages, we propose a strategy of methodological individualism (Ferrarotti, 2007) and "hydrological" analysis (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 454), an approach that starts from the practices and lived experiences of an individual person and works outward, following the flows

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to find the articulations and assemblages that position that individual as a subject within a complex web of geographical, social, and technological connections and spatial representations (For a graphic representation of the model, consult the ancillary materials for this article on the publisher's website. For a more detailed discussion of the theoretical justification of this model, see Wiley, Moreno, & Sutko, in press.).

As a contribution to empirical studies of globalization and sense of place called for by Nick Couldry (2000) Saskia Sassen (2007), John Tomlinson (1994), Patrick Murphy (2005), and others, this article presents three case studies drawn from a year of fieldwork in the city of Concepción, a major urban center in southern Chile where neoliberal economic policies and rapid technological development have led to one of the most radically globalized urban regions in the world. The analysis, grounded in ethnographic participant observation and interviews conducted by the first author (Wiley) and his research team in Chile, as well as the native knowledge of the paper's third author (Moreno), aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are a given individual's social networks, practices of geographical mobility and emplacement, and uses of media and communication? In what ways do those networks connect the individual to global flows?
2. How does a given individual experience the mobilities, places, and territories constructed by his or her practices; that is, what is his or her sense of place and sense of space?
3. How do the networks and practices of a given individual articulate that person to multiple assemblages?
4. What is the scope and scale of those assemblages, what logics govern them, and in what ways do they articulate individuals to local and translocal flows?

In the sections that follow, we first present the conceptual framework of the study, which builds on Lefebvre's (1974, 1991) analysis of social space and sets it in global context by drawing on assemblage theory, mobility studies, social network theory, and media ecology analysis. We argue for methodological individualism and "hydrological" analysis as a research strategy that is adequate to the current context of mobility and global connectivity. Next, we provide brief summaries of three case studies that illustrate different practices of geographical mobility and emplacement, different social networks, different media ecologies, different modes of articulation to the translocal, and different experiences of place and space. Third, we develop an analysis of several assemblages that operate to compose the social space of the three interviewees. Last, we return to our initial research questions, offer some preliminary observations, and map out directions for the next stage of the research.

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ASSEMBLAGES, NETWORKS, AND SUBJECTS: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF SOCIAL SPACE

The model that we use to define and analyze social space draws on four basic concepts that have been developed in disparate fields of social theory over recent years: assemblages, networks, activities, and subjects (a graphic representation of the model is available; see the ancillary materials for this article on the publisher's Web site). *Assemblages* link subjects (whether individual or collective) via networks and activities, to particular arrangements of bodies, technologies, and materials in order to do something—to enable the production of surplus value, to produce citizens, to move populations or resources, to expand human knowledge and develop technologies, to manage and direct force and violence, to create community and solidarity, and so on. *Networks* are the virtual links—that is, the potential articulations, or ties—that connect subjects to assemblages; we focus on social networks, geographical networks, and communication networks. Much has been written about networks (e.g., see Axhausen, 2002; Carrasco, Miller & Wellman, 2008; Castells, 2010; Larsen, Axhausen, & Urry, 2006; Wellman, 2001), but here we reimagine networking as the work of netting, or assembling, disparate elements; this argument will be developed later in this article. *Activities*—the everyday practices we carry out alone and with others—are actualizations of networks; that is, they actualize the virtual links of one's networks by expressing networked relations in actual activity. Last, *subjects* are human individuals or collectives who perceive, experience, and define reality from a particular perspective and position within relations of power (Foucault, 1982).

For this project, we are specifically interested in the ways in which subjectivity entails lived experiences of space and place, which, in turn, enable spatial practices (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). We break down lived experience of space into sense of place, sense of territory, and sense of space. Last, our model includes sociospatial agency: Subjects are subjects of their activities as well as being subjected to the effects of power. We now develop each of these elements of the model—assemblages, networks, activities, subjects, and agency—in greater detail.

The first element of the model is the assemblage, or more precisely, a constellation of multiple assemblages to which a given subject is articulated. Assemblages, in this model, are the bundles of arrangements and logics that shape a subject's emplacement, mobility, and connectivity—that is, their social space—with the aim of producing a specific effect. Assemblages are compositions of heterogeneous elements "deducted from the flows" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 448) and made to function according to a certain set of logics. As these elements are brought into relations of composition with one another, they constitute a specific territory for a certain duration and code the component elements, and the assemblage as a whole,

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according to specific logics (DeLanda, 2006; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; see also, Wiley, 2005; Wise, 2005).

In this study, we pay attention to three kinds of networks that we see as critical for linking subjects to assemblages. They are social networks, media or communication networks, and geographical networks:

- From *social milieus*—the populations with which we are potentially connected—are formed *social interactions* whose virtual dimensions are *social relations* and *social networks*.
- From *technological milieus*—the infrastructures, technologies, and media that surround us—we select and focus our attention on specific *sources and discourses* whose virtual elements are *media and communication networks* (or "media ecologies"; see Fuller, 2005).
- From *geographical milieus*—the built and natural landscapes through which we move and the available technologies of mobility, we enact specific practices of mobility and emplacement; the virtual element of these spatial practices are geographical networks, or *networks of mobility and emplacement.*

All three of these networks and modes of articulation are actualized, or expressed, in a person's practices or activities. Any specific activity that a subject undertakes is the product of the multiple articulations that link that subject simultaneously into a whole constellation of assemblages acting in that subject's milieu. Furthermore, activities themselves depend on the salience and power of one assemblage's shift in time and space in relation to others. For example, moving through daily activities, one experiences the shifting, overlapping salience of the assemblages of family, consumption, community, or labor.

Last, the model focuses attention on several specific elements of subjectivity that are relevant for conceptualizing a subject's lived experience of space: sense of place, sense of territory, and sense of space. We define *sense of place* as the set of meanings, affects, and expectations that an individual associates with a place, including an understanding of the characteristics of the people, activities, and physical components that are appropriate to the place.

On the basis of an individual's knowledge and experience of multiple places, he or she develops a *sense of territory*—a space imagined and experienced as the container of past, present, and potential future activities, within which that individual locates his or her own places and/or the places of others. Like sense of place, sense of territory can be socially constructed on any scale, but a territory is always understood in relation to a set of places, as the container of those places. Last, *sense of space* is the overall set of relational meanings, affects, and expectations within which an individual

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understands and experiences all the places and territories he or she knows (whether these have been experienced corporeally, through embodied practices, or incorporeally, via place images and narratives circulated in schools, the media, and stories told by others). Our sense of space positions us, cognitively and affectively, in relation to the places and territories we know (our own and others'), the practices of mobility and stopping that structure our everyday life, and the associated activities and social relations that we experience in places and in movement.

