

9 Scale Bending and the Fate of the National

Neil Smith

In the last months of 1997, with financial capitalists across the world panicking about the wave of global economic crisis reverberating out of Thailand, Hong Kong, and Indonesia, several seemingly disparate but curious events turned up in the media. In the first story, New York's Mayor Rudy Giuliani, angry at the abandon with which UN diplomats seemed to flout local parking laws and blaming them for much of Manhattan's gridlock, threatened to begin towing illegally parked cars with diplomatic plates. Openly derided with the nickname Benito Giuliani for his erratic authoritarianism, the mayor raged even more angrily at the US State Department which, he felt, simply capitulated to this vehicular malfeasance. Maybe it has come to the point, Giuliani huffed, where New York City needs to have its own foreign policy. Four years later, in the wake of the September 11 tragedy, Giuliani found himself addressing the United Nations with a speech on New York's role in the world.

The United Nations also featured in the second set of headlines. The Atlanta media capitalist Ted Turner, erstwhile owner of CNN, announced in 1998 that in light of the UN's financial plight (caused in no small part by US refusal to pay its dues) he was donating them a billion dollars. Almost as generous was billionaire financier George Soros who responded to the imminent bankruptcy of the new capitalist state in Russia by providing \$US 1/2 billion in loans to a desperate Yeltsin government. That figure was five times larger than the aid package offered by the US government that year. At about the same time the Disney Company (Turner's chief competitor) planned the release of a movie championing the religious monarchy of Tibet against Chinese military brutality, but they were apprehensive about possible Chinese government reaction. To smooth any ruffled feathers, Disney appointed Henry Kissinger as its "ambassador to China."

For Disney after all, a billion consumers is a terrible thing to waste (Katz, 1997).

One further event around the same time did not make such headlines. Based in the Philadelphia neighborhood of Kensington, the Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU) had been organizing for years on a platform that insisted on welfare rights for poor people in the city. They argued powerfully that access to housing and especially a job represented a basic human right. They petitioned the Philadelphia City Council to no avail and so took their struggle to the state capital in Harrisburg. Rebuffed there, they went to Washington demanding that the Federal government provide decent-paying jobs, housing and other vital services for welfare recipients and poor people. Again rebuffed, they took their case to the United Nations. Hundreds of KWRU members and supporters set off from North Philadelphia to walk the hundred miles to UN Plaza on Manhattan's East Side. There they argued that the economic plight of poor people in the United States resulted from a class, race, and gender discrimination endemic to that society, and as such contravened the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights.¹ Downplayed in the mainstream media, this was nonetheless an embarrassing international indictment of the US government by some of its own citizens, on its own soil.

Something very odd is happening here. Any one of these events challenges our traditional sense of the proper role of city governments, nation-states, global corporations, and private individuals. Cities and states are not supposed to have their own foreign policy, presumably the prerogative of national states. Private individuals are not supposed to dwarf nation-states in bankrolling other national and transnational state institutions. In the home of the free, "domestic" activists are not supposed to jump scale and appeal to international authority for the resolution of local complaints. And since when did global corporations displace nation-states as the proper purveyors of diplomatic emissaries? Taken together, these events suggest intense "scale bending" in the contemporary political and social economy. Entrenched assumptions about what kinds of social activities fit properly at which scales are being systematically challenged and upset. This raises a host of questions. Why is this happening now? What are the causes? Is scale bending symptomatic of new geographies of capitalist expansion, and if so, what do they look like? How does scale bending affect particular scales inherited from past geographies? Who wins and who loses in the process? Finally, how does the restructuring of scale rework the landscape of empowerment and disempowerment for different classes, races, and genders of people?

These examples suggest not simply an economy gone global, the readjustment of local and national governments to so-called globalization, or even

the emergence of a new class of cowboy capitalists scouting out the global frontiers of total capitalization. Woven through all of these shifts is a much more profound, multidimensional restructuring of the very geographical scales according to which the social economy is organized. These signs of scale bending are only the most obvious expressions of the reorganization of spatial difference that is currently underway in the global political and social economy. Restructured scales are a central metric of this spatial reorganization. But scale is of much more than momentary importance. As I have tried to argue previously, the question of scale is intrinsic to capitalism in a way unprecedented in previous modes of production. Socially construed scales of activity obviously preceded the capitalist mode of production, and will presumably outlive it, but as Marx demonstrated, the dialectic of expansion and centralization of capital becomes definitive of the capitalist mode of production. With capitalism, scale for the first time provides a vital geographical solution to this potential contradiction between expansion and centralization. The establishment of capitalism was from the start a construction of scales and scale differences, its uneven development is premised on the ability to construct and dismantle scales (and much more systematically so after the period from 1880 to 1919), and every restructuring of capital is a social and political restructuring of scale (Smith, 1990). The intense interest in geographical scale today, from issues of the body to those of the globe, is thus only understandable as a direct expression of the transformation of modern capitalism.

Naturalization, Gestalt, Lefebvre

There are many different conceptions of scale – representational, operational, descriptive, cartographic, and so forth – but until recently, the treatment of scale in liberal geographic and scientific research has tended to follow one of two specific paths. Scale is treated either as naturally given or as a methodological choice. In the first treatment, a certain hierarchy of scale is simply assumed. In the physical and biological sciences, for example, the span of scales from subatomic to atomic through molecular and cellular all the way to the scale of the universe is broadly treated as inherent to the structures of nature. Quarks, neutrinos, atoms, or solar systems simply come in the sizes they do, for all that they may expand or contract. Similarly in the social sciences, the scales of the body and the home, urban and regional, national, and global are also widely treated as given. In the second treatment, scale appears to be the obverse, namely a methodological choice: what is the appropriate scale of analysis for a specific piece of research? At which scale are data to be gathered? How is a

reality at one scale to be represented at another scale, as in the drawing of a map?

