

## Open questions on state rescaling

Neil Brenner

*Department of Sociology and Metropolitan Studies Program, New York University, Puck Building, 295 Lafayette Street, 4th floor, NY 10012, USA. neil.brenner@nyu.edu*

---

**Recent work on state rescaling has opened up productive lines of theorization and research. However, this literature contains many open theoretical, interpretive, methodological and empirical questions. By drawing attention to several of these, this article aims to promote reflection and debate on possible future lines of research within this field. I argue, in particular, for greater attention to questions of method—specifically, to the mediations linking abstract concepts to concrete, contextually specific investigations. The article concludes by outlining three research frontiers that could be productively explored within future work on state rescaling—logics of explanation, comparative analyses and questions of periodization.**

*Key words:* state space, state rescaling, political economy of scale, periodization

*JEL Classifications:* B5, F59, R38

---

Recent work on state rescaling has opened up some productive lines of theorization and research in the field of critical geopolitical economy. However, this literature contains many open theoretical, interpretive, methodological and empirical questions that deserve more systematic consideration. By drawing attention to several of these open questions, this article aims to promote further reflection and debate on possible future lines of research within this developing field of study. After surveying several strands of current work on state rescaling, including my own efforts in *New State Spaces* (Brenner, 2004), I suggest that the field now rests on relatively solid theoretical foundations and that these have facilitated a fruitful ‘first wave’ of concrete research. What is now needed, I believe, is greater attention to questions of method—specifically, to the mediations linking abstract concepts to concrete, contextually specific investigations. Careful exploration of such mediations could facilitate analytically robust, intellectually challenging lines of con-

crete research, which might then be mobilized as a basis for refining and/or critically re-evaluating some of the literature’s core theoretical categories, arguments and generalizations. In order to accomplish this, however, processes of state rescaling must be distinguished analytically from other (territorial, place-based and networked) dimensions of state spatial restructuring; the notion of rescaling must not be overstretched to encompass state space as a whole. The article concludes by briefly outlining three research frontiers that could be productively explored within a possible ‘second wave’ of work on state rescaling—a more careful consideration of logics of explanation, the elaboration of comparative analyses and the investigation of questions of periodization.

### **New geographies of statehood**

In recent years, critical geographers, heterodox political economists, historical sociologists and urbanists

---

have become attuned to the changing geographies of statehood during the geohistory of modern capitalism. Traditional accounts of statehood necessarily presupposed determinate geographical assumptions, but generally did so without reflexively interrogating their historical and epistemological preconditions or the possibility that established formations of state space might be qualitatively transformed. However, the geoeconomic and geopolitical transformations of the post-1970s period have indeed severely ruptured and reconstituted inherited formations of national territorial space, leading to an unprecedented scholarly interest in investigating the geographical dimensions of state power. Insofar as the apparently ossified fixity of entrenched territorial geographies has been thrust dynamically into historical motion, contemporary scholars have been confronted with the daunting but exciting task of developing new frameworks, categories and methods through which to map the new state spaces that are being constructed at diverse sites and scales across the world economy.

The new research on the geopolitical economy of state space is characterized by an impressive breadth: it now encompasses an almost dizzying range of theoretical orientations, disciplinary/post-disciplinary locations, substantive research foci and normative-political concerns (for an overview, see Brenner et al., 2003). It would therefore be misleading to classify such research as representing a single 'literature'. This work is better characterized as a heterogeneous constellation of inter-related yet distinct discussions of a broadly shared *problématique*—namely, the spatial construction/transformation of state power.

Taken as a whole, engagement with this *problématique* encompasses several fundamental sets of questions:

- *Questions of theory.* How and why is (modern) state power constituted spatially? What concrete forms does the spatial constitution of statehood assume?
- *Questions of method.* Through what types of categories, analytical techniques and logics of explanation should the spatial (re)articulation of state power be investigated?

- *Questions of periodization and contextual variation.* How and why have state spatial forms evolved over time? How and why do they vary across contexts and scales?
- *Questions of conjunctural analysis.* How and why are inherited formations of state space being reconstituted under contemporary capitalism? Are certain institutional forms, regulatory arenas or policy spheres serving as privileged sites or 'leading edges' for such transformations? What are the consequences of contemporary patterns of state spatial restructuring for the structuration of political-economic life (for instance, patterns of governance, capital investment, uneven development, citizenship, exploitation, social inequality and/or political mobilization)?
- *Normative-political questions.* Are contemporary patterns of state spatial restructuring and their variegated implications to be affirmed or criticized in social scientific analysis? Are alternative modalities of state spatial restructuring desirable, and if so, how can they be promoted?

While each of these issues has received some degree of attention among spatially attuned analysts of state power, the bulk of recent work has focused on the conjunctural questions listed above. Some of the most insightful recent work on state spatial restructuring intersects closely with several important contributions to radical and heterodox political economy that investigate the remaking of post-war Fordist–Keynesian and developmentalist state forms and the subsequent consolidation of post-Keynesian, post-Fordist, post-national, post-developmental, workfare or competition state regimes. As such intersections demonstrate, analyses of contemporary patterns of regulatory and institutional change increasingly require a reflexive engagement with the changing spatial parameters of statehood and, more generally, with the uneven development of regulatory forms across places, territories and scales.

It is against the background of these fruitful discussions of what might be termed the *production of state space* that the last decade of research on state rescaling must be situated. Alongside variegated

processes of state territorial restructuring, the re-making of bordering regimes, the emergence of new modalities of place-making and the consolidation of new forms of networked governance, it is now widely recognized that, in Lipietz's (1994: 32) classic formulation, a major 'reshuffling of the hierarchy of spaces' is unfolding throughout contemporary capitalism. State rescaling represents one of the most prominent examples of such rescaling processes—others being the rescaling of capital accumulation, the rescaling of urbanization processes and the rescaling of contentious politics (Brenner, 2004; Leitner et al., 2007; Swyngedouw, 2000; Uitermark, 2002).<sup>1</sup>

Over 15 years ago, when Swyngedouw (1992) published his now well-known analysis of glocalization, the concept of rescaling was relatively obscure and resonated mainly within a circle of radical geographers interested in the scalar articulation of uneven development and spatial difference (e.g. Smith, 1992). Today, by contrast, not least through the pioneering work of scholars such as Swyngedouw, Smith and others, the notion of rescaling has become one of the keywords of critical geopolitical economy, a major focal point for journal articles, theme issues, scholarly conferences, edited volumes, PhD theses and research monographs. Research on state rescaling has been substantially enriched by the broader literature on what Keil and Mahon (2009) have recently termed 'the new political economy of scale', and the latter has in turn helped orient research on state rescaling within the broad constellation of rescaling processes that are animating political–institutional change within contemporary capitalism. In no small measure because, during the last 30 years, processes of state rescaling have been ricocheting across the world interstate system with particular intensity, rapidity and volatility, their investigation has become one of the most vibrant streams of contemporary research on state space (for an excellent recent overview of European trends, see Gualini, 2006).

Whereas research on state space is quite heterogeneous, if not completely post-disciplinary, the strand of that research oriented towards the question of state rescaling has been somewhat more nar-

rowly circumscribed. The intellectual agenda underlying research on state rescaling is usually understood in post-disciplinary terms. However, the major proponents of this agenda have generally been based in just a few academic communities—above all, political–economic geography and critical urban–regional studies, as well as certain interstitial strands of critical/heterodox international political economy and decentralization studies.<sup>2</sup> In principle, the debate on state rescaling could be extended more broadly across the social sciences, as it arguably has far-reaching implications for almost any investigation of state power, governance and political contention. For the moment, however, the somewhat self-contained character of research on state rescaling has an important practical advantage: it provides scholars working within this field with an opportunity to consolidate its basic theoretical concepts, to clarify its methodological foundations and to extend its substantive empirical–historical claims.