The methodological challenges entailed in applying this model to research on social space and sense of place are daunting. The extent and complexity of present-day transportation networks, social networks, and media networks, as well as the extensive and increasingly accelerated flows of populations, materials, and media content they facilitate, create substantial challenges for research on actual configurations of social space (on the challenges of field research in the context of globalization and mobility, see Brown & Durrheim, 2009; Büscher & Urry, 2009; and Marcus, 1995). To discover what constellations of assemblages are at work constituting an individual's social space (rather than presuming to know this in advance on the basis of a person's present geographical location, birthplace, or citizenship), we chose to use a strategy of methodological individualism. In terms of our model, this involves working backwards (right to left in our model)—from the subject and his or her activities to the networks, and finally to the assemblages. By methodological individualism, we mean that we must begin with a person (or perhaps more accurately, "a life"; Deleuze, 2005) and follow the flows and connections that articulate him or her to all the assemblages to which he or she is linked. In this way, we can apply Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) call for a nomad science: a "hydraulic" (or, as we prefer, "hydrological") approach to research (p. 397, 454) in which one *follows the flows* outward from a given starting point to discover the distant connections and the geographical, social, or cultural reach of the assemblages that are acting in the milieu of the subject. (Methodological individualism, it must be said right away, is not the same as an ontological commitment to the autonomy or individuality of subjects.)

A key point in our argument is that methodological individualism is necessary because, in the context of mobility and global connectedness, no two individuals are linked to the same set of assemblages or linked in the same way. Because individuals are mobile, because they may inhabit distinct media ecologies, and because their social relations and networks may be translocal, it cannot be assumed that two people inhabiting (or working in, or passing through) a given urban area or national territory are members of a common society or that they share a common sense of place. Each person—each subject, in our model—practices and experiences space differently and, most significantly, may be articulated to different conceived spaces (Lefebvre, 1991)—that is, to different dominant assemblages

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that compose social relations and produce space. Methodological individualism allows us to follow those linkages for each subject and to uncover the distant (or not so distant) assemblages shaping the social space of our interviewees. Methodologically, it is the implication, or enfolding, of the social in the individual that interests us. We intend for our analysis to work through individual accounts to illuminate the social (Ferrarotti, 2007) and to work from the practices and experiences of individual interviewees toward the articulations, networks, and assemblages whose effects are refracted in their accounts.

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THREE LIVES

In this section, we introduce three interviewees and describe their social space in terms of the social networks, place networks, and communication networks that link them to a range of assemblages. We begin each case study with a quote from the interviewee. As a way of inquiring about interviewees' sense of place and sense of space (i.e., how they imagine their own place in relation to the world beyond), we asked them to imagine sending a message in a bottle and explaining, in the message, who sent the bottle and from where. The epigraphs that appear at the beginning of each case study are the interviewee's responses to that question.

After briefly introducing each person, we discuss their specific connections to global flows and consider their experience of globalization, as well as their sense of place and space. These three case studies—three lives being lived at the intersection of multiple networks and flows—then serve as starting points for a hydrological analysis in which we move from subjects, via networks and practices, to discover the assemblages functioning in their milieus. Four of those assemblages—assemblages of commuting, of labor, of tourism, and of "alternative" culture—are then analyzed in the following section.

Don Alvaro (Interview #03-05)

> *I am Alvaro Navarro. I was born in Agüita de la Perdiz, a humble neighborhood where many people dream of improving their lives. I have worked in the university for 31 years.*

This is what Don Alvaro Navarro would write if he were to send a message in a bottle to an unknown recipient across the ocean. His message is brief, but it expresses his strong sense of self, which is characterized by rootedness in his neighborhood and work and a somewhat critical, class-conscious sense of place. Don Alvaro Navarro is a 49-year-old resident of Agüita de la Perdiz,

a working-class neighborhood in central Concepción, where he was born and raised and where he has lived his entire life. He lives with his wife and three children, two of whom are adults, in a house that they own. For more than 30 years, Don Alvaro has worked as an *auxiliar*—a maintenance man and office service employee—at a major university that is within walking distance of his house. It is a modestly remunerated but steady job with decent benefits, and his family's total household income is about 255,000 Chilean pesos/month (US$530/month). Comparatively, this places his family in the second-lowest quintile of income distribution for Chile (Ministerio de Planificación, Government of Chile, 2006), although his position at a major university offers the kind of career stability, salary, benefits, and working conditions that many within his income bracket would envy.

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Social network

Don Alvaro's interactions with people in his social network are concentrated in the Bío Bío Region. Most of his extended family, as well as his friends and fellow workers, live in Greater Concepción, and many of them live in his own neighborhood. His workplace is the site of daily interactions with university faculty and staff, including foreign visitors to the university. Because of his longevity in his university job and his contact with many kinds of people there, some of his work interactions have become social relationships. Don Alvaro also has relatives who live in Ovalle, a city in the IVth Region of Chile in the north, as well as some acquaintances in other parts of the world, whom he met at the university and with whom he maintains e-mail contact.

Mobility

Don Alvaro's activities and interactions with others occur within a small local area most days of the week, but on weekends his range of mobility widens, and several times a year he takes longer trips. Don Alvaro's everyday mobility is primarily on foot, from his house to the university campus and back again, often twice a day, as he walks home for lunch, then back to campus. Although Don Alvaro gets around most of the time by walking, he occasionally uses his car to go to the grocery store or to Sunday Mass and to take weekend trips with his family to nearby towns and beaches. When he takes trips outside the Bío Bío Region, which he does several times per year, he travels by bus, using Chile's highly developed intercity bus system. Don Alvaro has traveled to several cities in the north of Chile, to Santiago, and to Puerto Montt in the south, sometimes as a tourist and sometimes to visit family (and often both simultaneously). Every year, he travels by bus to Ovalle to visit his brother-in-law, who lives there. Don Alvaro has neither traveled internationally nor expressed a desire to do so.

When asked where he would like to travel some day, he responded, "farther north and farther south"—that is, closer to the two extreme geographical ends of the country. This is in fact a common goal for Chileans—to cover the north–south geography of the country as thoroughly as possible—and how far north or how far south one has traveled is frequently a theme of conversation.

Media and communication

Don Alvaro has cable television service and broadband Internet at home. Although he occasionally uses e-mail and checks the Web sites of Chilean newspapers, the primary users of Internet in his house are his children. Don Alvaro watches *Televisión Nacional* (the Chilean state-owned, but highly commercialized, national network) and *Chilevisión* (a national, corporate-owned, and even more thoroughly commercialized network) to keep up with national and international news. For local and regional news of the Bío Bío Region, he reads *El Sur*, a longstanding regional newspaper based in Concepción, and listens to *Radio Bío Bío*, a Concepción-based national radio network. Don Alvaro says that it is important to keep up with the news in order to consider different political perspectives, to figure out who is telling the truth, and to "be able to have an opinion" and "know which side you're on." In addition to the national news programs, Don Alvaro uses television to watch some international programming; he likes soccer games, action movies, and programs about new technologies. On weekends, he likes to listen to Andean folk-rock music and romantic music on CDs, which he plays on his home stereo system.