These paths are certainly different but they are not mutually exclusive. In positivist science there is no necessary contradiction between voluntarist and naturalist assumptions about scale. Indeed, a voluntarism concerning scale – scale as choice – is necessarily balanced by gestures in the direction of an ontology of scale. Insofar as scientific investigation is assumed to leave the object of research unmodified, the voluntarism of the methodological approach actually abets the naturalization of scale.

Yet the mutual dependence of voluntarist and ontological treatments of scale is not foolproof. The choice of different scales of investigation can lead to very different kinds of statements about the realities being researched. One simple geographical illustration of this point concerns the scale of twentieth-century urbanism. It is conventional to argue that, with expansive suburbanization, twentieth-century urbanism experienced a dramatic decentralization from traditional urban cores. But this argument depends on an initial perspective that takes the urban center for the city itself. If instead we take view the city as a whole, for example from a circumplanetary satellite, the expansion of Los Angeles, São Paulo or Shanghai in the twentieth-century landscape appears as an extraordinary *centralization* of social activity into existing urban centers, driven by economic expansion.

This “gestalt of scale” – the same object taken as a whole can look radically different from different scalar positions – haunts the conventional conceptual offset of voluntarist and ontological treatments of scale (Smith, 1987; Swyngedouw, 1997). Empirical associations that register statistically at one scale frequently look very different at different scales of analysis: by altering the chosen scale of vision a reality seen one way can suddenly appear as its opposite. Scale may be a choice, therefore, but different methodological choices of scale can generate radically different assertions about reality. Thus the gestalt of scale is not merely a procedural inconvenience (or convenience), but an endemic contradiction in liberal scientific approaches that insist on a definitively knowable reality.

In recent years the naturalization of scale has been challenged intellectually, much as scale bending has appeared in the political, social, cultural, and economic landscapes. Scale today is widely conceived in terms that hold the extremes of ontological and voluntarist treatments at bay for sake of arguably more complex approaches. Spurred by rapid technological innovations in the development, handling, and representation of geographical data, for example, many geographers have begun to treat scale as problematic, more malleable than in the past. Thus Dale Quattrochi and Michael Goodchild (1997) preface their review of scale in geographical mapping technologies with the ambition to develop a means for the

"management and manipulation of scale." The mode is technocratic, aimed at improved geographic information for the improved management of public policy, and the positivist framework keeps intact the broad nexus of methodological and ontological assumptions about scale, but it also registers a heightened awareness of scale's plasticity.

As Sallie Marston (this volume) argues, however, it is social theorists who have been at the forefront of the recent, intense theoretical interest in geographical scale. For them, the "rejection of scale as an ontologically given category" is much more complete, giving way to a constructionist vision of geographical scale. She points back to Henri Lefebvre who, although not a theorist of scale, introduced the radical notion of the social production of space and provided a vital foundation for subsequent theorizations of scale (Marston, 2000: 220). The brilliance of Lefebvre's "production of space" argument lies in the fact that it contravenes the conceptions of space that have dominated western thought for two or three centuries, and opens the way for a thoroughly repoliticized conception of space. Challenging the notions of space embedded in western thought by Newton, Descartes, and Kant among others, he argues that space is not a given arena within which things happen, but the physical, social, and conceptual product of social and natural events and process. It is not that such events and processes take place "in space" but rather that space and spaces are produced as an expression of these social and natural processes. Social, mental, and physical space comprise a unity in this process. Lefebvre was not working in a vacuum, of course. A heightening of spatial language (of which Lefebvre was selectively critical) was already evident in French social theory, and English-language geography had also embarked on a critique of traditional western notions of space. But he was the most evocative, arguing that the production of space is the making of a political world, and vice-versa, and he came to decry the abstraction of space executed under the expansionist impress of capital accumulation and the capitalist state. Against this homogenization of space he championed "differential space," in which there is a direct translation from democratized social and political interests to democratized geographies, and his analytical optimism pointed toward a postcapitalist production of space. But Lefebvre was typically vague about the analytical roots and entailments of this differentiation of space. How does the differentiation of space – subversive or symptomatic of capitalist social relations – take place within a homogenizing capitalism? How would it work in a socialist world?

Attempting to answer these questions leads us in the direction of geographical scale. The production of geographical scale provides the organizing framework for the production of geographically differentiated spaces and the conceptual means by which sense can be made of spatial differenti-

ation. The always malleable systems of geographical scales fix social differences temporarily in more or less hierarchical spatial configurations. Or as Erik Swyngedouw (1992a) has argued, spatial scale represents a kind of territorial infrastructure, or geographical technology, for the expansion and reproduction of capital. This "technology" may be economically or politically defined, but may just as easily be social or cultural in inspiration, or more likely a complex combination. Scales emerge from a dialectic of cooperation and competition which always involves social struggle and, as Marston insists, relations of social reproduction are integral with the production of scale (Smith, 1992b). In a broader sense, then, geographical scale is the spatial repository of structured social assumptions about what constitutes normal and abnormal forms of social difference. Scale distils and expresses the oppressive as much as the emancipatory possibilities of space, its deadness as much as its life. The production of scales is contradictory. The generation of scales provides a means of containment, insofar as it rationalizes the identities of specific homes, regions, or nations defined vis-à-vis other homes, regions, and nations, and provides natural territorial bounds for containing specific activities in distinct places. Yet the production of scale is also empowering insofar as it also provides the boundaries of specific places that can be defended in the name of specific identities, social relations or activities.