### Scalar turns and the 'post-national' state

The 'scalar turn' within studies of contemporary statehood is paradigmatically illustrated in Jessop's (2002) major synthesis, *The Future of the Capitalist State*. Whereas Jessop's (1990) previous theoretical monograph, *State Theory*, had analysed the state and the interstate system as 'sites' of political strategies, he did not then explicitly examine their spatial or scalar constitution. Like much of mainstream and radical political economy at the time, Jessop conceptualized the geographies of statehood as being configured relatively unproblematically around two more or less fixed scales of political–economic life, the global and the national, in and through which political strategies could be articulated.

By contrast, Jessop's (2002) book and his subsequent writings have devoted extensive, systematic attention to what he now terms 'the political economy of state rescaling' and have developed a reflexively scale-differentiated conceptualization of the contemporary Schumpeterian Workfare Post-national Regime (SWPR). The reconstitution of state

forms under contemporary capitalism is now said to involve, simultaneously, a reworking of their scalar architectures, which are conceptualized as intrinsic dimensions of the state institutional apparatus and all forms of state intervention. No longer, then, are the scales of statehood conceived as stable platforms of institutional organization, with analytical attention fixed primarily on the political strategies that operate through them. Instead, in Jessop's more recent work, state scalar organization is examined not only as a *site* for political strategies but also as one of their key *mechanisms* and *outcomes* (see also MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999).

This conceptual reorientation means that state scalar structures are now understood to be historically malleable; they may be ruptured and rewoven through the very political strategies they enable. Furthermore, the rescaling of institutions and policies is now conceptualized as a key means through which social forces may attempt to rejig the balance of class power and manage the contradictory social relations of capitalism (see also Gough, 2004). While Jessop's notion of an SWPR is tied closely to his account of the changing logics of capital accumulation under knowledge-based capitalism, its internal coherence hinges on the proposition that the post-national scalar architecture of contemporary statehood differs qualitatively from that of the preceding state form, the Keynesian Welfare National State (KWNS).

Have contemporary processes of state rescaling produced a post-national or 'denationalized' (Habermas, 2001; Sassen, 2006) constellation of state power? It is considerably more straightforward to characterize the general trajectory of processes of state rescaling than to choose an overarching label for their variegated institutional and spatial consequences. In part because the concept of the national is generally understood ahistorically, as an atemporal unit of territorial organization, this issue remains a source of considerable confusion among analysts of state rescaling. Indeed, Jessop and several other contributors to the rescaling debates have occasionally been misinterpreted as postulating a newly consolidated formation of state space that effectively circumvents national

state power (see, e.g. Cerny, 2006; Mansfield, 2005).

On my reading, however, the notion of the post-national in Jessop's work is a tendential concept, not a substantialist one. First, it is explicitly defined with reference to several processes—in particular, scale relativization and the mobilization of political strategies to construct a new primary scale—whose outcomes are said to remain uncertain, contested and contradictory (Jessop, 2002: 252). Second, in Jessop's framework, the concept of the post-national is historically and geographically specific. It is intended mainly as a basis for contrasting currently emergent state spaces to the inherited regulatory landscapes of Fordist–Keynesian capitalism, which had been tendentially nationalized prior to and during that period. Jessop's (1993) argument in *The Future of the Capitalist State*, therefore, is not that the national has been marginalized or, as he proposed in an earlier, less precise formulation, 'hollowed out'. Rather, Jessop is suggesting that the national is being redefined in relation to other scales (local, regional and triadic) of institutional organization, regulatory experimentation and political strategy. Thus understood, the national/post-national distinction that is embedded within Jessop's KWNS/SWPR contrast is not based on a zero sum or either/or logic. It is instead grounded on a series of generalizations regarding the tendentially evolving interscalar *articulations* among the major sites of statehood since the systemic crisis of Fordist–Keynesian capitalism in the 1970s.

The question of how to label the (chronically unstable) tendencies and (endemically provisional) outcomes of contemporary processes of state rescaling remains hugely complex. In particular, such generalizing procedures are notoriously susceptible to the methodological fallacies of teleology, substantialism and essentialism that became particularly rampant amidst earlier debates on the alleged transition to 'post-Fordism' (for a critique and assessment, see Jessop and Sum, 2006). In my view, Jessop does not succumb to these methodological hazards. Nonetheless, the scalar content of the third term, 'P', within Jessop's SWPR concept, is actually considerably more complex than his proposed

acronym implies. By his own account, the ‘post-national’ is a zone of rearticulation that is currently being constituted through multiscalar, if contextually specific institutional transformations and political struggles. It might therefore be methodologically prudent, if stylistically inelegant, to represent this scalar content simply as an open bracket containing a question mark (‘SW[?]R’), since this would explicitly underscore the relatively inchoate character of contemporary rescaling processes, especially relative to the intensive nationalization tendencies that obtained during *les trente glorieuses*.

However, I believe that such precautions would be excessive. The use of general concepts to characterize emergent processes of state rescaling is analytically desirable insofar as, when accomplished rigorously, this can help illuminate otherwise disparate, apparently inchoate institutional shifts, policy realignments and political struggles. Consequently, the rescaling literature stands to benefit substantially from continued efforts to elaborate ‘big-picture’ generalizations regarding contemporary trends. It is often only with considerable hindsight that coherent generalizations regarding a period of intense volatility can be effectively elaborated. While such a macrospatial and macrohistorical synthesis may not be attainable at the present time, this analytical aspiration can arguably provide a powerful stimulus for creative thinking and research on processes of state rescaling. If Jessop’s notion of the post-national remains a preliminary, even somewhat misleading formulation, it has served to stimulate productive debates on the nature and trajectory of contemporary processes of state rescaling. Presumably, future efforts to construct an appropriate theoretical label for the rescaled state spaces of contemporary capitalism could have a similar intellectual function.

### **State rescaling as a political strategy**

Jessop’s scalar turn, along with foundational works by Harvey (1982) and Lefebvre (1991, 2009), provided much inspiration for my own efforts since the late 1990s to develop a scale-attuned theorization of contemporary statehood and a state-theoretical

analysis of contemporary rescaling processes. Many of my initial writings on these topics deployed the language of scale as a generic label for levels of state spatial organization—for example, the global, national, regional and local scales of the modern interstate system (see, for instance, Brenner, 1998). By contrast, my book *New State Spaces* (2004) adopted a different methodological strategy. Rather than focusing on specific scales of state power or examining the scalar structure of a particular state form, I adopted a processual methodology—in effect, a spatialized version of Jessop’s (1990) strategic-relational approach—in which state scalar selectivity is understood as an expression, a medium and an outcome of political strategies. This meant that processes of rescaling must be understood in terms of the contextually specific political strategies that engendered them (see also Swyngedouw, 1997). The question, from this point of view, was how and why political strategies are mobilized to transform established formations of state scalar organization and how such rescaling strategies in turn evolve over time.