Globalization

Don Alvaro's social space has been globalized primarily through two types of connection: the national media and his own social network. As previously mentioned, to stay "informed about the world," Don Alvaro watches the newscasts of Chilean national television, and this seems to be an important activity for him. However, he does not make use of other sources of international news (e.g., foreign news channels on cable TV such as CNN and the BBC, foreign newspapers and magazines available at sidewalk newsstands, blogs, or the Web sites of international news providers), so his understanding of world events is thoroughly filtered and framed by the national news media. When asked if he felt a connection to other parts of the world, Don Alvaro specifically mentioned Iraq, Afghanistan, and Haiti, "countries whose people who have suffered a lot." He also mentioned negative feelings about "the Yankees" (the United States) because of the embargo against Cuba and the war in Iraq, which he believes was economically motivated.

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Don Alvaro's second important connection to globalization is through people he knows personally. Because he works in a major Chilean university that collaborates extensively with universities in other countries, he often interacts with people who come from abroad. In Chilean universities, it is the job of the *auxiliar* to serve coffee and tea at university meetings and to clean and maintain the university facilities. These duties, as well as the tendency of many foreign visitors to strike up conversation with university employees, provide *auxiliares* such as Don Alvaro with opportunities for social interaction with foreigners. When visitors he has met return to their home universities, Don Alvaro sometimes maintains contact with them through e-mail. Thus, despite his blue-collar job at the university, which does not provide him with professional opportunities for international business travel or the discretionary income for international tourism, Don Alvaro is positioned within the social relations of production—within academia as one site of globalized knowledge production—in a way that connects him, socially, to global flows of people through Concepción.

When asked about his perception of what is going on in the world, Don Alvaro said that the most important world problems have to do with the quality of life and that these problems—he mentions hunger, disease, AIDS, and climate change—have persisted for years. When asked if he sees evidence, in his own surroundings, of the effects of global events or trends, he points to economic inequality and the rising cost of living. Don Alvaro believes that these problems can be solved by uniting people and working together to help others, although he does not report participating in any political, social, or labor movements. He laments not having more resources (disposable income) to help those suffering in other parts of the world. Don Alvaro says that anyone who chooses to do so can be informed about what is going on in the world today; all that one has to do is "keep your five senses open to get information from anywhere in the world."

Señora Matilde (Interview #05-01)

> *I am from here, from the VIIIth Region. I am a Christian, and I hope that whoever gets this message is also a Christian.*

Señora Matilde's message in a bottle is brief and emphasizes her religious identity, which she sees as a potential element of commonality with unknown others across the ocean. Unlike Don Alvaro, who defines himself in relation to his neighborhood and his workplace, Señora Matilde says she is from the VIIIth Region, suggesting that she attaches less importance to a particular neighborhood or city than does Don Alvaro. (This interpretation is reinforced when we learn that she has lived in several different municipalities around Concepción and that her family members live in various parts

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of the VIIIth Region.) Like Don Alvaro, Señora Matilde is unreflexive about her use of local place names—she seems unaware that most people in the world would be unfamiliar with terms such as “the VIIIth Region.” This is a point to which we will return in the following section.

Señora Matilde is 52 years old and has lived her entire life in Concepción and its surrounding municipalities. In fact, she has never left Greater Concepción, with the exception of two or three church-sponsored sightseeing trips to other cities in Chile. At present, she lives with her husband and their two grown children in an apartment they own in a working-class sector of San Pedro, a rapidly growing suburb of Concepción. Señora Matilde and her husband run a sidewalk newsstand in downtown Concepción where they sell newspapers, magazines, candy, and cigarettes. The newsstand is their only source of income, and together they earn approximately 160,000 pesos/month (US$300/month), placing them in the bottom quintile of income distribution in Chile (Ministerio de Planificacion y Cooperacion, 2006).

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Social network

The members of Señora Matilde’s social network include her family, her fellow church members, her newsstand customers, and other merchants with whom she interacts when she works at the newsstand. She and her husband are articulated to the social relations of production as small-business people in retail sales—local street vendors at the endpoint of the physical distribution networks for international, national, and local print media. Despite their connection to the global information economy, their income is minimal. It is also precarious, considering the current economic context in which few have disposable income for purchasing media, and in which news is consumed, increasingly, via radio, television, and the Internet. Nearly all of Chile’s printed newspapers, the staple of the newsstand business, are now available for free on the Web, and it seems likely that only a few *quioscos*, or traditional newsstands, will survive the shift toward online information. But Señora Matilde seems to have a strong set of social relations with her family and church, and these connections are likely to serve as a significant means of social, and perhaps economic, support.

Mobility

Señora Matilde’s activities and her interactions with the people in her social network occur almost exclusively within Greater Concepción, with the exception of her occasional church-sponsored trips. Her daily routine is marked by travel between her apartment in one suburb of Concepción and the newsstand downtown, a routine to which she and her husband are deeply tied, as a result of the nature of their business and their inability

to hire employees. On weekends, Señora Matilde visits the members of her extended family, who live in another suburb of the city. She and her husband do not have a car, so she travels to and from work, as well as to the grocery store and to family members' homes, by city bus. The sightseeing trips to Santiago and Viña del Mar made possible by her church are the only trips she has taken outside of Concepción, and she remembers them very fondly. In short, Señora Matilde's mobility is overwhelmingly local, motivated by work and family connections, and dependent upon public transportation.

Media and communication

Considering her work in a newspaper and magazine retailing business, it is ironic that Señora Matilde's own media use is limited to television and radio and to entertainment programming specifically. She left school after the sixth grade, and it is unlikely that she is fully literate. Whether by choice or as a result of limited literacy, she does not read the many local, national, and international magazines and newspapers that she and her husband sell at her newsstand. Señora Matilde and her husband have cable TV service and three televisions, but no computer or Internet service (nor does she use computers or the Internet elsewhere). Señora Matilde says that she watches the variety show *Sábado Gigante* and some other Chilean humor programs on TV, listens to Christian music on the radio, and reads the Bible; she does not watch the news on television, listen to it on the radio, or read any newspapers or magazines. She does have a cell phone and uses it to keep in touch with her husband and other family members, so this medium reinforces her ties with locally situated family members whom she sees on a regular basis; it does not serve as a means to connect with distant others whom she would not otherwise see.

Globalization

Señora Matilde's connections to global networks are primarily via her work and through her religious community. Señora Matilde's work locates her within the social relations of production constituted by the global information economy, but in a doubly marginal and economically precarious position, as a street vendor and in a business that depends on retail sales of print media. Her own experience of globalization appears to be limited by her low literacy (she is surrounded by global information sources but cannot read them) and shaped predominantly by her religious identity as a Christian and her participation in the church. When asked to mention some events or tendencies taking place in other parts of the world, she was not able to answer, other than to talk vaguely about other unnamed "countries where there is suffering." However, through her religious faith, she feels somewhat connected, in a spiritual sense, to other places and other people (other

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Christians, that is) beyond the geographical contexts of her own everyday life.