Some have sought to find an explicit theory of the production of scale in Lefebvre (Brenner, 1997; Brenner, 2000). In various places, Lefebvre gives us tantalizing views of how the production of global space brings about a constant reshuffling and reworking of social spaces at different scales. "Social spaces interpenetrate one another," he emphasizes, and "superimpose themselves upon one another"; spaces may be fractured and differentiated amidst the maelstrom of economic, political and social change, but established spaces may also live on in relatively fixed form. He talks constantly of global and regional spaces, nation-states and cities, all of them open to change, and for Lefebvre, the fate of space is closely bound up with the fate of the state (Lefebvre, 1991). Indeed, long before globalization became such a fashionable question, Lefebvre interrogated the nexus of global space and the state.

While his language of spatial difference is peppered with suggestive comments about scalar change and difference, Lefebvre does not intimate much about what a theory of the production of scale might look like. The discussion of scaled space is not the same as analyzing systematically how space becomes scaled, and there is no systematic discussion of the production of spatial scale. In his sparse theoretical references to scale (as opposed to more numerous empirical discussions of specific scales), Lefebvre often slips between discussions of space in general and scale in particular, and this

can be accentuated in secondary discussions of scale that use Lefebvre as a starting point. Further, more traditional treatments of scale still intrude in his fragmented discussions of scale.

As Brenner has pointed out, some of Lefebvre's most explicit statements about scale appear in his four-volume *De l'État* (Lefebvre, 1976). There he extols the multiplicity of scales that comprises a "hierarchical stratified morphology," and is most original vis-à-vis scale in arguing that one needs to know the conditions of "genesis," "stabilization," and "rupture" of different scales if one is to "study them completely" (p. 69). But these highly suggestive comments are made in a specific context, namely Lefebvre's attempt to understand "the globalization ["mondialisation"] of the state," and he is explicit that they comprise "methodological" rather than theoretical arguments (p. 67) (the entire section dealing with scale is entitled "method"). This is clear whenever he talks more generally about the scale question: "The question of scale and of level," he says, "obliges one to choose at the outset the scale one wishes to study" (pp. 67–8). Voicing the crucial contradiction of liberal treatments of scale: "The question of scale, today, appears at the outset . . . of the analysis of texts and the interpretation of events. The results depend on the scale chosen as initial or essential" (p. 68).

With his sense of the "interpenetration" of spaces and the life-cycles (genesis, stabilization, rupture) of scales, Lefebvre begins to glimpse the profundity of the scale question, but his methodological framing and the subordination of scale to questions of globalization and method suggest that he never fully grasped scale as a central theoretical problem *per se* in the analysis of differential space. He passes quickly from method to historically specific discussions of globalization, the state, regions, and cities without the kind of extended philosophical reflection or theoretical ambition that characterizes his treatment of space in *The Production of Space* (1991). Indeed this latter work has surprisingly little to say about scale. The differentiation of scale is not naturalized in Lefebvre – he has moved beyond that point – but the dynamics of scalar restructuring remain largely obscure, and strong threads of the voluntarist treatment of scale linger in his prescriptive comments. Not surprisingly, perhaps, a full realization of the centrality of scale as a metric of spatial differentiation, and a more complete break with the methodological ideologies of scale, had to await the 1980s and 1990s when scale bending events and processes, associated with the restructuring of capitalist regimes and relations of production, were increasingly evident.²

After (and Before) Globalization: The Nexus of Capital and the State

"Trade is a bigger prize than ever before in world history," and "world trade has carried us into an era in which *scale* plays an appropriate and highly important part." So announced a well-known American geographer, not in the 1990s when the World Trade Organization rose to prominence, but in the 1940s when such organizations of global governance were just being hatched. The venue was a wartime meeting of the State Department's Political Committee, and Isaiah Bowman was huddled with Secretary of State Cordell Hull and a number of other officials, devising top secret plans for postwar global reconstruction. The purpose of that meeting in June 1943 was to begin the systematic design of what would become the United Nations. Bowman had been entrusted with the job of drafting a first attempt at a UN constitution, and as his five-page effort and subsequent discussions made clear, Roosevelt's government envisaged the United Nations as a political instrument for managing a specifically US-centered globalism.³

Not only did Bowman model his UN proposals on the US constitution, replete with universals about human nature and self-evident truths, but he replicated, albeit at a higher scale, the eighteenth-century Federalist Papers debate over the appropriate political geography of the United States. In order to govern such a large territory effectively, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison mused, what is the desired balance of centralized (Federal) vis-à-vis decentralized (state) control? In the State Department in 1943, however, it was no longer an issue of constituting a new space at the national scale, but a new space at the global scale. It was in this context that Bowman raised the importance of the "scale question." While some regional prerogative would be necessary and regional differences would have to be managed, he argued, the reality and the prize of world trade inclined them toward a strong global organization. Globalism was preferable to regionalism from the standpoint of US interests, especially if the US could maintain the broad managing hand in global governance that it inherited between 1919 and 1941. US interests flanged neatly with those of other nations, he assumed, since global trade "equalizes the natural resources and advantages of the different regions of the world" (see Smith, 2002: chapter 15).

Bowman's proposal went through many iterations in the State Department and then among the allies, and while the UN charter of 1945 evolved well beyond these origins, the resulting organization and its history bear distinct traces of the politics of scale that framed its early design. Bowman's proposal remains remarkable for a number of reasons, however. First, the

application of principles of national construction to the global scale suggests that he and the State Department were involved in some rather ambitious scale bending of their own. Not only were they modeling a global institution after a national blueprint, but they were fudging a specifically national economic interest in world trade as a global interest shared by all. To modify Orwell's concluding dictum of the time, all may be equal in some formal sense but in the world market some are more equal than others.

