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A Thousand Leaves: Notes on the Geographies of Uneven Spatial Development

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The experience of geographical difference – that is, the recognition that spaces across the world differ from one another – lies at the heart of capitalist modernity. While geographical difference is hardly unique to the modern age, it can be argued that the ability of populations to travel long distances, and thus to encounter otherness, has intensified qualitatively during the capitalist epoch. It continues to be enhanced in the early twenty-first century, as worldwide flows of capital, trade, and migration acquire ever greater densities and speeds.

Some commentators have claimed that, in our current moment of “globalization,” geographical differences are being annihilated as new information technologies, transnational corporate strategies, free-market politics, and cultural imperialism homogenize the landscapes of everyday life around the world. Most critical geographers reject such claims, arguing that late modern capitalism has been premised upon an intensification of differences among places and territories, even as the mobility of capital, commodities, and populations is enhanced (Cox 1997; Lee and Wills 1997; Smith 1997). Struggles for a sense of place, for territorial rootedness, and for a unique geographical niche remain as intense as ever in a world of sometimes disturbing volatility (Massey 1994). Precisely as interconnections among dispersed spaces around the globe are thickened, geographical differences are becoming more rather than less profound, at once in everyday life and in the operation of social, political, and economic power. In short, spatial unevenness remains endemic to the contemporary global capitalist (dis)order (Smith 1997).

During the past three decades, critical geographical scholarship has confronted the problem of geographical difference in a systematic, theoretically reflexive way. The concept of *uneven spatial development* lies at the heart of such analyses. This concept is derived from Marx’s (1976) foundational

account of capital circulation in *Capital*, where the notion of uneven development was used to describe the existence of differential growth rates among various sectors (or “departments”) of the capitalist economy. The concept was reinvented in the early twentieth century by socialist intellectuals such as Lenin, Luxemburg, Bukharin, Trotsky, and (decades later) Mandel, who were concerned to understand the global expansion of the capitalist mode of production through imperialism and colonialism (Smith 1984). The concept of uneven *spatial* development was introduced by radical geographers in the late 1970s and early 1980s, thanks to the pathbreaking contributions of writers such as Harvey (1982), Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), Massey (1985), Smith (1984), and Soja (1985). Through their work on uneven spatial development (USD), these scholars and others in their intellectual milieu developed new ways of conceptualizing the production of geographical difference under modern capitalism. The theoretical foundations forged during this period have also proven useful for scholars concerned to analyze various aspects of geographical differentiation that cannot be fully derived from the logic of capital accumulation (Brenner 2004; Harvey 2003, 2006b; Taylor 1993).

Building upon this expansive, increasingly sophisticated literature, this chapter considers a specific question: how are the *geographies* of USD to be conceptualized? In his classic book on the topic, Neil Smith (1984) suggested that USD is deeply imbricated in the production of geographical scale. Indeed, it was his attempt to decipher the “see-saw movement” of USD that appears to have led him, in a brilliant intellectual manoeuvre, to theorize about geographical scale on its own terms rather than subsuming it under other geographical concepts such as territory and place. The very differentiation of global, national, regional, and urban scales, Smith argued, must be understood at once as a medium and a product of the process of USD under capitalism.

Smith’s justifiably influential conceptualization inspired a generation of critical geographical scholarship not only on USD but also, more generally, on the production of scale and its associated politics. Against the background of recent debates on the new political economy of scale (see Mahon and Keil, this volume), this chapter revisits the intellectual terrain of Smith’s initial theorization of USD. While I build closely upon the foundations constructed by Smith, I also argue for a broader, polymorphic conceptualization. Drawing upon a metaphor introduced by Lefebvre (1991, 87), I suggest that the geographies of USD resemble “a thousand leaves”: that is, a multilayered fusion of several distinct *dimensions* of sociospatiality (for a closely related conceptualization, see also Jessop, this volume). While Smith’s insight that

USD is scale-differentiated remains foundational, any adequate, historically nuanced conceptualization of this phenomenon must also consider its place-based, territorial, and networked dimensions. Paradoxically, it is precisely the progress of debates on the new political economy of scale during the past two decades, which have provided a differentiated conceptual vocabulary for the analysis of scalar structuration, that now enables us to reconsider processes of USD in their full geographical complexity.

Following a general overview of the theory of USD, I develop this theorization through a stylized analysis of its four most essential geographical dimensions during the geohistory of modern capitalism – namely, place, territory, scale, and networks. My argument underscores what I have elsewhere termed “the limits to scale” (Brenner 2001a). While I would agree with the contention of other contributors to this volume that processes of rescaling are central to the political economy of late modern capitalism (Brenner 2004), this chapter is intended to caution against the tendency to overextend scalar concepts.