Miguel (Interview #09-22E)

> *My message would say "Come to Ovalle, a land of sweet memories." . . . or maybe "bittersweet memories." Sometimes you feel bitter because you get there and everything is still the same, the same poor people. But the memories are sweet*. [Interviewer: What is it that makes you feel bitter?] *The economic centers of accumulation have moved to La Serena and Coquimbo, so nothing reaches Ovalle. I'm not asking for them to build a new supermarket or anything like that—just dignity for the people. I'm not talking about that kind of "progress" where some national leader arrives and helps start a bunch of small businesses or a mall—not that kind of progress, just dignity for the people . . . . This bottle is from someone who loves his home, but for whom it is impossible to continue living there. You can find me anywhere . . .*

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Unlike Don Alvaro and Señora Matilde, Miguel does not imagine launching a bottle from Concepción, but rather from his childhood home in Ovalle, the northern city where he grew up and where his family lived until recently. His point of spatial reference for addressing the rest of the world is elsewhere in both space and time. Ovalle is a powerful affective reference point for him, both in terms of its physical geography and as the site of formative family relations. At the same time, Miguel is critical of capitalist development, which has marginalized Ovalle in relation to other cities, and of the populist government programs in the region. Perhaps because of Ovalle's marginal place in Chile's development and its lack of opportunities for higher education, Miguel has accepted that he must leave his home and move on. His message places him affectively in Ovalle, "the land of sweet memories," suggesting that his presence in Concepción is motivated by practical considerations (higher education) and is perhaps temporary, a present stopping point on the way to other places and other life stages in the future. Like Don Alvaro and Señora Matilde, however, Miguel frames his message in a way that presumes local or national knowledge: most Chileans would recognize "Ovalle" and many would be able to locate it on a map, but few outside of that national context would have heard of it. Furthermore, "the north," as Miguel uses the term, is a relational term that is both clear and highly significant for Chileans but meaningless without Chilean geography as the reference point.

Miguel is a 19-year-old sociology student at the university where Don Alvaro works. He currently lives in Agüita de la Perdiz (the same working-class neighborhood where Don Alvaro lives) in a house that he rents with four other university students. Miguel was born in Ovalle—a small city in northern Chile—and lived there until his family moved to Coquimbo, a larger

city in the north, where his mother and siblings still live today. His father lives in the United States, but Miguel has not had contact with him for a long time. Miguel moved to Concepción 2 years ago to study at the university. He reports a monthly household income of approximately 1,000,000 pesos (about $2,000/month), which corresponds to the top quintile of income distribution in Chile (Ministerio de Planificacion y Cooperacion, 2006); he has no personal income, so it is likely that this figure refers to the household income of his family in Coquimbo.

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Social network

Miguel's social network is composed of his family members, who live in the IVth Region; his friends, who are mostly fellow university students; and the professors and staff members with whom he interacts at the university. As a student who is wholly dependent on his family for income, Miguel's present connection to the social relations of production is liminal and indirect. His family's income is substantial by Chilean standards, making it possible for him to study full time and for the family to travel internationally. The fact that Miguel is studying sociology suggests that there is little pressure for him to pursue a lucrative professional career, and indeed, when he talks about his plans for the future, his aspirations seem unencumbered by such requirements.

Mobility

Miguel's mobility and emplacement are shaped by the geography of his social relations (his ties to family in the north and to the university in Concepción) and by his desire, and capacity, to travel for pleasure. Although neither he nor any of his friends has a car, he seems to have a relatively high level of mobility, both locally and on a national scale, perhaps as a result of his age, his free time, and his family's disposable income. Miguel travels by foot from home to campus and uses the city buses to go to other parts of Concepción. On weekends, he takes the bus to visit the homes of friends or to go with them, as a group, to a beach or camping area. Once or twice a year, he travels by intercity bus to visit his mother and siblings in the north, or he takes bus and hitchhiking trips with friends to explore other cities. In this way, Miguel he has visited many cities throughout Chile and several in Peru.

Media and communication

Miguel's media use is diverse, with a heavy reliance on the Internet and the use of many media sources that are not part of the mainstream Chilean media ecology. In addition to reading social theory and Latin American literature for his university classes, Miguel uses a number of alternative or critical sources

of news and opinion: *The Clinic, El Ciudadano,* and *El Quinto,* for example, which he identifies explicitly as *not* belonging to COPESA (Consorcio Periodístico de Chile S. A.) or El Mercurio, the two dominant newspaper conglomerates in Chile. Unlike many Chileans, Miguel avoids television and the mainstream press almost completely and instead uses the Internet to download independent feature films and documentaries, YouTube videos, music, international newspapers, critical opinion magazines, and political activism blogs (although this is atypical for most Chileans, it is less unusual for his generation, and especially for university students and sociology majors in particular). Miguel watches television news rarely, he says, and when he does, he surfs the four broadcast channels casually, with no preference for any specific news program. He says he reads *Las Ultimas Noticias* (a popular national tabloid newspaper) from time to time "to get a laugh." He does not have cable TV or Internet access at home, despite the relatively high household income of his family and the high rate of cable TV and Internet access in Chile. Miguel does have regular Internet access, though, by connecting his laptop to the Wi-Fi networks at the university and the houses of friends—a form of connectivity that is perhaps indicative of emergent information technology practices of younger Chileans. When he does watch films or other audiovisual programs, he downloads them from the Internet. He is interested in both Chilean and international programs and specifically mentions European films and auteur-type U.S. films (he mentions directors such as Tim Burton and Stanley Kubrick), as well as news and documentaries on political and social movements in other countries (Argentina and Peru).

Globalization

Miguel's social space is composed of global networks and flows in several ways. The first is through the geographical mobility of his family and his own international travel, which distinguishes him from both Don Alvaro and Señora Matilde. His trip to Peru had a profound effect on him because of the cultural differences he experienced there. Peruvians are proud of their culture, he said, whereas Chileans are "retrograde," seeking to imitate other cultures like that of the United States. In other words, Miguel's experiences in a different country provided him with a critical perspective and a lived experience from which to view his own national culture. Because his father lives in the United States, it would seem that Miguel's social network is also transnationally distributed; however, Miguel's apparent lack of communication with his father suggests that this international link is not an especially important form of global connection.

Miguel is also linked to global flows through his use of alternative, Internet-based media. When asked about the effects of globalization in his own environment, he offers a critical discourse on global capitalism, which

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he blames for rampant consumerism, the rising cost of living, and the construction of ostentatious and unnecessary skyscrapers in Concepción. He points to worker occupation and ownership of factories in Argentina as a positive model of political organization and resistance to capitalism. When asked what he, or we, can do to respond to the challenges of global processes, he says his own plans are to become an educator of young children, a profession which he sees as providing the opportunity to combat the dominant ideologies of consumer capitalism. Last, we can note that global connections are a part of Miguel's potential future: when asked what places he would like to visit, he mentioned Argentina, which he admires for its workers' movements, and several countries in Europe: Spain, Portugal, and Germany. It appears that Miguel's upbringing, and the trajectory of social and geographical mobility that likely awaits him after graduation, make international travel an easily imaginable activity.