The directness of the geographer's locution provides a rare glimpse into one strategic episode of scale construction. Although Bowman would hardly have put it in these terms, the wartime US government was embarked on nothing less than a remake of the global scale as *global market*, managed by transnational (largely US identified) capital. The end of World War II was a crucial moment in this process; the period in which an entire infrastructure of global governance was constructed – the UN, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later the World Bank), the International Monetary Fund, the Global Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT, precursor to the WTO), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and so forth.

Although it was penned in 1943, the justificatory language of the UN proposal might easily have been written a half century later when the majority leader in the US Senate, Dick Armey, raised free trade to the status of a human right, indeed "perhaps the most fundamental human right." But it might as easily have been written a century earlier as well. The contention that global trade leads to an equalization of conditions across the world – or a flattening of spatial difference – is a staple of globalization ideologies. At least since the 1840s, when the heady expansion of British capital whipped manufacturers into a free trade frenzy, the promise has been that global free trade will deliver commodities more cheaply everywhere, diminishing economic inequalities across the world. This eternal promise of capital-inspired equality at the hands of global free trade has persistently been challenged as a cruel hoax, and never more acerbically than by Marx. Reacting to the repeal of the British Corn Laws, Marx concluded at the beginning of 1848 that free trade was nothing but the "freedom of capital." Far from equality, he argued, global free trade would only increase the antagonism between the owning and working classes. As evidence he cites the early nineteenth-century destruction of the Dacca weaving industry as a result of competition from cheaper machine-made garments in Britain. The confusion of "cosmopolitan exploitation" for a "universal brotherhood" around the world is a grotesque fantasy, he argued. "All the destructive phenomena which unlimited competition gives rise to within one country are reproduced in more gigantic proportions on the world market... If the free traders cannot understand how one

nation can grow rich at the expense of another," he adds, "we need not wonder, since these same gentlemen also refuse to understand how within one country one class can enrich itself at the expense of another" (Marx, 1973: 223, 221; see also Wainwright, Prudham, and Glassman, 2000). Within weeks of Marx's critique of an apparently invincible free trade movement, and as if to prove his point, the economies of Europe convulsed in crisis, unemployment soared, and a series of revolutions broke out across the continent. Implicit in all of this is the same connection between trade and the making of geographical scale that Bowman made a century later. Implicit also is an interpellation of economics and politics in the broadest sense. Then as now, the contradictory geographies of globalization and state formation provide the fulcrum on which many episodes of scale bending balance. There are other sources for scale bending; we could fruitfully have started at a different point in the scale hierarchy, with the body and the home for instance (Marston, 2000). I focus here on the relations between capital accumulation and the state because the shifts taking place at this nexus have been dramatic in recent decades and have reverberated powerfully through other scales.

During periods of enduring economic expansion matched by a stable territorial division between states, assumptions about which kinds of activities fit properly at which scales are also relatively stable. The eruption of scale-bending incidents and events, such as the ones with which I began, suggests on the contrary, a period of scale reorganization in which an inherited territorial structure no longer fulfils the functions for which it was built, develops new functions, or is unable to adapt to new requirements and opportunities. New social activities erode the coherence of old scales and/or crystallize new ones; old activities no longer fit in or support the scaled spaces that hitherto contained them. It is not just that the spatial arrangements of social activity are being reorganized but that the basic territorial building blocks of the social geometry are themselves being restructured. Episodes of scale bending emanate from these deeper shifts. The scale of the nation-state was from the start entangled with questions of capital accumulation. From West Africa to East Asia to Europe, states took many different forms prior to the eighteenth century, each expressing some version of precapitalist social relations: kingdoms and fiefdoms mixed with duchies and city states and so on. New elites constructed nation-states, most commonly by the agglomeration of smaller, previously distinct territories, but also by hiving one territory off from another, by imperial conquest, or by the more gradual morphogenesis of often diffuse kingdoms or precapitalist territories into national units. In many cases it involved all of these processes, as for example with China or Britain. The development of nation-states fundamentally involved two interconnected processes.

First, social definitions of nationality – who comprises “the people” – had to be given territorial definition. Second, the state had to develop a monopoly of violence within the national sphere and defend its borders. These were inextricably interconnected processes and they etched a far more profound historical geography than simply galvanizing an “imagined community.”

The means of nation-state formation were occasionally peaceful, more often violent, certainly protracted, but for our purposes the important point is that the main impetus came from the increased scale of economic accumulation in the transition to capitalism and the need to reconcile competition and cooperation, geographical expansion and centralization. This is clearest in the case of Mediterranean Europe where mercantile city states in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries were economically dependent on a much larger territory than that controlled by the cities, and were simultaneously dependent on non-local armies to defend their investments, sources, and transportation routes. As units of territorial control, city states thus were no longer capable of managing the wider scale conditions of their own economic reproduction. Colonization and economic internationalism were not contradictory but constitutive of national states; imperial conquest was a predicate as much as a result of nation building. Larger kingdoms often fared better in this regard, but equally their capitalist development was retarded by the perpetuation of feudal power rooted in land ownership and absolutist control of the state (Tilly, 1990; Smith, A., 1998; Arrighi, 1994).

The earliest nation-states were the ultimate exercise in scale bending. Spurred on by class revolutions such as those in France and the United States, they combined under one national hat functions that had long been exercised by cities, royal courts, clan chiefs. The problem that nation-states solved was twofold: on the one hand they had to reconcile competition between emerging capitals with the necessity for cooperation in the provision of certain common conditions of social reproduction and production (taxes, roads, labor laws, trade and currency controls, etc.); on the other they had to satisfy revolutionary demands for democratic representation that erupted among peasant and city populations. The protracted worldwide establishment of the national state scale was therefore simultaneously a defensive move by emerging bourgeoisies – vis-à-vis competing capitals and classes – and a progressive one that expanded bourgeois rights into new territories and societies. The nation-state provided a spatial solution – a broad strategy of ‘scale jumping’ combined with the invention of new institutions – to the combined problems of intraclass competition among capitals and interclass competition for social power. There were precursors of course, such as earlier national states in China or Korea, but as a systematic means of organizing the world’s political economy, capitalism and

nation-states were born as twins of a dramatically changing seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historical geography in Europe. The scale of the nation-state was defined from the start as container of national capitals, purveyor of national identities, and (in the visage of “national capitals”) the elemental building blocks of global political economic competition.