To confront this set of issues, I focused my analysis on the systemic regulatory problems associated with capitalist urbanization processes and, more generally, with the process of uneven spatial development under capitalism. My hypothesis was that, as with other systemic regulatory problems under capitalism (for instance, the commodification of labour, the reproduction of capital, the circulation of money and so forth), urbanization processes would engender contextually specific forms of sociospatial dislocation and crisis formation, as well as corresponding strategies of political intervention designed to confront the latter. Building on approaches to state theory that emphasized the contradictory character of state intervention under capitalism (e.g. Jessop, 1990, 2002; Lefebvre, 2009; Offe, 1984; Poulantzas, 1978), I assumed that state strategies to regulate the urbanization process would frequently engender dysfunctional, even self-undermining, sociospatial consequences rather than an effective management of territorial development.

My analysis in the latter half of *New State Spaces* revealed that, with the (albeit uneven) expansion,

intensification and acceleration of urbanization processes during the course of the 20th century, western European states did indeed mobilize a range of political strategies intended to stabilize, manage and redirect urban development patterns. Through a cross-national examination of such political strategies across western Europe during the 1960–2000 period, I found strong evidence that their scalar architectures have been qualitatively modified, particularly since the 1980s. Since the early part of this decade, the nationalizing, spatially redistributive orientation of post-war urban and regional policies has been largely superseded. As the regulatory formation of spatial Keynesianism was destabilized and dismantled, diverse types of urban locational policy were mobilized, at once nationally, regionally and locally, across the western European state system. Rather than promoting ‘balanced’ urban and regional development within relatively auto-centric national space-economies, the overarching goal of urban locational policies is to position major cities and city-regions strategically within supranational (European and global) circuits of capital accumulation. While both spatial Keynesianism and urban locational policies are associated with endemic policy failures and political–economic dislocations, my research suggested that such state-induced crisis tendencies—in Offe’s (1984) terms, the ‘crisis of crisis management’—have been particularly pervasive during the post-1980s period. Accordingly, the book’s final chapter suggested that, since the 1990s, new forms of state rescaling have emerged largely in response to the crisis tendencies engendered through the first wave of urban locational policy. This has led to the construction of new scales of state intervention (neighbourhoods, metropolitan regions and transnational interurban networks), to the crystallization of additional crisis tendencies and dislocations and, subsequently, to a further intensification and acceleration of rescaling processes. Processes of state rescaling therefore appear to be animated through regulatory failure.

Methodologically, then, *New State Spaces* interpreted state rescaling through a distinctive analytical lens. It examined the evolving scalar selectivities of state responses to a specific regulatory problem un-

der post-war and late 20th century capitalism, and on that basis, it elaborated a schematic analysis of medium- and long-term tendencies of state rescaling during a 40-year period. The stylized concept of a ‘Rescaled Competition State Regime’ (RCSR) represents the analytical fruit of that effort (for an analogous approach to rescaling processes with reference to the regulatory problem of commodifying decommodified labour, see Peck, 2001, 2002). Crucially, the concept of the RCSR was introduced to demarcate a crisis-riven, self-undermining and contradictory, if significantly rescaled, institutional ensemble, rather than to label a stabilized state form or spatio-temporal fix under neoliberalizing capitalism (contra Cerny, 2006). Like Jessop’s notion of the SWPR, as presented above, the concept of the RCSR is tendential, processual and relational rather than substantialist.

### **Levels of abstraction and the dialectical spiral**

An equally central methodological feature of *New State Spaces* was the adoption of the critical realist distinction between abstract concepts and concrete research (Sayer, 1992). The analytical ballast of the book was lodged firmly on what I termed the ‘meso-level’, which combined both abstract concepts and concrete evidence to propose a broad periodization of state spatial development patterns across western Europe during the 40-year period under investigation. This meant, on the one hand, the elaboration of theoretical foundations for the analysis of the state spatial process as such under modern capitalism. Those theoretical foundations are intended not only to inform research on the regulation of capitalist urbanization but also to facilitate thinking about state rescaling, and indeed, state spatial restructuring more generally. On the other hand, this meso-level approach entailed the excavation of contextually specific (national, regional and local) histories of institutional reorganization and policy change across some of the major European Union (EU) countries.<sup>3</sup> The goal was to determine whether any macrohistorical generalizations could be ventured regarding the broad trajectory of state rescaling during the

post-war and post-1980s period. What was thus introduced as an abstract-simple conceptual grid outlining the basic parameters for the evolution of state spatial selectivity (Brenner, 2004: 104) subsequently evolved, through increasingly concrete-complex modes of analysis, into a series of meso-level diagrams intended to express, in schematic form, the core tendencies and crisis tendencies associated with each of the major waves of state rescaling examined in the book (Brenner, 2004: 132, 134–136, 214, 215–219, 273, 283, 291). Rather than postulating a convergence of state space around a singular form or model, these meso-level diagrams were intended to summarize the shared patterns of state rescaling that have crystallized across otherwise quite diverse, intensely variegated politico-spatial formations.

This research strategy contains significant methodological dangers (Sayer, 1992)—for instance, that of constructing abstract concepts lacking a concrete reference point (bad abstractions), that of expecting abstract concepts to explain or predict the precise shape of concrete trends or events (over-extension), that of imposing abstract concepts upon concrete trends to which they do not properly apply (overgeneralization) and that of treating concrete histories simply as a means to illustrate abstract principles or meso-level interpretive claims (reductionism). Yet, it should be recognized that research strategies that attempt to operate primarily or solely on the concrete level confront equally significant methodological hazards—including voluntarism, empiricism and naïve falsificationism (Sayer, 2000).

The key to avoiding these problems is to maintain clear, reflexive distinctions among the various levels of abstraction on which research on state rescaling is organized. On this basis, it is possible to spiral dialectically among the relevant levels of abstraction in order, simultaneously, to deepen theoretical understanding (of state space and rescaling processes), to illuminate meso-level tendencies (pathways and trajectories of rescaling) and to decipher concrete-historical conjunctures and struggles (scale-specific regulatory experiments, rescaling strategies, political struggles over scalar

organization, scale-articulated regulatory failures). The challenge of navigating this dialectical spiral obtains not only within studies of state rescaling but also within any approach to social science, including Marxism, regulation theory and evolutionary economics, that embraces some form of critical realist epistemology (see, for instance, Fleetwood, 1999; Jessop and Sum, 2006; Lawson, 1997; Sayer, 2000).

### Recent rescaling tendencies

Reflecting back on the arguments of *New State Spaces* several years after its publication, I would continue to defend the book's broad interpretation of western European meso-level trends. Specifically, the reorientation of state spatial strategies from nationally redistributive modalities towards urban-centric, competitiveness-oriented forms of locational policy still appears quite pervasive across the EU.

In recent years, this trend has been rather dramatically illustrated in France under Sarkozy, where the DATAR, the 40-year-old institutional cockpit of French spatial planning, was recently superseded by the DIACT, a new state agency oriented towards planning and competitiveness.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Sarkozy has recently mobilized a large-scale planning, administrative and architectural project to establish 'Greater Paris', a massive agglomeration stretching from the Channel seaport of Le Havre all the way to Rouen in the West.<sup>5</sup> In the Netherlands, with the adoption of the National Spatial Strategy (*Nota Ruimte*) in 2006, the central government continues to explore ways of channelling both public and private investments into the Randstad, its major urban region, without neglecting the fiscal and political claims articulated elsewhere within the national territory. In most EU countries, however, urban locational policies are not being promoted on such a grand scale or debated so explicitly in the public sphere. Instead, they are generally pursued through more subtle, yet no less pervasive, institutional recalibrations, policy reorientations and regulatory experiments, whether within established state agencies or within newly created organs of post-Keynesian

statecraft. Meanwhile, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2005) has begun to promote local and regional competitiveness policies as the most appropriate, ‘best practice’ governmental response to an increasingly uncertain geo-economic environment.