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FOLLOWING THE FLOWS: FROM SUBJECTS TO ASSEMBLAGES

What assemblages are at work producing the social space of these three people, and what does this reveal about the production of social space in the context of distantiated social relations, media globalization, and mobility? An exhaustive analysis is beyond the scope of this essay, but here we will venture some preliminary observations about the role of the global in four specific assemblages: assemblages of commuting, of labor, of tourism, and of alternative culture. In each case, we consider the ways in which the assemblage gathers, arranges, and mobilizes materials, bodies, and discourses in specific spatiotemporal rhythms. We note the dominant logics by which the assemblage operates and the particular ways in which it constitutes social space and positions subjects. We are particularly interested in the mechanisms by which these assemblages select flows and components from various scales, producing local places and national territories out of a range of translocal and transnational elements. Although these assemblages articulate people to distantiated social relations, to mobilities on a wide range of scales, and to global flows of communication and culture, they position subjects differently in relation to those flows.

The Bus/Commuter/City Assemblage

One key assemblage operating to constitute the social space of these three subjects brings together the urban environment, the public transportation network, and the populations who are shuttled around on an everyday basis. In each of the three examples of spatial practices we have considered, walking and bus riding are key elements of everyday life. Miguel and Don Alvaro

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walk to work and to university classes. Miguel takes the bus regularly for other trips around town. Señora Matilde takes the bus to work, spends the majority of her workday sitting in the newsstand, and takes the bus home again. And, although Don Alvaro owns a car, it is used only sparingly, on the weekends. The bus/city/commuter assemblage works to articulate populations to work, to family, and (in the case of the intercity buses) to both family and sites of national tourism. Its scale is interurban, and it is shaped by logics of capital (buses are run by for-profit transportation companies) and logics of the public (fares are regulated by the national government).

Family cars and suburbs are becoming an increasingly important element of Chilean city life, and extensive television viewing has been a central cultural practice since the 1980s, but the spatial practices of our interviewees remind us that walking and public transportation remain a primary mode of mobility for many. (Although a growing number of working-class families own cars in Chile, gasoline and highway tolls are so expensive that many families keep their car garaged most of the time, a practice that contrasts with the automobile-based mobile privatization said to be characteristic of late modernity in Europe and the United States; see Hay, 2001; Packer, 2008; Williams, 1961, 1974/2003). Walking and public transport shape the everyday rhythms of the work week, when city buses and pedestrians assemble the downtown and the university as a populated work space during the day and then disassemble those spaces in the evening, reassembling the neighborhood, apartment block, and domestic spaces as the space of the family. These forms of mobility are also characteristic of leisure-time trips on weekends and holidays, when intercity buses enable the reassembling of extended families, as well as tourist trips with family or friends (or fellow church members, in the case of Señora Matilde). In both cases (work and leisure), the infrastructure of the bus networks fits the population with the territory in shifting spatiotemporal configurations, and mobility and emplacement actualize the three virtual networks—social networks, place networks, and media networks—in specific modalities.

There is a media component to this assemblage as well, although it is changing. Public transportation in Chile generally also includes some form of mass media and, increasingly, mobile personal media. Chilean city buses often have the radio blasting, and the driver's choice of station (news-talk radio, romantic oldies, rock & pop) helps compose specific media/commuting spaces and experiences as passengers are shuttled to and from work. Intercity buses are usually equipped with overhead screens, where a recently released movie or two (generally a Hollywood blockbuster) is played during long trips. These shared media environments are rapidly ceding ground to mobile personal media, however, as more and more Chileans use MP3 players, personal DVD players, and headphones to "becom[e] private publicly" (Wise, 2005, p. 84) and to shut out the collective media reception of radio and television. The private-in-public

media/transportation assemblage (eg., listening to an MP3 player on the bus) may be the Chilean version of the public-in-private automobility of the United States, in which a single driver commutes to work while broadcasting a radio program or podcast to the interior of his or her vehicle.

Does this assemblage—the bus/commuter/city assemblage—connect our interviewees to global flows in some way? Although the infrastructure and routes of the city buses and the intercity buses are clearly territorialized on the urban area and the nation, respectively, they do rely on global flows for two key components: fuel and media. Chile imports 100% of its petroleum, and as a result, bus fares are tied closely to changes in world oil prices unless they are offset by the national Ministry of Transportation. Bus fares, and the politics of subsidizing them to offset increasing oil prices, thus become a significant ongoing news topic and, for many Chileans, an important part of the everyday budget. The heavy reliance of Chilean workers and tourists on the bus infrastructure, and the reliance, in turn, of the bus network on the global flow of petroleum, is one example of the articulation of local and national assemblages to global ones.

Mobile media, whether personal or shared, are another globally connected component of the bus/commuter/city assemblage. Of our three interviewees, only Miguel reports using an MP3 player to record and listen to music while riding the bus or walking around the city—a fact that is not surprising, given the generational differences in uses of mobile media in Chile as elsewhere. If we imagine Miguel and Señora Matilde riding the same bus through the streets of Concepción, it is likely that Miguel would be found in his own private world of sound, listening to Ska, Latin American rock or punk rock in Spanish on his MP3 player and headphones, using files he downloaded from a file-sharing network on the Internet. Señora Matilde, meanwhile, would be straining to hear the music or news talk played over speakers by the bus driver (often turned down to accommodate the passengers listening to their own music or podcasts on iPods and MP3 players). Miguel and Señora Matilde thus move through different but potentially overlapping media ecologies (Fuller, 2005), but global components are likely to be a part of both of these assemblages. Whether selected and downloaded from the Internet to an MP3 player or broadcast from a local radio station through the ether and played over speakers in the bus, audio content is one of the most globalized elements of the bus/commuter/city assemblage. This is not to say that global commercial pop music dominates the regional or local music ecology; for young Chileans like Miguel, globalization of media technologies (i.e., access to music through the Internet) may enable a relocalization (Escobar, 2001) or regionalization of musical taste (as indicated by Miguel's preference for Latin American rock). Bus drivers in Concepción often tune their receivers to *Radio Bío Bío*, the locally produced news-oriented radio station that has had success in expanding nationally. At the same time, other bus drivers may well choose an oldies station that

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plays a mix of English-language and Spanish-language top-40–style music, and young people with MP3 players may well download the latest tunes by pop divas and *American Idol* stars. Further analysis of the interviews conducted in this study will provide us with a broader sense of the specific ways in which commuters in Concepción integrate music and other audio (or video, or print) content into their everyday mobility through the city.