The scale of the nation-state represented a fundamental geographical response to the contradictions engendered by capital accumulation at an expanded scale. Capitalism must expand to survive, if Marx’s critique is correct, and the emerging system of nation-states provided the political geographical infrastructure to contain and empower that expansion. The jigsaw puzzle of nation-states was always a territorial compromise between global ambition and local control. If the national state system in Europe was largely completed by the Versailles conference in 1919, the global consummation of the national scale had to await decolonisation, which followed much the same dialectic of competition and cooperation, forced by revolutionary demands, the reconciliation of global ambition with local control, and national defense.

The national scale, therefore, represented a platform for a globalization that already preceded and produced it. But this was not a one-dimensional scale expansion so much as a multilateral restructuring of scale. The global reach of capital was possible only because of a parallel centralization of capital at other scales. The centralization of capital in transport or media corporations, in urban and regional economies, in financial institutions, was both a result and a premise of the globalization that accompanied and accomplished nation-state formation.

The fate of the national scale today has to be seen in this light. Globalization per se is not necessarily inimical to nation-state formation; on the contrary the expansion of the world market was historically implicated in the emergence of nation-states. Yet the nexus of global economic expansion and national states looks very different today, and the frenzy of recent bulletins announcing the death of the nation-state – even the end of geography – do catch something real about the current predicament (O’Brien, 1992; Ohmae, 1990; Ohmae, 1995; Virilio, 1997; Castells, 1996–8). Such obituaries for the nation-state provide much too simple a prognosis, of course. They express a globalized utopia; literally a globalization that takes us beyond space and spatial difference, in which capital is all powerful, state interference is subdued if not eliminated, and social reproduction is unproblematically guaranteed by the market. The resonance with ideologies of global neoliberalism is unmistakable even in more progressive paens to the end of the nation-state.

It is widely objected that any erasure of spatial difference is countered by a powerful reassertion of place in the new global geography, And yet this

notion of a reassertion of place also does not entirely succeed in grasping the significance of the transformation wrought by the new globalism. The vision from mainstream economic geography is broadly that if the global social economy comprises a plethora of containers – regions and/or nation-states – globalization brings about a dramatic change and resorting of social and economic relations and activities carried on within these containers, and perhaps also an increased porosity of the containers themselves. With the exception of some national containers which could dissolve entirely, the containers themselves remain largely intact even as social relations between and within them are transformed. But the scale arguments of recent years alert us to the fact that with the new globalism, the containers themselves are being fundamentally recast. As Peter Taylor (1994: 159) has put it, “the old wealth containers are no longer operative.” Scales are recast and social activities are rescaled (Swyngedouw, 1996). In short, we are witnessing not just the global production and restructuring of space, or of the content of given spaces, but of geographical scale *per se*.

As regards the national scale specifically, many of the same processes that led to the pupation of national states in the first place now endanger or at least potentially circumscribe the political power that can be wielded at that scale. This *historical* gestalt – similar processes in different periods have diametrically opposite results given different contexts – pivots on the question of scale. While early nation-states provided a means of corralling, managing and rationalizing the expansion of capital, today the scale of capital accumulation has long outgrown the system of national differences that fulfilled these functions. A specific example may help to make this point more concrete.

By the 1970s, the largest automobile companies had ceased producing cars for separate national markets in Europe. New car plants were built with a Europe-wide market in sight. Except for a few cases of specialty cars, it was no longer possible to compete in the automobile market at the national scale. The process was rather different with Japan, East Asia, and Oceania, but the result in scale terms was broadly similar. If car manufacturing presents a highly visible example, the supersession of the national scale was evident in many other markets: shipbuilding, coal, steel, computers, many domestic electronics, to name only a few. The stretching of global space beyond the scale of the national market was matched by an increased global integration and deregulation of financial markets, but these were premised more on the expanded scale of production, and especially the industrial revolution in South, South-East, and East Asia after the 1960s, rather than the other way round. The fiction of a national market could be sustained longest in the US because of the enormous size of the so-called domestic market, but the NAFTA agreement of 1994 solidified what

State Department officials in 1943 well understood, namely that the future of the US economy was necessarily international. They also understood, as globalization aficionados do today, that there is no necessary contradiction between internationalism and nationalism and that the major contest concerns whose national norms – cultural, economic, political – get to become the basis of the new globalism: who gets to be more equal than others in the world market

It is important to note at this point that although my discussion has focused on the global and national scales and on the process of production, the supra-national scale of capital accumulation has dramatic effects at other scales. Scale bending is partly scale stretching but it also implies the fragmentation of pre-existing scales. And it is also intimately connected to the destabilization of identities – national, classed, raced, gendered etc. – in this same period. We will return to this issue below.