In light of these trends, I believe that the rather bleak, medium-term scenario postulated in the final pages of *New State Spaces* (2004: 295–304) continues to command considerable plausibility. Urban locational policies appear to have been tendentially ‘locked in’ across the EU (and indeed, beyond), despite their dysfunctional, often self-undermining consequences for economic development prospects. However, the distinctive political sources, institutional contours and political–economic effects of this institutional lock-in continue to vary significantly across national, regional and local contexts, and consequently, so too do the possibilities for ‘breaking out’ of the regressive developmental pathway it entails. For, as with any project of rescaling, urban locational policies can only be perpetuated through the continued mobilization of social forces, territorial alliances and ideological resources to promote them (see Keating, Cairney and Hepburn, this issue; as well as Jones and MacLeod, 2004; Park, 2003, 2008).<sup>6</sup> Particularly in light of their pervasively disruptive effects on urban–regional growth dynamics and national systems of regulatory coordination, the long-term sustainability of urban locational policies remains very much open to question (more recent arguments to this effect include Markusen, 2007, and Turok, 2009).

In the immediate and medium-term future, as the crisis tendencies of post-Keynesian, neoliberalizing capitalism continue to ripple across the European and global economic landscapes, further modifications to urban locational policies seem most likely—for instance, in their scalar/spatial configuration, their institutional structure and their substantive political orientation. Will such modifications amount to mere ‘tinkerings’ within the basic parameters of an entrenched, competitiveness-oriented regime of economic governance? Or will they signal the beginnings of that regime’s qualitative reorganization, or even its death knell? These questions can only be

confronted through more concrete research, informed by reflexive awareness of their comparative implications and their (geo)political stakes.

### **Towards a second round of research on state rescaling?**

To the extent that a new theoretical orientation, framework or concept inspires scholars to reconsider established interpretations of a phenomenon, it may open up fresh lines of access to research questions that had previously been considered resolved. Such innovations may also reveal ignored or neglected issues requiring more systematic inquiry, and thus open up entirely new research questions and fields of investigation. Each of these opportunities for the investigation of state rescaling is now being seized upon. Indeed, it is now evident that a ‘first round’ of work on state rescaling has been under way for at least a decade. There are signs that this initial phase of theory development and exploratory research is now reaching maturity. On the one hand, the literature on state rescaling is expanding rapidly with reference to diverse realms of state policy, forms of institutional reorganization, sites of regulatory change and modalities of statecraft (see Lobao, Martin and Rodríguez-Pose, this issue). Meanwhile, the empirical parameters for such research are also being extended to sites and territories throughout the world economy. Thus, there is now considerable evidence suggesting that state rescaling is unfolding not only within the EU but also, for instance, within parts of Eastern Europe (Drahokoupil, 2007), the USA (Cox, this issue), Canada (Boudreau et al., 2007; Mahon, 2005), Mexico (Mills, 2006), Australia (Lawson, 2007; McGuirk, 2004), post-apartheid South Africa (Samson, 2008), Turkey (Bayirbag, 2007; Ercan and Oguz, 2006), Iran (Rouhani, 2003), South Korea (Park, 2003, 2008), Malaysia (Bunnell and Coe, 2005), Ghana, India (Grant and Nijman, 2004; Ren and Weinstein, 2008) and post-reform China (Smart and Lin, 2007; Zhang, 2008), among other contexts. Finally, many traditional fields of administrative science and policy analysis—for instance, the study of intergovernmental relations,

decentralization, regionalism, localism, centralism and federalism—are being re-examined through the lens of the rescaling debates. This has enabled researchers to link rather specialized, technical academic discourses to foundational issues within the geopolitical economy of state transformation (Martinez-Vazquez and Timofeev, this issue). Especially for scholars who have long been working to integrate scalar considerations into comparative geopolitical economy, these are encouraging developments.

Only time will tell if ongoing debates on state rescaling will have a lasting, constructive impact on the social sciences. It is instructive, in this context, to recall the analytical terrain covered in the British localities debates of the 1980s, which anticipated some of the major concerns that are now being addressed under the rubric of state rescaling, albeit during an earlier phase of state spatial restructuring (see, for instance, Dickens et al., 1985; Duncan and Goodwin, 1989; Harloe et al., 1990). The localities debates produced a wealth of insights into the uneven development of state regulation across place, territory and scale, and they influenced many of the early contributors to recent discussions of state rescaling. Yet, with the exception of citations to scholars such as Kevin Cox, Mark Goodwin and Neil Smith, whose work spans both literatures, references to the localities debates have been largely absent from contemporary discussions of state rescaling.

This apparent theoretical amnesia has several sources—for instance, the evolution of academic fashion and the methodological heterogeneity, even eclecticism, of the rescaling literature. But, I would argue, it also results in part from the geographical parochialism of the localities debates themselves. For, although the localities debates rested upon sophisticated theoretical foundations, they were oriented almost exclusively towards the UK context and were thus largely enframed within a single, nationally defined spatial arena. This circumstance underscores the importance of the explicitly transnational methodological horizons that have defined the literatures on state rescaling since their origins.<sup>7</sup> Most work on state rescaling is still focused on in-

dividual ‘cases’ or ‘instances’ (be it a city, a region, a national state or a multinational bloc). However, such analyses are usually situated analytically within a broader, unevenly developed *global context* of rescaling processes, practices and struggles. Particularly for critically oriented researchers, who have tended to hold mainstream positions within the globalization debates at arm’s length due to their homogenizing, totalizing thrust, the notion of rescaling has served to demarcate a general trend of worldwide sociospatial restructuring that nonetheless involves intensely patterned, yet contextually specific, forms of spatial redifferentiation (Smith, 1997; Swyngedouw, 1992, 1997). Debates on state rescaling extend this insight to hierarchically structured institutional arrangements, generating a powerful counternarrative to the predictions of state decline or erosion that pervaded research on globalization during the 1980s and early 1990s. The concept of rescaling has so far provided a relatively coherent, unifying conceptual rubric within which to interpret these otherwise disparate patterns of worldwide sociospatial restructuring and territory-specific institutional reorganization.

But herein lies what might well become the Achilles heel of this entire literature—a tendency to overgeneralize or underspecify the concept of rescaling as it is applied to an ever widening range of political–institutional and sociospatial transformations. Like the notion of scale itself (Brenner, 2001), the concept of rescaling is increasingly being used as a generically descriptive category, as an all-encompassing label for contemporary sociospatial transformations or, in some cases, as a ‘chaotic concept’ (Sayer, 1992) lacking a clearly specified empirical referent.<sup>8</sup> However, just as rescaling processes do not encompass every aspect of sociospatial restructuring, state rescaling is not synonymous with state spatial restructuring as such. Instead it represents one among several key dimensions of contemporary state space, others being territorialization, place-making and networking/reticulation (Brenner, 2009; Jessop et al., 2008). Given the contentious nature of recent debates on the concept of scale (see, for instance, Collinge, 2005; Jonas, 2006; Marston et al., 2005; Sayre, 2005), it would be

unrealistic to expect all analysts of state spatial restructuring to agree on a single, shared definition of state rescaling. Nonetheless, unless scholars explicitly specify their own particular understandings of what this process entails, both theoretically and empirically, the distinction between scalar transformations of state space and other dimensions of state spatial restructuring will be dissolved. Consequently, research on rescaling will remain vulnerable to deconstructive, ontologizing critiques as well as to the considerably more mundane problem of methodological imprecision.