Foundations

Reflexive theorizing on USD began in the 1970s and has subsequently flourished in the writings of critical geographical political economists. While this literature is now quite multifaceted, it contains at least four core theoretical propositions regarding the nature of USD under modern capitalist conditions, which can be briefly summarized as follows.

First, under capitalism, the existence of geographical difference is not simply an expression of the discrete qualities of particular places, of inherited differences among territories, or of the fact that sociospatiality is intrinsically heterogeneous. As the capitalist division of labour is deepened and extended, spaces throughout the world are simultaneously connected and distinguished in a see-saw movement of equalization and differentiation (Smith 1984). Rather than extinguishing the distinctiveness of places and territories, this dialectic of simultaneous interconnection/differentiation reworks inherited geographical differences, which can now only be understood in relational terms. From this point onward, geographical difference no longer represents the spatialization of particularity. It instead demarcates the distinctive positionality of any given space within an evolving, worldwide grid of interdependencies. In the most general terms, then, USD represents the aggregate, macrogeographical expression of such positionalities within each configuration of global capitalist development (Sheppard 2002).

Second, each historical framework of USD entails the differentiation of cores and peripheries, spaces of centrality and marginality, zones of inclusion and exclusion (Lefebvre 1991; Smith 1984; Soja 1985). Accordingly, in this conceptualization, spatial positionality refers not only to absolute geographical location but also to the relational situatedness of particular spaces within broader, asymmetrically organized frameworks of power (Sheppard 2002). The notion of USD is therefore intended to capture the deeply polarized distribution of socioeconomic assets, forms of geopolitical influence, ideological hegemony, and conditions of everyday life not only among different populations but also among spaces positioned differentially within the global capitalist system.

Third, patterns of USD are mediated through large-scale institutional forms (e.g., the modern state) and diverse social forces (e.g., capitalist firms, business organizations, trade unions, property owners, and place- or territory-based social movements). This means that the analysis of geographical difference necessarily entails an inquiry into the "politics of space" (Lefebvre 1976) through which historically specific structures of sociospatial polarization are produced. Capitalist accumulation strategies play a central role in the structuration of USD, but so do political institutions, territorially based alliances, social movements, and households (Cox 2002).

Fourth, during the historical evolution of capitalism, certain deep structures of USD have been entrenched. They include the core/periphery division on which the international division of labour has long been grounded (Amin 1979; Wallerstein 1974) and the city/countryside opposition (Williams 1973). Despite this, however, USD is always articulated in historically and contextually specific forms. Global inequality and the urban/rural divide remain persistent, durable features of capitalism, but their precise geographical contours have been reshaped during the past three centuries. Moreover, even as certain dimensions of USD under capitalism have proven relatively durable, others have been qualitatively modified during the process of historical development. Examples of the latter include the configuration of urban and regional settlement patterns, the geographies of industrial development, networks of infrastructural investment, and the concentration of political-economic hegemony (Harvey 1985; Soja 1985). Patterns of USD can thus be said to crystallize at the interface between inherited sociospatial configurations and emergent spatial strategies intended to transform the latter (Brenner 2004; Massey 1985).

A Thousand Leaves

Up to this point, my discussion has deployed the term “space” as a generic category for describing all aspects of geographical difference. I have thus referred to “spaces,” “spatial differentiation,” and, most generally, “uneven spatial development” without delineating the specific forms in which they are articulated. At this stage, it is essential to examine more closely the fabric of social space and, specifically, the contours of USD. To this end, Lefebvre’s (1991) emphasis on the *polymorphic* character of social space within capitalist modernity provides a useful methodological starting point. From this point of view, the geographies of any social process – such as urbanization, state power, capital accumulation, or uneven development – cannot be understood with reference to a singular principle or all-encompassing pattern. Instead, several intertwined yet analytically distinct dimensions of sociospatiality may be distinguished (Brenner et al. 2006a, 2006b; Sheppard 2002).

For example, the principle of *place*, which entails geographical proximity, the embedding of social relations within particular locations and patterns of areal (horizontal) differentiation (Massey 1994; Paasi 2004), represents an important dimension of each of the aforementioned social processes, but it cannot capture all aspects of their geographies or serve as a generic metaphor for sociospatiality as such. To proceed otherwise entails the methodological error of *place-centrism*: that is, the treatment of social space as if it were composed completely and uniformly of places.

Similarly, the principle of *territoriality*, which entails the enclosure, bordering, and parcelization of social relations (Sack 1986; Taylor 1993), is powerfully implicated in diverse aspects of macrogeographical development. However, it would be a serious mistake to reduce all aspects of social space to this form. Indeed, even the geographies of the modern state, which has been routinely defined as a territorial power-container (see, e.g., Giddens 1984; Mann 1988), cannot be understood in exclusively territorial terms (Agnew 1994; Brenner et al. 2003). This fallacy, which has been quite pervasive within mainstream political studies, may be characterized as *methodological territorialism* (Agnew 1994; Brenner 2004).