At the scale of multinational capitals, there is little doubt that nation-states increasingly represent unfortunate inconveniences on the global map – or, as when they shelter huge reservoirs of cheap labor, conveniences. The assets of Microsoft now exceed the gross domestic product of Spain, and Bill Gates' personal wealth dwarfs that of many poor countries. For them and such as them the notion of national capitals is thoroughly obsolete, and has been for decades. The industrial revolution in Asia since the 1960s together with the heightened mobility of workers and *production* capital in the last three decades has made postnational arguments more real. The post 1980s dismantling of social welfare systems by national states in North America, much of Europe, and Oceania would have been inconceivable without two basic conditions. First, national states have increased their room for political movement as a result of the severe dampening of social protest and of opposition to state policies geared at social reproduction of the national labor force. But second, the definition of a national labor force, much like that of a national capital, is much more porous today with unprecedented levels of global migration and the internationalization of many labor markets. To a greater extent than ever before, many states are freeing themselves from the necessity of local labor force reproduction (Katz, 2002).

Yet, less obviously, many other, especially smaller-scale, capitals still construct and rely on something akin to a national capital and national and local labor markets. Precisely this contradiction concerning scale and power, between a capitalist internationalism and an often nastier bourgeois nationalism, lies at the heart of numerous contemporary debates, and nowhere more so than in the politics of immigration. The representatives of globally mobile capitals are not, by and large, so agitated by immigration into California, France, or Saudi Arabia. Ted Turner and George Soros,

Prince Saud and Bill Gates, whose profits depend on worldwide worker mobility, would scorn such smaller capitalists, however, who may benefit from cheaper immigrant labor but who vie for political power at the local and national scales. They are stuck in space, for all intents and purposes, provide the organizational ferment – and much of the financial fodder – for racist anti-immigrant hysteria. The possibilities for a defensive reassertion of national prerogatives and privileges in this process are significant and dangerous. Precisely this dilemma is being played out in the United States in the wake of new immigration controls established after September 11.

Nation-states initially crystallized amidst the combined, if conflicting, processes of global economic expansion and the centralization of capital at different scales. The scale of the nation-state is not automatically weakened but could conceivably be strengthened in certain places as an integral outcome of economic globalization. This could happen from a position of power, to the extent that nation-states are able to insinuate their specific interests as the defining goals of globalization – most obviously the United States in the 1990s – but could also transpire defensively in states that define a national political identity within but against “globalization.” This latter perhaps best pertains to several states in Central Africa in the last decade or to Serbia and Croatia and other post-Soviet states (Žižek, 1999).

With appropriate state institutions, therefore, the new globalism can easily generate a new nationalism, but it is equally matched by restructurings of the urban and regional scales, as well as others (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999; Paasi, 1991; Ohmae, 1995; Scott, 1998; Brenner, 2000; Smith, N., 2000). It is not so much that a “state scale” nestles between global and urban scales (Brenner, 1997: 154–8), but that a thoroughgoing rescaling of the state is occurring as part of this complex set of territorial and political shifts. The notion of a discrete “state scale” invites a confusion between nation and state that obtains in practice during only a short period of history and at the same time encourages the Hegelian slippage that we find in Lefebvre, whereby the state is endowed with a certain teleological impulse to become all. In contrast, it seems to me that the restructuring of scale today, and the rescaling of the state that is integral to but only a part of this process, not only takes place across and throughout the scale hierarchy, from the body to the global, but is fundamentally a process of struggle. The scale question is a lot more complicated than the issue of the globalization of the state. Struggles over the rescaling of the state may be very different in different places, at different times, and at different scales, but a Hegelian teleology of the state does not upset the “logic” of a utopian

globalization so much as fit a virtual image – state-based rather than global-based – into its pre-existing grooves. Either way, the outcomes of globalization and of the rescaling of the state are much more contingent than this conceptualization would seem to suggest.

Conclusion

Vladimir Lenin famously upended Hegel’s argument that space eclipses historical time as the state evolves as master of all space. Instead, under globalism, Lenin (1972) argued, the state will wither away. An organ of class oppression, its function fades with the fading of class differences. Lenin’s anticipation of the withering away of the state was certainly powered by a sense of agency – a politically mobilized international working class, and carried with it a certain optimism – the world can be made to look very different. Yet fairly or otherwise, Lenin is widely criticized for a certain utopian globalism, and his ambition of a withering state is rarely given voice today except as an object of scorn or nostalgia. The remarkable thing, however, is the virtual reinvention of Lenin’s idea at the opposite end of the political spectrum. A left that used to champion the withering away of the state has now evolved, in the context of globalization, into the state’s apparent defender, whether buttressed by Hegelian philosophy or liberal sentiment. By contrast, fantasies of the withering away of the state are now the enthusiastic preserve of bankers, financial capitalists, business school professors, and right-wing ideologues preaching free market neo-liberalism and global deregulation. In the 1990s, at least until the Asian economic crisis of 1997–9, Wall Street may have been the real haven of lingering Leninists. Utopian globalism per se is not the issue; the issue is whose utopianism gets to be globalized.

The language of globalization itself represents a very powerful if undeniably partisan attempt to rescale our world vision. Less obviously, perhaps, and at a quite different scale, a similar judgement may well apply to the identity politics which emerged in the 1980s. Identity politics emerged as various 1960s movements – feminism, antiracism, environmentalism, anti-imperialism, and lesbian and gay rights movements among others – developed significant theoretical literatures and installed themselves in the academy. With one foot in the academy and one in activism, these movements mobilized a much wider political instability. Not only were these movements demanding space for the valorization of previously “marginalized” identities, but the economic restructuring of the 1970s was eroding previously stable identities at the same time. Militia movements, antiaffirmative action politics, and the resurgence of right-wing white identity

and nationalist groups represent different, partly reactive, reassertions of identity.

Identity politics was inspired by interlocking crises of identity. It represented for some a broadening and deepening of class politics, for others an escape from class. For many it provided a nominally "oppositional" political framework while remaining broadly commensurate with the liberal individualism of North American or European society. Its most radical edge galvanized an ambitious reconquest of the body, a redefinition of the scale of the body, and a dramatic reorganization of the ingredients of identity that go into the making of that scale. This was not happening in a vacuum, of course, but was intimately tied to economic, political, and cultural shifts associated with the emerging new globalism, restructuring of the national scale, and the disruption and remaking of local economies.