The University Assemblage

A second type of assemblage operating in the everyday life of our three interviewees is the one into which they insert themselves when they arrive at work—the assemblage that articulates them directly, as it were, to the social relations of production. For Señora Matilde, it is the retail economy of downtown Concepción, an apparatus of commodification and value capture that operates through retail sales and relies on pedestrian traffic. For Miguel and Don Alvaro, it is the university, an apparatus of ideological formation, professional training, socialization, and knowledge production, in which they each play different roles with differing implications for their mobility and emplacement. Each of these assemblages ties local populations into the social relations of production and incorporates global flows of information and value, but the component elements of each assemblage, and the logics shaping them, are different. In the present section, we focus specifically on the university assemblage because it allows us to consider how two different subjects are differently positioned within a common assemblage, linking them in different ways to the social relations of production and the global flows of knowledge and knowledge workers.

The university assemblage is a key component of the urban conglomerate of Greater Concepción: It is the third-largest Chilean university and the most important non–state, non–religious university in the country. It is also one of the region's major employers as well as a prominent symbolic element in discourses about the city. A full analysis of the university as an assemblage is well beyond the scope of this article, but some initial observations are possible, focusing especially on the ways in which it composes local, regional, and global flows and articulates with other assemblages nationally and transnationally.

The university assemblage selects and brings together specific populations—young adults to be educated; faculty members to teach them and to produce research and knowledge; staff and administrators to manage resources, space, and people—along with funding, infrastructure, and flows of academic discourse. It captures segments of the transnational circulation of academic discourse and articulates them, as models, procedures, and narratives, to regional/local research and practice. For the university where Miguel studies and Don Alvaro works, the articulation of globally

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circulating knowledge to local and regional research is especially notable in the areas of information technologies, where the university is preparing students to work on regional development in business and in the information technology sector, and in the areas of biology and engineering, which link research to regional agroindustry in key export sectors—forestry, fishing, and hydroelectrical energy production. The university assemblage also connects students and faculty members to discourses that may be critical of the aims or effects of global capitalism (e.g., critical theory, environmental research, indigenous studies, and social service professions such as education and social work).

In addition to the global flow of academic discourse, the university assemblage captures and makes use of funding from a variety of sources: a regional lottery, student tuition, nationally funded research grants from agencies such as the Chilean National Council for Research on Science and Technology, and international grants from foreign or international organizations such as the U.S. National Science Foundation, the government of the Federal Republic of Germany, and various United Nations agencies. A complete map of these financial flows and institutional linkages would be highly informative, but it is beyond the scope of the present study. The point, at present, is that the university assemblage—and particularly this university as assemblage—is positioned as a primary nexus for the articulation of national and international capital to local and regional knowledge production in the Southern Cone of Latin America. It is not surprising that funding is most plentiful, and international organizations are most heavily invested, in areas that link the economy of the Bío Bío Region to national and global exports.

A third type of transnational flow assembled by the university is the flow of foreign academics, both faculty and students. The university in question is a major site for study-abroad programs from the United States and other countries, as well as a primary host for international faculty exchanges through programs such as Fulbright and the National Science Foundation. This university maintains formal institutional linkages with many other universities around the globe, and in addition to receiving foreign faculty and students, it sends its own faculty and students abroad. In this way, the university assemblage works to bring people together across lines of nationality, language, and culture, enabling the development of transnational social networks for both Chileans and foreign visitors. As such, it is a key agent (although not the only one) for the management of the articulation between global academic travelers and the Bío Bío Region.

The position that one occupies in the university assemblage is a key determinant of its effects for individual subjects. Don Alvaro's long-term connection to the university has brought him into contact with these transnational flows, and his relationships with foreign faculty members have even become elements of his social network. However, in terms of social status, Don Alvaro is on the margins of the interactions, social relations, and

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knowledge-based labor of the university. Miguel, in contrast, is at the center of these activities and his ideological and professional formation are a key focus of the university assemblage. Miguel, too, is brought into contact with global flows, but unlike Don Alvaro, the university assemblage works to transform him. As a sociology student, in a university and sociology department with a strong leftist heritage, Miguel is expected to master classical European social theory as well as present-day approaches to critical analysis and research on current issues of relevance to Latin America, Chile, and the southern region. Social theory and critical discourse flow globally as well, and Miguel is learning to speak these languages and bring them to bear on the developments he perceives in his own surroundings. Perhaps just as significantly, the university's technological infrastructure, along with its support for students' and faculty members' technological literacy, enables students such as Miguel to connect to the Internet more or less constantly, where they can seek out additional sources of critical discourse, contemporary analysis, and perhaps interactive communication, as we saw in the case of Miguel's use of blogs and foreign news sources.

The National Tourism Assemblage

An assemblage of national transportation and national television articulates a substantial portion of the population to sites coded as national tourist destinations; this assemblage plays a role in the composition of social space for all three interviewees. All three interviewees make extensive use of the intercity bus system to visit family or take tourist trips to other Chilean cities. The national bus infrastructure makes long-distance travel within the borders of the nation possible for many, whereas school textbooks and television news and documentaries, along with the interpersonally shared travel tales of family members, friends, and others, produce an imagined territory of places—an imagined community (Anderson, 1991)—that Chileans think of as part of the national patrimony and which they aspire "to know."[1] As discussed earlier in this article, Chileans often speak of their past travel or their potential future travel explicitly in terms of the national territory and its predominantly north–south orientation. As Don Alvaro put it, he aspires to go "farther north and farther south," getting as close as possible to the two extreme geographical ends of the country. We can clearly understand the determining role of nationality as a logic shaping this assemblage if we consider the fact that Concepción is less than 150 miles from the Argentinean

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[1] In Chile, the verb *conocer* (to know) is used to assert, rather confidently, knowledge of a place. In the United States, Americans would generally use the verbs "to be" and "to go" for this purpose ("I'm going to Atlanta" or "I have been to Atlanta"), whereas Chileans say that they *know* a place: *Conozco Viña del Mar y Valparaíso* ("I know Viña del Mar y Valparaíso"). This assertion simply means that one has *been* to that place; however, it does not mean that one knows it well, as would be suggested in English, for example, by the sentence, "I know New York pretty well."

border but more than 300 miles from Santiago. The cities mentioned by Don Alvaro, the ones he would like to visit in the north and south, are Punta Arenas (1,600 miles south of Concepción) and Arica (1,500 miles to the north); in other words, his imagined patrimony is 3,000 miles long but stops 150 miles to the east, at the Argentinean border. Señora Matilde's geographical aspirations are more limited (she mentions the area to the south of Puerto Montt, which is 380 miles south of Concepción), but like Don Alvaro and Miguel, she has already traveled to several of the most popular national tourist destinations (for non-Santiago residents)—Viña del Mar, Santiago, and Puerto Montt.