For my part, I continue to believe that studies of state rescaling represent an important means to explore the wide-ranging questions on state space—theoretical, methodological, historical, conjunctural and normative-political—that were presented at the outset of this essay. The issue of rescaling does not exhaust the *problematique* of state space, but it arguably represents a key dimension of the latter, especially under contemporary conditions, in which inherited scales of regulatory activity are being profoundly rewoven across much of the world economy. Moreover, as Jonas (2006) explains, the reworking of scalar divisions of regulation is often mediated through networked, territorialized or place-based structures, processes, mechanisms and relationships. For this reason, the investigation of state rescaling—whether as *explanans* or as *explanandum*—need not commit a researcher to mapping the entire spatial context of such processes exclusively in scalar terms. On the contrary, the lexicon of geographical scale is most powerful when it is reflexively combined with other conceptual rubrics that are attuned to the polymorphic character of sociospatial relations under modern capitalism, including those associated with state space (Brenner, 2009; Jessop et al., 2008).

Therefore, despite recent calls to replace scalar concepts with those of the site, the assemblage and the network, it seems likely that research on processes of state rescaling, alongside other rescaling processes, will continue to gain intellectual momentum. The first round of the debate on state rescaling was closely intertwined with discussions of state reterritorialization, rebordering and, to a lesser ex-

tent, the politics of place-making. It is to be hoped that the next wave of research on state spatial restructuring will entail more systematic explorations of how rescaled, reterritorialized state institutions interact with relational, networked or rhizomatic forms of governance, and vice versa (see Pike and Tomaney, this issue; Buchs, this issue; as well as Bulkeley, 2005).

### Three research frontiers

Aside from these theoretical and definitional considerations, I believe that the next round of research on state rescaling could benefit substantially from greater methodological reflexivity at every level of the dialectical spiral, from the abstract to the concrete and back up again. In the terms outlined above, this would entail, firstly, developing new techniques for linking the abstract concepts and general arguments of first-wave rescaling research to more concrete, contextually specific forms of inquiry. Careful exploration of such conceptual mediations could, secondly, provide a basis for critically interrogating some of the first-wave literature's theoretical foundations—for instance, its core categories, its organizing macrohistorical narratives, its conjunctural generalizations and its political diagnoses. These are broad, wide-ranging tasks, and there are many potentially fruitful ways to confront them, each of which involves distinctive combinations of abstraction-concreteness, techniques of mediation and understandings of methodological reflexivity. For present purposes, I would like to draw attention to three specific issues whose systematic exploration would, I believe, help accomplish the two aforementioned goals and, by consequence, further advance research on state rescaling.

(1) *Logics of explanation.* In most analyses, state rescaling is viewed in structural terms, as the expression or outcome of large-scale political-economic tendencies—for instance, the crisis of North Atlantic Fordism, accelerated geoeconomic integration, intensified interspatial competition and so forth. In more agent-centred accounts, state rescaling is understood in strategic terms, as a political response to the dislocations, challenges and contradictions induced

through those macrostructural tendencies. Occasionally, state rescaling is also viewed as an *explanans*, that is, as a trend or condition engendering specific political-economic consequences—for instance, intensified uneven spatial development, accelerated regulatory failure, new forms of citizenship, new patterns of political conflict and so forth. For the most part, however, these methodological logics are unreflexively presupposed rather than being explicitly elaborated. Yet, doing so could clarify the goals, stakes and implications of research on state rescaling while enhancing its methodological precision.

What, precisely, is the explanatory agenda of a given study of state rescaling? To strengthen, update or supersede existing theoretical conceptualizations? To demonstrate that rescaling is occurring in an institutional context in which this process had not previously been recognized? To show that state rescaling is assuming a specific form, perhaps one differing from those that have been emphasized in previous studies? Or, perhaps, to show how the process of state rescaling has engendered other outcomes or developments that are of broader social-scientific or political significance? The lexicon of state rescaling remains a powerful interpretive device for characterizing key dimensions of historical and contemporary state spatial restructuring. However, now that this analytical vocabulary has been consolidated, the observation that state institutions are being rescaled is relatively familiar and unsurprising. Consequently, as Lobao, Martin and Rodríguez-Pose (this issue) likewise argue, this is an opportune moment for researchers to elaborate more creative, adventurous methodological procedures designed to illuminate exactly how, when, where and why processes of state rescaling unfold, how such processes evolve over time, and how they impact various realms of political-economic life.

This is not simply a call for more concrete research, but for concrete research *of a particular kind*. Its goal would not be simply to illustrate a theoretical proposition or to describe the concrete, contextually specific form in which a postulated macrospatial tendency has been articulated. Its remit, rather, would be to excavate more systematically some of the diverse sources, forms,

contradictions and consequences of state rescaling and, on that basis, to revisit and, if necessary, to update, revise or supersede first-wave understandings of the latter. There are countless analytical strategies through which such an agenda might be pursued but, to be effective, they would surely need to be premised upon a high level of reflexivity regarding the framing research question, the appropriate choice of methods and the theoretical, analytical and political stakes of the analysis.

(2) *Comparisons*. Cox (this issue) offers some insightful reflections on how US patterns of state rescaling differ from those that obtain within western Europe, and he also usefully emphasizes the differences among rescaling processes within several European states. To date, however, there is little systematic work comparing pathways of state rescaling, whether with reference to particular state territories, institutional forms, policy arenas or regulatory problems (exceptions include Giersig, 2008; Grant and Nijman, 2004; Mahon, 2005; Ren and Weinstein, 2008). The comparative investigation of rescaling processes is particularly challenging because, even as determinate pathways of scalar reorganization are being forged, the units of analysis being compared are themselves likely to be in flux. Therefore, comparative studies of state rescaling will require the elaboration of process-oriented research strategies in which trajectories rather than units are analytically juxtaposed. But, given the absence of a fixed unit of analysis, it is equally imperative that such investigations specify as precisely as possible the sense in which the processes of state restructuring being subjected to comparative analysis represent *rescaling* processes as opposed to some other modality of political-spatial reorganization.

No matter how their empirical and definitional parameters are ultimately demarcated, comparative approaches to state rescaling could prove quite fruitful: they have the potential to illuminate the varied forms, patterns and sequences in which rescaling processes unfold, as well as their differential interconnections with other axes of sociospatial restructuring. Such variation-finding comparisons can also facilitate the elaboration of meso-level generalizations regarding the medium- and long-term

trajectories of rescaling processes in relation to worldwide patterns of capitalist restructuring and uneven spatial development. Given the proliferation of research on state rescaling processes in so many regulatory arenas throughout the world economy, it is to be hoped that new, multiscale axes of comparison will be explored across and within diverse global regions.<sup>9</sup>

(3) *Periodizations*. Much research on state rescaling has inserted various kinds of scalar narrative into established periodizations of capitalist development—for instance, those derived from regulation theory, neo-Marxist state theory or world system theory (for a useful overview, see Albritton et al., 2001). Theorists such as Jessop (2002), Lipietz (1994), Peck and Tickell (1994), Smith (2004) and Swyngedouw (1997) have gone further, integrating scalar considerations systematically into their conceptualization of how the various phases of capitalist development are to be understood and differentiated from one another. In such analyses, rescaling processes are not simply a descriptive detail within a temporally defined moment of capitalist growth. Rather, the phases are themselves understood to be *scaled* insofar as their constitutive political-economic units are associated with historically specific configurations of scalar organization and interscalar articulation, as well as with scale-specific crisis tendencies (see also Brenner, 1998). It is this set of assumptions that underpins these authors' shared understanding of Fordist–Keynesian capitalism as being organized predominantly around nationalized political-economic units ('scalar fixes'), and their associated interpretation of post-1970s capitalism using terms such as scale-relativization, glocalization, the global–local disorder and scale-bending.