Although I have used globalization, capital, and the state as entry points to this discussion of scale in an attempt to sketch some of the processes behind contemporary incidents of scale bending, the emergence of identity politics and the rescaling of the body to which it aspires abets Marston's (2000) observation that theories of the production of scale cannot proceed from a hermetic sealing of relations of production off from relations of social reproduction. The references above to the internationalization of social reproduction, or to the importance of political struggles in the periodic fixing of scales, support this argument. The fate of the national state scale today is unfathomable without a comprehension of the rescaling of social reproduction. A new body politics makes little sense if divorced from the remaking of national and global scales, and vice versa.

It is equally true that the struggles over the reconstruction of scale expressed in scale bending moments are rarely discrete. Not only are different scales interconnected but specific struggles often operate at several scales simultaneously. As one example, consider the "Free Tibet" movement that emerged in the 1990s and has blossomed as part of the antiglobalization politics following the 1999 street battle in Seattle against the World Trade Organization. Devoted to the liberation of Tibet from Chinese tutelage, this movement is variously driven by assertions of national and religious identity, liberal antisocialism, and American protectionism. It combines global, as well as different national and local aspirations, and insofar as it bears on Chinese integration into the global capitalist system (as the appointment of Kissinger as Disney's Chinese ambassador suggests) it impinges on the trajectory of global economic and cultural change. Its central symbols include the berobed bodies of Tibetan monks and likenesses of the Dalai Lama.

This movement has attracted many who champion the local against the global, but more than most such "oppositional" movements in the

antiglobalization stable, the Free Tibet movement highlights the scale complexities of globalization. While the demand for human rights may be admirable, this case also highlights, à la Dick Arme, that human rights have become more not less of an economic weapon in the post-Cold War world (Koshy, 1999). On the one hand, an authoritarian religious monarchy is hardly a supportable alternative to global capitalism (or state socialism). On the other hand, support for the Tibetan local against either Chinese authoritarianism or the global free market is widely inspired in the United States by narrow nationalist self-interest, mixed with anti-Chinese racism, aimed at preventing cheap Chinese labor from becoming more directly competitive with US capital. The value of labor power, of course, is a crucial nexus of social production and reproduction.

Marx faced the same dilemma, albeit concerning British rather than US-centered globalism: how to oppose free trade while simultaneously eschewing a narrow nationalism. He had no illusions in 1848 that free trade represented anything other than the freedom of capital, nor had he any intention of supporting protectionism. One can declare oneself an enemy of the bourgeois regime, he said, "without declaring oneself a friend of the ancient regime." The "protectionist system is nothing but a means of establishing large-scale industry in any given country" and thereby making it "dependent upon the world market." But the protectionist system "is conservative," he reasoned, "while the free trade system is destructive," he told his Democratic Association audience. "It breaks up old nationalities and pushes the antagonism of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to the extreme point. In a word, the free trade system hastens social revolution. It is in this revolutionary sense alone, gentlemen, that I vote in favor of free trade (Marx, 1973: 224).

A century and a half later, that critique of protectionism and insistence on a clear, critical internationalism still provides a fresh alternative to a specifically capitalist globalization. More than anything it suggests that insofar as scales are only ever the temporary spatialization of certain social assumptions, always susceptible to scale bending, the global is every bit as accessible to political struggle as the local. The conquest of scale is a central political goal. Capital may for now make the world in its own image but it does not control the global or any other scale. This is vividly exemplified in the response of the US state after September 11, 2001. Not only did the events of that day have to be anxiously nationalized and the prerogatives of the national state dramatically reaffirmed in order to justify war (Smith, N., 2001), but the "war on terrorism" after October 7 became nothing less than an attempt to secure a specific model of US-inspired and US-led globalism in the one region of the world (Afghanistan and the Middle East) that threatens to opt out of the new globalism – that threatens an "alternative

modernity." It is not so much a war against terror as a war sponsored terror for the global scale. It is a war to secure global rights to define what does and does not count as terror. As such, this is not an interruption of 1990s globalization but its continuation, by other means, a lesson that the anticapitalist opposition to globalization, motivated by the seeming placelessness of global economic and political power, is only slowly learning.

Notes

- 1 Melissa Gilbert, personal communication.
- 2 Brenner's dependence on Lefebvre as the source of scale theory thus has the effect of rereading a whole array of theoretical concepts back into Lefebvre's writings after 1968. Lefebvre's movement in this direction was very preliminary, however, and concepts such as "the politics of scale," "rescaling," "the production of scale," "scalar fixes," "scale jumping," and the theoretical arguments about scale that they portend, did not emerge until the 1980s and especially the 1990s. See for example, Taylor (1981); Herod (1991); Swyngedouw (1992b); Swyngedouw, 1996; Smith and Dennis (1987); Smith, (1992a); Leitner and Delaney (1997).
- 3 "Mr. Bowman's remarks in the political committee, June 12, 1943," Isaiah Bowman Papers, series 52, Special Collections, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University.

References

- Arrighi, G. 1994: *The Long Twentieth Century*. London: Verso.
- Brenner, N. 1997: Global, fragmented, hierarchical: Henri Lefebvre's geographies of globalization. *Public Culture*, 10: 135-67.
- Brenner, N. 2000: The urban question as a scale question: Reflections on Henri Lefebvre, urban theory and the politics of scale. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24, 361-78.
- Castells, M. 1996-98: *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*. 3 vol. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Herod, A. 1991: The production of scale in United States labor relations. *Area*, 23: 82-8.
- Katz, C. 1997: Power, space and terror. Unpublished text of lecture, Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley. October.