The national tourism assemblage is not simply a bringing together of tourists and places; tourism is also articulated to other networks for each of these interviewees. For Don Alvaro and Miguel, family members living in Ovalle and Coquimbo, cities of the IVth Region, are an additional, or even primary, reason for traveling there. For Señora Matilde, whose travel has been sponsored by the church, national tourism is a fringe benefit of belonging to a religious community—another kind of social network. In the case of Miguel, travel with friends is a key social activity, so trips to different Chilean cities and national tourist sites are also actualizations of that portion of his social network. The national tourism assemblage captures the imagination and the spatial practices of all three interviewees, but it is articulated to the social network of each one in a different way.

As in the case of the university assemblage and the bus/commuter/city assemblage, each interviewee is also positioned differently in relation to the national tourism assemblage. For Señora Matilde, whose income is not adequate for leisure travel, the only way to enter the national tourism assemblage is through the church; this is evidenced, also, in the limited aspirations she has for future travel. Don Alvaro, whose job security and more adequate salary do permit travel for pleasure, participates more fully in the imagining of future national travel. As an avid consumer of national television, he has also likely seen images and heard stories and facts about the places he aspires to know. He is likely to achieve the goal of filling in the map of the national territory, but he does not imagine going further. Miguel, by contrast, includes foreign destinations in both his past travel (i.e., Peru) and his future, aspirational travel (i.e., Argentina, Europe). Thus, for him, the national tourism assemblage does not constitute a territorial horizon or limit. It has clear salience—and much of his travel has been, like that of Don Alvaro, a process of knowing more and more of Chile—but for Miguel, this assemblage is one territory and one type of mobility within a wider potential geography.

The presence of global flows as a component of local or national assemblages was clear in the case of the bus/commuter/city assemblage and the university assemblage, but what role does the global play in the national tourism assemblage? Like the city buses and all motor vehicles in

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Chile, the intercity buses run on imported petroleum. The buses themselves are produced by European manufacturers (e.g., Mercedes-Benz, Scania, Volkswagen, Volvo), so in fact the very infrastructure is imported. Last, as previously discussed, long-distance travel on intercity buses, like the shorter commutes on city buses, is frequently accompanied by mobile media, which riders use to watch or listen to programming that circulates through the global networks of commercial cultural production and distribution. The national tourism assemblage itself thus appears to be composed largely of globally imported components and flows. And yet its central logic is eminently national: It circulates a nationally self-defined population over a nationally imagined territory to cities, natural features, and tourist sites promoted, via school textbooks, oral culture, and national media, as the eminent sites of "Chilean-ness."

Chile has famously been compared to an island, given the nearly insurmountable geographical features that mark its borders: the Atacama Desert to the north, the "ice of the Pole" to the south, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the Andes Mountains to the east (Subercaseaux, 1943, p. 59). And it may be that, despite the globalization that has shaped Chile's economy, its political institutions, its processes of industrialization and urbanization, its educational system, its communication and information infrastructure, and its appetite for the latest consumer goods and services, Chilean culture remains deeply nationalistic, assembling, in the midst of innumerable global flows, an island territory in which media discourses resonate with transportation flows and the desires of travelers to know their nation. Indeed, given the plethora of international programming available on Chilean cable and satellite television, it may be the case that Chileans work actively to produce, via discourse and travel, a distinctive natural and cultural geography worthy of their national pride. Here, the global is not present as an overwhelming logic of cultural imperialism but functions, instead, as both a constitutive element of national infrastructure and a visual and informational background—an imagined global geography against which Chile becomes distinctive, recognizable, and desirable as a shared national territory.

The Alternative Culture Assemblage

A fourth assemblage is at work producing the social space of one of our interviewees, however, indicating the presence of a number of flows that need to be followed as well as the need for further analysis to discover the extent to which others share these connections. It is an assemblage connecting (predominantly) young people, through mobile technologies and the Internet, to a range of alternative and critical discourses: nonmainstream music, noncommercial film and video, minoritarian news and opinion, postnational (or transnational) narratives and theories, and Web-based forums and organizations. We have already made some observations about this

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assemblage in our analysis of the case of Miguel, and although that case may not be typical or representative, Miguel's media use and his comments on Chile in the context of globalization do indicate the presence of such an assemblage and the potential that other young people, perhaps especially fellow university students and sociology majors, are also part of this assemblage. Because of the limitations of space, only some brief observations are possible here.

Perhaps most important is that this assemblage is widely accessible across the physical and social geography of Chile, but the spatiality of the assemblage itself is not coextensive with the boundaries of the nation. It is an obvious fact, but one that is worth stating bluntly: The geography of Internet infrastructure; the geography of its content sources; the patterns of circulation of its discourses, images, and sounds; the spatial categories and concepts used in its narratives and representations of space; and the interactions and social relations it enables both overrun and undercut the political, infrastructural, and cultural space that has been coded as national. Unlike radio and television, which reproduce the national territory both in the shape of their infrastructure and the agendas and framing of their programs, the sense of territory and the more general sense of space that is enabled by the critical, comparative discourses from Miguel's Internet sources are dissonant, not resonant, with the mainstream media's representations of Chile.

The operation of this assemblage in Miguel's media ecology does not necessarily lead to a reduced salience of the nation, or to a postnational, cosmopolitan sense of place (Hannerz, 1996). In fact, many of the sources and discourses that Miguel selects from the vast options available through the Internet are critical, minoritarian news and opinion about Chile. In addition, the alternative culture assemblage connects him to news about other countries (e.g., labor movements in Argentina), which allows him to evaluate Chile from a comparative perspective. It also connects him to information about global events (wars and invasions, natural disasters, the ups and downs of capitalism) that provide context within which he makes sense of Chile's politics, economy, and culture. Similarly, although Miguel makes use of Internet sources for music and movies not otherwise available in Chile, his interest in Chilean culture is not necessarily reduced. The assemblage links Miguel to a much broader range of cultural material than the nation-based, nationally circulated programming that Don Alvaro selects from national television and newspapers, but Miguel's own practices (informed by the critical views of his professors, fellow students, and possibly his family members) select, from the Internet milieu, a concrete set of specific sources and discourses that focus, in part, on Chile as a national space while placing it within a critical, comparative framework that is not made available by the national media assemblage. To put it more directly, the critical discourses and culture Miguel gets from the Internet do not make the nation less salient

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for him, but they do develop his capacity for viewing it critically and within a broader context. Poster (1999) asked,

> How then will the Internet construct subjects, and how will these subjects become political agents? What will be the effect of being online in cyberspace upon the existing forms of interpellation, specifically upon national identity? Will the conditions of global interconnectedness, interactivity, the instantaneity of electronic communication, generate new forms of the subject that entail planetary selves? (p. 239)

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If Miguel's media practices and his critical perspective on nationality reflect a view shared more broadly among some young Chileans, Poster's question would seem to be partly answered: Global interconnectedness may coexist with, and provide a critical perspective on, the representational spaces (lived space) of the nation. In other words, the alternative culture assemblage to which Miguel is articulated does not erode the importance of nationality, but it transforms that sense of territory by repositioning it within a broader sense of space.