My analysis in *New State Spaces* built extensively on these scaled periodizations of contemporary capitalism, but attempted to explore yet a further possibility—namely, that processes of state rescaling might *themselves* be periodized. The question, in other words, was not only how an understanding of state rescaling could contribute to a spatialized periodization of capitalist development but also, more specifically, whether the archi-

tectures of state scalar organization evolved in more or less regularized historical patterns punctuated by ruptures, breaks and crises. While my account of state spatial projects and state spatial strategies in the sphere of urban policy emphasized their manifold, often contradictory, links to cycles of capital accumulation and their expressions in unevenly developed economic landscapes, it also uncovered a distinctive periodicity *within* western European forms of state scalar organization. I suggested that the successive patterns of state scalar selectivity associated with spatial Keynesianism, endogenous growth policies, urban locational policies and rescaled locational policies were permeated by deep crisis tendencies and that the rupture and transformation of such patterns occurred when such tendencies became unmanageable.

However, while I emphasized the fundamentally discontinuous nature of post-1980s forms of state rescaling, I also underscored their path-dependencies, that is, their continuities with inherited institutional geographies. The rescaling of state space never entails the creation of a 'blank slate' on which totally new scalar arrangements could be established, but occurs through a conflictual 'layering' process in which emergent rescaling strategies collide with, and only partially rework inherited landscapes of state scalar organization (see also Brenner and Theodore, 2002). Thus conceived, any attempt to delineate coherent, temporally distinct 'phases' of state rescaling poses fundamental methodological and empirical dilemmas. For, as Jessop and Sum (2006: 324, 327) explain, all forms of periodization entail demonstrating how 'relative continuity alternates with relative discontinuity', and concomitantly, how 'path-dependent "conservation–dissolution" moments can occur'.

In my view, periodization represents one of the most challenging and exciting frontiers for current research on state rescaling: it requires a careful synthesis of theoretical argumentation, meso-level interpretation and concrete research, as well as sustained attention to the methodological logics and comparative horizons discussed above. Yet, aside from the broad, macrohistorical generalizations presented in the theoretical literature on state

rescaling, as described above, and occasional, case study-based reflections, this task has yet to be confronted systematically. For instance, my own proposed periodization of rescaled urban governance strategies in western Europe surely requires further concrete specification, and possibly modification, to decipher the discontinuities *and* path dependencies associated with national institutional trajectories and policy repertoires (as appropriately suggested, for instance, by Pelkonen, 2005, 2008; and in the contributions to this journal issue by Cox and Scarpa, respectively). Furthermore, in my analysis, the ‘transition rules’ governing western European rescaling processes were not adequately explored on a concrete level and thus deserve further empirical attention. Interestingly, however, much of the concrete research that has already been completed by scholars of state rescaling contains potentially useful inroads into these sorts of questions. Specifically, concrete research on state rescaling suggests at least two main methodological strategies through which more systematic reflection on the periodization of such processes might be pursued.

An initial approach to this task involves inquiry into the scale differentiation and subsequent rescaling of specific state policies (for instance, housing, employment, innovation or monetary policies). Here, the notion of rescaling refers, essentially, to a *policy trajectory*. To the degree that the scalar referent for a given state policy evolves over time, a periodization becomes possible. A significant strand of the literature on state rescaling is focused on such policy trajectories or, in some cases, clusters of policy trajectories. Hackworth’s (2003) study of the rescaling of US housing policy during the post-1970s period, Mahon’s (2005) study of national/local interactions in childcare policy in post-1980s Toronto and Stockholm, and Swyngedouw’s (1996) analysis of the rescaling of global monetary policies since 1945 provide excellent illustrations of such an approach. The challenge of periodization here involves examining one or several policy trajectories during a specified time period in order to determine whether a broader pattern of rescaling is unfolding.

A second approach to the periodization of state rescaling involves examining the evolving scale ar-

ticulation of a particular institutional–territorial space—be it a supranational regulatory agency, a national state, a region, a city or a cross-border zone. Here, the notion of rescaling refers to a process of *institutional reorganization*. To the degree that the scalar configuration of the institution or territory under investigation is qualitatively modified—whether through the recalibration of existing organizational scales or through the construction of entirely new ones—the challenge of periodization arises. This type of research is likewise quite pervasive within the literature on state rescaling, particularly among urban and regional researchers. For instance, a recent theme issue of *European Planning Studies* (2006, 14, 7) contains studies of territorial governance restructuring in the Flanders region of Belgium, the Dutch Randstad, the German *Länder*, the French *Communautés d’Agglomération* and various post-devolution British regions (for an overview, see Gualini, 2006). In each case, the authors trace the rescaling of state spaces within the region under study with reference to the contested evolution of formal governmental institutions as well as emergent strategies of political–economic intervention. In this form of research, the challenge of periodization involves determining the degree to which the dominant scales of institutional organization within a given territory have been qualitatively reshuffled, and relating these rescalings to medium- to long-term shifts in economic conditions, state spatial strategies, political–territorial alliances and the balance of social forces.

These two approaches to the periodization of state rescaling are certainly not mutually exclusive. Indeed, if they are combined within a well-focused, theoretically grounded research agenda, they may powerfully complement one another to generate both concrete and meso-level insights into the trajectories of state rescaling in different global regions and national state spaces. Such research is, I believe, increasingly essential as a means to evaluate, revise, fine-tune and/or update the relatively abstract, schematic periodizations that were productively elaborated in the first round of rescaling research by authors such as Swyngedouw, Jessop and Smith.

Was the national scale indeed the primary basis of political–economic organization during the Fordist–Keynesian period? Is a relativization of scales indeed occurring under post-Keynesian capitalism? Is the triadic scale of the EU, East Asia and North America indeed emerging as a potentially dominant regulatory site under early 21st century capitalism? Is interspatial competition among cities and regions indeed intensifying under post-Keynesian capitalism, and are rescaled state institutions exacerbating that competition? Does state rescaling assume divergent forms in different global regions, among the ‘varieties of capitalism’, and in the global South? Do processes of state rescaling facilitate or undermine economic development? Do they alleviate or exacerbate territorial inequality? Do they minimize or intensify the likelihood of regulatory failure? What social forces and political–territorial alliances underpin processes of state rescaling? Can social forces and political–territorial alliances block, bend or redirect the trajectory of state rescaling? Are there progressive, spatially redistributive alternatives to neoliberalized, competition-based forms of state rescaling? At this stage of research, insights into these and many other intriguing macrointerpretive questions increasingly hinge on developing more concrete-complex periodizations of the policies, institutions and realignments associated with contextually specific patterns of state rescaling.

It is through the further elaboration of such periodizations, I believe, that nationally and regionally specific patterns of state rescaling can be illuminated, hopefully leading to the construction of new, meso-level narratives regarding their medium-to long-term trajectories, temporal rhythms, crisis tendencies and political–economic implications. At this meso level of analysis, questions of periodization intersect quite closely with the comparative research agenda outlined above. For, as indicated, comparative approaches to rescaling processes necessarily involve the investigation of trajectories and pathways of change, not fixed, bounded spatial units. For this reason, they cannot be separated from the tasks and challenges of periodization. The spiral movement of research on state rescaling thus continues.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> These rescaling processes can be distinguished analytically, but in any historical–geographical context, they are mutually imbricated.