The principle of *scaling*, which entails the vertical differentiation of social relations among, for instance, global, supranational, national, regional, urban, and/or local levels (Smith 1995; Swyngedouw 1997b), likewise represents an essential, but not comprehensive, element of modern sociospatial

organization. To reduce sociospatiality as a whole to its scalar dimension leads to the methodological dead-end of *scale-centrism*.

Finally, the principle of *networking*, which entails the establishment of transversal interconnections across geographically dispersed locations or organizational units, is an increasingly significant dimension of contemporary sociospatiality (Castells 1996; Sum 1997; Whatmore and Thorne 1997). However, the fallacy of *network-centrism* must likewise be avoided insofar as the proliferation of long-distance, transversal linkages (e.g., through the deployment of new information technologies) does not necessarily erode the importance of place, territoriality, and scale as co-constitutive dimensions of social space (Bulkeley 2005; Leitner 2004).

Thus, in contrast to reductionist, isomorphic, and monodimensional approaches, it is methodologically imperative to view every sociospatial process as a complex crystallization of multiple, intertwined geographical dimensions and consequently to subject each of the latter to sustained analysis. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre (1991) develops this point through his thesis of the “superimposition and interpenetration of social spaces” (88). In one particularly vivid formulation, he likens the superimposed dimensions of social space to the intricate, asymmetrical layerings within a *mille-feuille* pastry – a powdery French dessert that means, literally, “a thousand leaves” (88). While Lefebvre’s somewhat fanciful culinary metaphor may distract us momentarily from the intricacies of sociospatial theory, it has direct implications for the discussion at hand. Like the *mille-feuille*, formations of USD are composed of complex articulations among multiple patterns, contours, lines,

FIGURE 1.1
Mille-feuille cake
SOURCE: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Mille-feuille_01.jpg.



Henri Lefebvre on the polymorphic character of sociospatiality

(excerpts from Lefebvre 1991, 85-88)

“HOW MANY MAPS ... might be needed to deal exhaustively with a given space, to code and decode all its meanings and contents? It is doubtful whether a finite number can ever be given in answer to this sort of question.”

“WE ARE CONFRONTED not by one social space but by many – indeed, by an unlimited multiplicity or uncountable set of social spaces which we refer to generically as “social space.” No space disappears in the course of growth and development: the *worldwide does not abolish the local* ... Thus social space, and especially urban space, emerged in all its diversity – and with a structure far more reminiscent of a flaky *mille-feuille* pastry than of the homogeneous and isotropic space of classical (Euclidian/Cartesian) mathematics.”

“THE PLACES OF social space are very different from those of natural space in that they are not simply juxtaposed: they may be intercalated, combined, superimposed ... Consequently the local ... does not disappear, for it is never absorbed by the regional, national, or even worldwide level. The national and regional levels take in innumerable “places”; national space embraces the regions; and world space does not merely subsume national spaces, but even (for the time being at least) precipitates the formation of new national spaces through a remarkable process of fission.”

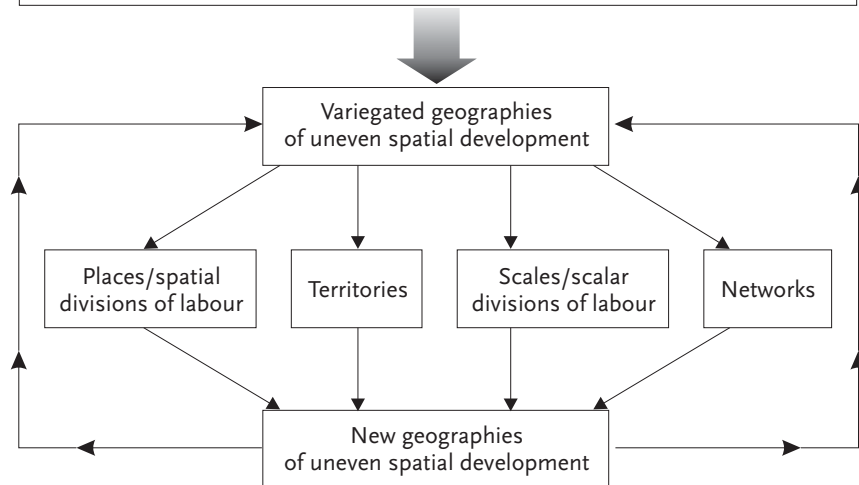
“THE PRINCIPLE OF the interpenetration and superimposition of social spaces has one very helpful result, for it means that each fragment of space subjected to analysis masks not just one social relationship but a host of them that analysis can potentially disclose.”