We have considered four assemblages operating in the lives of three Chileans. Many more could be identified and analyzed if we had the space to do so, for assemblages operate on every scale and across all milieus. We must therefore place an arbitrary stop on our hydrological analysis and its potential for indefinite extension, in order to make two final observations about the articulation of one assemblage to another and the ways in which multiple assemblages work, simultaneously or in a temporal rhythm, to produce concrete social spaces.

First, we reiterate that assemblages are composed within and across other assemblages, sometimes in resonance with them and sometimes in contradiction. The assemblage that constitutes Don Alvaro's home in Agüita de la Perdiz, for example, conforms to the conceived space of the built environment and the legal and social norms of State-sanctioned private property—a State assemblage that produces space as commodified lots and sets the terms within which capitalism, community, and family can function. The university assemblage, too, must resonate with the state apparatus, which codifies and regulates higher education in Chile through laws, administrative and professional norms, and financing. At the same time, the university assemblage must harmonize its norms and practices with those of transnational academia in order to resonate with international funding agencies, foreign partner institutions, visiting students, and the standards of international academic publishing. The logics of territorialization and coding that characterize a given assemblage thus do not operate in a vacuum; they must account for, and respond to (or resist, or evade) the effects and thresholds of tolerance of other assemblages.

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Second, if we consider the spatial practices and lived experience of any of the three lives analyzed here, it is clear that they are the result of the subject's negotiation of multiple assemblages operating simultaneously in the subject's milieu. Some of these assemblages are slower moving and harder to contest: the city as assemblage, with its conceived space coded into the built environment through the construction of long-lasting physical routes, barriers, and containers, along with slow-changing laws and norms of public behavior; the family assemblage, with its often patriarchal and always hierarchical logics of power and subject formation; the productive apparatus of capitalism and its social relations of production, to which one must be connected for survival in a capitalist society. Other assemblages have less inertia or rigidity and thus may be more open to collective or individual intervention: the composition of personal and shared media ecologies through the selection of specific technologies and sources; the decision, by adults, to participate in (or avoid) religion, social movements, artistic projects, or other forms of social organization; the use of travel and communication to make connections to other people and places. Yet, as a citizen, family member, wage earner, or student, one must constantly negotiate, via changing spatial practices and spatial representations, the complex intersection of all of these assemblages: You may listen to loud rock music on the bus, but only through earphones; you may question the authority of your parents or leaders, but only in your blog or in conversation with friends; you may abandon your place of work and the commodified social relations it entails, but only at the end of the work day; you may do as you please in your apartment, but you must pay the rent and respect the private property and privatized domestic space of your neighbors. In the process of negotiating multiple assemblages, contradictions are resolved and potential conflicts avoided through a number of strategies, not the least of which is the temporal arrangement of spatial practices (Sharma, 2008). The result of this ongoing negotiation is the social space of a specific subject—a social space that is an expression of that subject's articulation to multiple assemblages and, as we have attempted to demonstrate, to multiple global flows out of which local, national, and transnational assemblages are composed.

CONCLUSIONS

The urban conglomerate of Greater Concepción is deeply enmeshed in translocal ties to different parts of the world, particularly through its export-oriented industrial development; its place in research and higher education; and its position as both a producer and consumer of news, information, and entertainment media. The city and the surrounding region are both a dynamic economic growth pole for the country and a key point of articulation between the national economy, on the one hand, and foreign markets

and networks of knowledge and information, on the other. Concepción's robust economic, technological, academic, and media growth would seem to provide evidence that neoliberal capitalist development has benefited the city, the region, and the country. Indeed, statistics on national development portray Chile as a Latin American success story in which deregulation, open markets, and export-oriented growth have led to higher gross domestic product growth per capita, higher real wages, reductions in poverty, improved infrastructure, and a higher standard of living.

Some of those claims are difficult to refute—and indeed, would one want to argue against reductions in poverty?—but the analysis presented here illuminates globalization from a different angle. It reveals how individual subjects whose everyday activities unfold in what is nominally the same city nevertheless inhabit strikingly different social spaces, are linked to distinct assemblages operating on varying scales (or to the same assemblage, but within contrasting subject positions), and have markedly different connections to, and experiences of, globalization. As we hope our analysis has demonstrated, this is not simply a matter of economic inequalities, although the income and educational levels of Señora Matilde, Don Alvaro, and Miguel are clearly key factors affecting their emplacement and mobility. In the terms of the model developed here, the differences in their practices, their experiences, and their connections to globalization are the work of assemblages that link them, via social networks, geographical networks, and media networks, to different positions in the social relations of production and reproduction, different sites and activities, and different sources of verbal and visual discourse.

Señora Matilde lives a highly routinized life, with limited mobility and connectivity, from which she escapes only on certain occasions thanks to the church. She does not feel connected to the world or have an opinion about global events or tendencies. She has little sense of the forces affecting her own environment, making her more vulnerable in an already precarious labor situation. How many Chileans live such lives, on the margins of information networks and public participation? Although our analysis did not examine the all-important consequences of sociospatial positioning on agency, it seems clear that Señora Matilde has little power, or the subjective sense of place and agency, to intervene proactively in her own social space.

Don Alvaro, in contrast, feels connected, through his university work and his media use, to distant places and people, providing him with a wider perspective against which he can evaluate what is happening in his own surroundings and in the world. His connection to globalization through the social relations of work—although it places him in a clearly subaltern position—motivates him to stay informed and to express an opinion about current events. His long-term emplacement in the Agüita de la Perdiz neighborhood, a historically left-leaning neighborhood, may also have encouraged him to develop a critical point of view in relation to the

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dominant national culture. Don Alvaro's socioeconomic level is only slightly higher than that of Señora Matilde, but his positioning in social space has afforded him a different experience of globalization, with, it seems to us, a greater degree of sociospatial agency.

Miguel's economic and educational status are markedly privileged in relation to that of Don Alvaro and Señora Matilde and, indeed, in relation to that of most Chileans. Yet, his specific sense of space and place—his critical outlook, his transnational perspective on his own national territory, and his more elaborate narrative of global events and trends—is likely a product of his position as a sociology student at the university. The university that Miguel attends, and specifically the Department of Sociology, is known for socializing students to be critical of the neoliberal system. Starting with this set of social relations and accompanying media (books and articles on critical theory, lectures, and discussions of current events with faculty and fellow students), Miguel extends his media ecology to connect with globally circulating critical discourses on the Internet. Perhaps, as an upwardly mobile and academically privileged young man, Miguel is no more (or less) an agent of his own spatial practices than are Don Alvaro and Señora Matilde. His spatial practices, his social networks, and his linkages to particular media networks are shaped by specific assemblages just as much as theirs are. However, it is apparent that Miguel's social space is produced in such a way as to enable—perhaps even demand—that he become a critical and globally mobile subject. We cannot predict his future sociospatial trajectory, but his current emplacement in the social relations of the university, in certain capacities for mobility, and in the particular media ecology he has developed seem to enhance his potential to become an active agent of that line of flight.

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