<sup>2</sup> In the US context, for instance, debates on state rescaling so far appear to have had little influence within mainstream political sociology and urban sociology; their main impact on US political science has been within the field of urban politics. Interestingly, historian Maier (2000) has appropriated the discourse of rescaling to analyse the consolidation and decentering of territory during the global history of the 20th century, and Sassen (2006) has likewise recently mobilized this terminology to analyse even longer term shifts in worldwide configurations of territory, authority and rights. There are, of course, several other important social science literatures that grapple with the problematic of state rescaling without, however, conceptualizing it as such—for instance, studies of global governance, European integration, multilevel governance, intergovernmental relations, decentralization, metropolitan governance reform, local government reorganization and policy networks. For present purposes, I understand the ‘literature’ on state rescaling primarily with reference to contributions that explicitly, reflexively use the terminology of ‘rescaling’.

<sup>3</sup> The analysis focused primarily on the UK, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy and parts of Scandinavia.

<sup>4</sup> The DATAR (*Délégation à l’Aménagement du Territoire et à l’Action Régionale*) had been created in 1963; it played a key role in developing and implementing various housing, infrastructural and regional development policies throughout the high Fordist period (Brenner, 2004: 148). The DIACT (*Délégation interministérielle à l’aménagement et à la compétitivité des territoires*) has several administrative functions, including the promotion of territorial cohesion, but one of its key projects is to establish ‘competitiveness poles’ across France.

<sup>5</sup> See Samuel (2008) as well as the theme issue of *Revue ESPRIT* (10/2008, 60–194), ‘Les chantiers du Grand Paris’.

<sup>6</sup> As Bayirbag (2007) notes, the role of such territorial alliances and spatial imaginaries in the rescaling of state space remains poorly understood and deserves much more extensive theoretical and empirical attention. The writings of Kevin Cox, Jamie Gough, Martin Jones, Michael Keating, Gordon MacLeod and Bae-Gyoon Park provide extremely useful inroads into this task, but much work remains to be done to understand the social and ideological bases of state rescaling.

<sup>7</sup> A theme issue of *Environment and Planning A* (1991, 23, 2) devoted to the localities debate may well mark a key transition point between these distinct literatures. While most contributions to the special issue were oriented towards the analytical deficits and missing links within the localities debates, several authors used the occasion to articulate some of the core methodological agendas that would subsequently animate debates on rescaling processes (see, in particular, Cox and Mair, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> My participation in several recent international scholarly conferences in geography (AAGs, Boston, April 2008) and urban studies (RC21/ISA, Tokyo, December 2008), where the concept of rescaling was often used synonymously with equally ill-defined notions such as restructuring, neoliberalization and globalization, reinforced my concern regarding these tendencies within the published literature.

<sup>9</sup> I believe that international collaboration will be crucial to confronting this task. The forthcoming volume edited by Hill et al. (2009) on state rescaling and neoliberalization in East Asian developmental states represents an excellent example of how such research might be pursued.

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the editors of this theme issue, Linda Lobao, Ron Martin and Andrés Rodríguez-Pose for their encouragement, support and patience as I worked to complete this paper and for a number of helpful comments on the final version. Additional thanks are due to Xuefei Ren for her critical reactions and suggestions. Much of the thinking developed in this article took place during my tenure as Wibaut Chair of Urban Studies in the Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development, University of Amsterdam, Summer 2008.

Thanks are due, in particular, to Robert Kloosterman for his generosity and intellectual engagement during my visit and also to Ewald Engelen, Pieter Terhorst and Justus Uitermark for many stimulating discussions of methodological questions.

### References

- Albritton, R., Itoh, M. and Westra, R., et al. (eds). (2001) *Phases of Capitalist Development: Booms, Crises, Globalizations*. New York: Palgrave.
- Bayirbag, M. (2007) *Local Entrepreneurialism, State Rescaling and Scalar Strategies of Representation: The Case of the City of Gaziantep, Turkey*. Unpublished PhD thesis. School of Public Policy and Administration, Carleton University.
- Boudreau, J.-A., Hamel, P., Jouve, B. and Keil, R. (2007) New state spaces in Canada: metropolitanization in Montreal and Toronto compared. *Urban Geography*, **28**: 30–53.
- Brenner, N. (1998) Between fixity and motion: accumulation, territorial organization and the historical geography of spatial scales. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, **16**: 459–481.
- Brenner, N. (2001) The limits to scale? Methodological reflections on scalar structuration. *Progress in Human Geography*, **15**: 525–548.
- Brenner, N. (2004) *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brenner, N. (2009) A thousand leaves: notes on the geographies of uneven spatial development. In R. Keil and R. Mahon (eds). *The New Political Economy of Scale*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press (in press).
- Brenner, N., Jessop, B. and Jones, M., et al. (eds). (2003) *State/Space: A Reader*. Boston, MA: Blackwell.
- Brenner, N. and Theodore, N. (2002) Cities and the geographies of ‘actually existing neoliberalism’. In N. Brenner and N. Theodore (eds). *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in Western Europe and North America*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 2–32.
- Bulkeley, H. (2005) Reconfiguring environmental governance: towards a politics of scales and networks. *Political Geography*, **24**: 875–902.
- Bunnell, T. and Coe, N. (2005) Re-fragmenting the ‘political’: globalization, governmentality and Malaysia’s multimedia super corridor. *Political Geography*, **24**: 831–849.
- Cerny, P. (2006) Restructuring the state in a globalizing world: capital accumulation, tangled hierarchies and the search for a new spatio-temporal fix. *Review of International Political Economy*, **13**: 679–695.