- © 2002: Stuck in place: Children and the globalization of social reproduction. In R. J. Johnston, P. J. Taylor and M. J. Watts (eds), *Geographies of Global Change*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 248-60.
- Levy, S. 1999: From cold war to trade war: Neocolonialism and human rights. *Social Text*, 58:1-32.
- Lefebvre, H. 1976: *De L'État. Tome II. De Hegel a Mao par Staline*. Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions.
- Lefebvre, H. 1991: *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Lefebvre, H. and Delaney, D. (eds) 1997. *Political Geography*, 16(4) Special issue.
- Lenin, V. 1972: *The State and Revolution*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Leod, G. and Goodwin, M. 1999: Space, scale and state strategy: Rethinking urban and regional governance. *Progress in Human Geography*, 23: 513-27.
- Johnston, S. 2000: The social construction of scale. *Progress in Human Geography*, 24: 219-42.
- Marx, K. 1973: On the question of free trade. In K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*. New York: International Publishers.
- Paasi, A. 1991: Deconstructing regions: Notes on the scales of spatial life. *Environment and Planning A*, 23: 239-56.
- Brien, R. 1992: *Global Financial Integration: The End of Geography*. New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Council on Foreign Relations.
- Ohmae, K. 1990: *The Borderless World. Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy*. New York: Harper Business.
- Ohmae, K. 1995: *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies*. New York: The Free Press.
- Quattrochi, D. A. and Goodchild, M. F. (eds) 1997: *Scale in Remote Sensing and GIS*. Boca Raton: Lewis Publishers.
- Scott, A. J. 1998: *Regions and the World Economy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, A. 1998: *Nationalism and Modernity*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, N. 1987: Dangers of the empirical turn: Some comments on the CURS initiative. *Antipode*, 19: 59-68.
- Smith, N. 1990: *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2nd edn.
- Smith, N. 1992a: Contours of a spatialized politics: Homeless vehicles and the production of geographical space. *Social Text*, 33: 54-81.
- Smith, N. 1992b: Geography, difference and the politics of scale. In J. Doherty, E. Graham and M. Malek (eds), *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences*, London: Macmillan, 57-79.
- Smith, N. 2000: New globalism, new urbanism: Uneven development in the 21st Century. *Working Papers in Local Government and Democracy*, 99(2): 4-14.
- Smith, N. 2001: Scales of terror and the resort to geography: September 11, October 7 *Society and Space*, 19: 631-7.
- Smith, N. 2002: *Mapping the American Century: Isaiah Bowman and the Prelude to Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Smith, N. and W. Dennis 1987: The restructuring of geographical scale: coalescence and fragmentation of the northern core region. *Economic Geography* 63(2): 160-82.
- Swyngedouw, E. 1992a: Territorial organization and the space/technology nexus. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 17: 417-33.
- Swyngedouw, E. 1992b. "The Mammon Quest": "Glocalisation," interspatial competition and the monetary order: the construction of new scales. In M. Dunford and G. Kafkalas (eds), *Cities and Regions in the New Europe*, London: Bellhaven Press, 39-67.
- Swyngedouw, E. 1996: Reconstructing citizenship, the rescaling of the state and the new authoritarianism: Closing the Belgian mines. *Urban Studies*, 33: 1499-1521.
- Swyngedouw, E. 1997: Excluding the other: The production of scale and scaled politics. In R. Lee and J. Wills (eds), *Geographies of Economies*, London: Edward Arnold, 167-76.
- Taylor, P. 1981: Geographical scale within the world-economy approach. *Review*, 1: 3-11.
- Taylor, P. 1994: The state as container: Territoriality in the modern world-system. *Progress in Human Geography*, 18: 151-62.
- Tilly, C. (ed.) 1990: *Coercion, Capital and European States*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Virilio, P. 1997: *Open Sky*. London: Verso.
- Wainwright, J., Prudham, S. and Glassman, J. 2000: The battles in Seattle: Micro-geographies of resistance and the challenge of building alternative futures. *Society and Space*, 18: 5-13.
- Žižek, S. 1999: Against the double blackmail. *New Left Review*, 234: 76-82.

10 Is There a Europe of Cities? World Cities and the Limitations of Geographical Scale Analyses

Peter J. Taylor

The advent of globalization as one of the "buzzwords" of our times has provided an unintended fillip to geographical debates about geographical scale. Defined by a geographical scale, the "global," and opposed by other geographical scales, the "regional," the "national" and the "local," it sometimes seems that globalization has finally vindicated two decades of work on scale by geographers. Of course, it is not as simple as this. Whatever globalization is, it is certainly more than simply a bigger organization of society. In this chapter, I am going to emphasize a different aspect of the geography of contemporary globalization, the idea that it is constituted as a global space of flows.

According to Castells (1996), contemporary society is a network society where traditional spaces of places, such as regions and states, are being gradually undermined by new spaces of flows, such as the international financial markets, facilitated by the combined enabling technologies of communications and computers. The world city network is a prime example of such a new space. Typified by a landscape of huge tower blocks of offices, these world cities are connected by a myriad of daily links between these offices across the world. In short, world cities provide an organizational structure to contemporary globalization, a networking of the world. Such a conception is at odds with the usual way of thinking about scale as bordered spaces – how else can you measure the scale of something unless you bound it first? Networks, and the flows upon which they are constructed, can be, and are, constrained by boundaries but the whole point of globalization is the reduction of such restrictions. Thinking in terms of spaces of flows, therefore, frees us from the boundary obsessions of the modern political world map, from narrow "mosaic thinking," and opens up