- Collinge, C. (2005) The *différance* between society and space: nested scales and the returns of spatial fetishism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, **23**: 189–206.
- Cox, K. and Mair, A. (1991) From localised social structures to localities as agents. *Environment and Planning A*, **23**: 197–214.
- Dickens, P., Duncan, S. and Goodwin, M., et al. (eds). (1985) *Housing, States and Localities*. New York: Methuen.
- Drahokoupil, J. (2007) The state of the capitalist state in east-central Europe: towards the Porterian post-national regime. In B. Sergi, W. Bagatelas, and J. Kubicová (eds). *Industries and Markets in East and Central Europe*, pp. 175–198. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Duncan, S. and Goodwin, M. (1989) *The Local State and Uneven Development*. London: Polity.
- Ercan, F. and Oguz, S. (2006) Rescaling as a class relationship and process: the case of public procurement law in Turkey. *Political Geography*, **25**: 641–656.
- Fleetwood S. (ed). (1999) *Critical Realism in Economics: Development and Debate*. London: Routledge.
- Giersig, N. (2008) *Multilevel Urban Governance and the European City: Discussing Metropolitan Reforms in Stockholm and Helsinki*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.
- Gough, J. (2004) Changing scale as changing class relations. *Political Geography*, **23**: 185–211.
- Grant, R. and Nijman, J. (2004) The rescaling of uneven development in Ghana and India. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, **95**: 467–481.
- Gualini, E. (2006) The rescaling of governance in Europe: new spatial and institutional rationales. *European Planning Studies*, **14**: 881–904.
- Habermas, J. (2001) *The Postnational Constellation*. Trans. by Max Pensky. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Hackworth, J. (2003) Public housing and the rescaling of regulation in the USA. *Environment and Planning A*, **35**: 531–549.
- Harloe M., Pickvance C., and Urry J. (eds). *Place, Policy and Politics: Do Localities Matter?*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Harvey, D. (1982) *The Limits to Capital*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hill, RC., Park, B-G., Saito A. (eds). *Locating Neoliberalism in East Asia: Neoliberalizing Spaces in Developmental States*. Oxford: Blackwell, (in press).
- Jessop, B. (1990) *State Theory*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Jessop, B. (1993) Towards a Schumpeterian workfare state? Preliminary remarks on post-Fordist political economy. *Studies in Political Economy*, **40**: 7–40.
- Jessop, B. (2002) *The Future of the Capitalist State*. London: Polity.
- Jessop, B., Brenner, N. and Jones, M. (2008) Theorizing sociospatial relations. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, **26**: 389–401.
- Jessop, B. and Sum, N.-L. (2006) *Beyond the Regulation Approach*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham.
- Jonas, A. E. G. (2006) Pro scale: further reflections on the ‘scale debate’ in human geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **31**: 399–406.
- Jones, M. and MacLeod, G. (2004) Regional spaces, spaces of regionalism: territory, insurgent politics and the English question. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **29**: 433–452.
- Keil, R. and Mahon, R. (eds). *The New Political Economy of Scale*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Lawson, T. (1997) *Economics and Reality*. London: Routledge.
- Lawson, S. (2007) The post justice city? Spatial targeting, social disadvantage and rescaling urban governance in Australia. *Governance*, **1**: 1–18. Available online at: [http://www.griffith.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/81253/city-governance-08-lawson.pdf](http://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/81253/city-governance-08-lawson.pdf) [Accessed 1 January 2009].
- Lefebvre, H. (1991 [1974]) *The Production of Space*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Lefebvre, H. (2009) *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*. In N. Brenner and S. Elden (eds). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Leitner, H., Peck, J. and Sheppard, E. (eds). *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers*. New York: Guilford.
- Lipietz, A. (1994) The national and the regional: their autonomy vis-à-vis the capitalist world crisis. In R. Palan and B. Gills (eds). *Transcending the State-Global Divide*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 23–44.
- MacLeod, G. and Goodwin, M. (1999) Space, scale and state strategy: rethinking urban and regional governance. *Progress in Human Geography*, **23**: 503–527.
- Mahon, R. (2005) Rescaling social reproduction: childcare in Toronto/Canada and Stockholm/Sweden. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **29**: 341–357.
- Maier, C. (2000) Consigning the twentieth century to history: alternative narratives for the modern era. *American Historical Review*, **105**: 807–831.
- Mansfield, B. (2005) Beyond rescaling: reintegrating the ‘national’ as a dimension of scalar relations. *Progress in Human Geography*, **29**: 458–473.
- Markusen A. (ed). *Reining in the Competition for Capital*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.
- Marston, S., Jones, J. P. and Woodward, K. (2005) Human geography without scale. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **30**: 416–432.
- McGuirk, P. M. (2004) State, strategy and scale in the competitive city: a neo-Gramscian analysis of the

- governance of 'global Sydney'. *Environment and Planning A*, **36**: 1019–1043.
- Mills, L. (2006) Maternal health policy and the politics of scale in Mexico. *Social Politics*, **13**: 487–521.
- Offe, C. (1984) 'Crisis of crisis management': elements of a political crisis theory. In *Contradictions of the Welfare State*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 35–64.
- Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). (2005) *Building Competitive Regions: Strategies and Governance*. Paris: OECD.
- Park, B.-G. (2003) Territorialized party politics and the politics of local economic development: state-led industrialization and political regionalism in South Korea. *Political Geography*, **22**: 811–839.
- Park, B.-G. (2008) Uneven development, inter-scalar tensions, and the politics of decentralization in South Korea. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **32**: 40–59.
- Peck, J. (2001) *Workfare States*. New York: Guilford.
- Peck, J. (2002) Political economies of scale: fast policy, interscalar relations and neoliberal workfare. *Economic Geography*, **78**: 332–360.
- Peck, J. and Tickell, A. (1994) Searching for a new institutional fix. In A. Amin (ed). *Post-Fordism: A Reader*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, pp. 280–315.
- Pelkonen, A. (2005) State restructuring, urban competitiveness policies and technopole building in Finland: a critical view on the global state thesis. *European Planning Studies*, **13**: 685–706.
- Pelkonen, A. (2008) *The Finnish Competition State and Entrepreneurial Policies in the Helsinki Region. Research Reports No. 254*, Department of Sociology, University of Helsinki.
- Poulantzas, N. (1978) *State, Power, Socialism*. London: New Left Books.
- Ren, X. and Weinstein, L. (2008) 'Metropolitanizing' the state: scalar transformations and mega-project development in Shanghai and Mumbai. Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Association of American Geographers, Boston, April.
- Rouhani, F. (2003) 'Islamic yuppies'? State rescaling, citizenship, and public opinion formation in Tehran, Iran. *Urban Geography*, **24**: 169–182.
- Samson, M. (2008) Rescaling the state, restructuring social relations: local government transformation and waste management privatization in post-apartheid Johannesburg. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, **10**: 19–39.
- Samuel, H. (2008) *Nicolas Sarkozy Plans for 'Grand Paris'*. Available online at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/2080999/Nicolas-Sarkozy-plans-for-'Grand-Paris'.html> [Accessed 1 January 2009].
- Sassen, S. (2006) *Territory, Authority, Rights*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sayer, A. (1992) *Method in Social Science*. New York: Routledge.
- Sayer, A. (2000) *Realism and Social Science*. London: Sage.
- Sayre, N. (2005) Ecological and geographical scale: parallels and potential for integration. *Progress in Human Geography*, **29**: 276–290.
- Smart, A. and Lin, G. (2007) Local capitalism, local citizenship and translocality: rescaling from below in the Peal River Delta. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **31**: 280–302.
- Smith, N. (1992) Geography, difference and the politics of scale. In J. Doherty, E. Graham, and M. Malek (eds). *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences*. New York: St Martin's Press, pp. 57–79.
- Smith, N. (1997) The satanic geographies of globalization: uneven development in the 1990s. *Public Culture*, **10**: 169–192.
- Smith, N. (2004) Scale bending and the fate of the national. In E. Sheppard and R. McMaster (eds). *Scale and Geographic Inquiry*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, pp. 192–212.
- Swyngedouw, E. (1992) 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: Belhaven Press, pp. 39–68.
- Swyngedouw, E. (1996) Producing futures: global finance as a geographical project. In P.W. Daniels and W.F. Lever (eds). *The Global Economy in Transition*. Essex: Longman, pp. 135–163.
- Swyngedouw, E. (1997) Neither global nor local: 'glocalization' and the politics of scale. In K. Cox (ed). *Spaces of Globalization*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 137–166.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2000) Authoritarian governance, power and the politics of rescaling. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, **18**: 63–76.
- Turok, I. (2009) The distinctive city: pitfalls in the pursuit of differential advantage. *Environment and Planning A*, **41**: 13–40.
- Uitermark, J. (2002) Re-scaling, 'scale-fragmentation' and the regulation of antagonistic relationships. *Progress in Human Geography*, **26**: 743–765.
- Zhang, C. (2008) *Tourism, state (re)scaling and the spatiality of urban-regional development: the case of Guilin*, Paper presented at the RC21 Conference, Committee on Urban and Regional Development, International Sociological Association, Tokyo, December.

Received on January 3, 2009; accepted on January 7, 2009