folds, points, clusters, and edges. Drawing upon the distinction between place, territory, scale, and networks introduced above, the remainder of this chapter elaborates this contention through a series of macrogeographical generalizations regarding the evolutionary patterning of USD during the *longue durée* history of capitalism. A schematic summary of this discussion is provided in Figure 1.2, which links major accounts of the *sources* of USD under capitalism

FIGURE 1.2

Geographies of uneven spatial development under capitalism**Underlying tendencies and tensions within the geographies of capitalism**

- Tension between space-annihilating tendencies of capital (promoting spatial dispersal) and its endemic space-dependency (promoting spatial concentration)
- Tension between capital's drive towards equalization (promoting spatial redistribution) and its drive towards differentiation (promoting spatial inequality)
- Endemic tendency towards the “creative destruction” of sociospatial configurations
- Recurrent quest for a “spatial fix” or “structured coherence” to secure the provisional stabilization of sociospatial configurations
- Chronically unstable, temporary character of spatial fixes: geographies of capitalism remain fundamentally inconstant, discontinuous, and uneven



(Harvey 1982; Smith 1984) to the analysis of its polymorphic *geographies* that is elaborated below.

Places and Uneven Spatial Development

Capitalism emerged within a differentiated geographical landscape inherited from previous modes of production. Nonetheless, even in its incipient stages,

capitalist expansion entailed profound transformations of places, above all through the establishment of new spatial divisions of labour in which dispersed geographical locations were assigned specific functional roles within the expanding capitalist world market. Initially, under merchant capitalism (1600-1750), these spatial divisions of labour were articulated with circuits of precapitalist trade and the geographies of inherited resource endowments – for example, the locations of waterways, raw materials, mineral supplies, and so forth. However, with the progressive industrialization of capital since the mid-eighteenth century, and the increasing integration of the production process into circuits of accumulation, specifically capitalist spatial divisions of labour emerged that have been based predominantly upon socially constructed economic assets (“agglomeration economies”). Under these circumstances, beginning in the core zones of Western Europe and eventually extending throughout the world economy, urbanization processes dramatically accelerated as capital and labour were concentrated within large-scale, specialized production complexes and long-distance trade networks were at once expanded and thickened. On a macrogeographical level, these trends also entailed the consolidation of a worldwide grid of places differentiated according to their particular functions, specializations, and positions within the spaces of global accumulation (Läpple 1978; Storper and Walker 1989). This differentiated landscape of place-making processes has articulated patterns of USD in at least five key ways.

First, new spatial divisions emerged within the expanding centres of capitalist production through residential segregation, the functional division of urban space, and the consolidation of new urban infrastructures for production and social reproduction. As capitalist urbanization has intensified and accelerated during the past two centuries, these intraplace divisions have continued to evolve, albeit always in contextually specific forms (Gordon 1978).

Second, the urban/rural divide was exacerbated as rapid industrialization fuelled large-scale urbanization and an increasing peripheralization or “underdevelopment” of rural spaces (Williams 1973). The division between two distinct *types* of places – capital-rich, industrializing urban centres and capital-poor, predominantly agrarian peripheries – thus became an essential axis of capitalist USD (Myrdal 1957). Even as settlement patterns have been differentiated among an ever broader range of types, this basic division has persisted, albeit in a continually evolving form, throughout the past two centuries (McMichael 2006).

Third, as capitalist industrialization accelerated in the global core zones, places across the global periphery were transformed into sites for the primary extraction, processing, and export of raw materials, generally through a process of “accumulation by dispossession” in which surpluses were violently or coercively appropriated (Harvey 2003). In this manner, spatial divisions of labour articulated a worldwide pattern of USD in which core, capital-rich zones of large-scale industrialization (the “global North”) were differentiated from peripheral, capital-poor areas of relative underdevelopment (the “global South”) (Amin 1979; Wallerstein 1974).

Fourth, as industrial restructuring and technological change have accelerated since the nineteenth century, new forms of interplace differentiation have rippled across the global system. The spatial divisions of labour produced through the first wave of capitalist industrialization have been subjected to rounds of “creative destruction” in conjunction with each period of crisis-induced restructuring – hence the increasingly chronic instability of places and interplace relations under capitalism since the nineteenth century. Such restructuring processes have, in fact, seriously unsettled the concrete patterns associated with each of the three previously mentioned forms of place-based USD (intraurban, urban/rural, and global core/periphery). The creative destruction of spatial divisions of labour has not, however, eroded the basic significance of place as an axis for the articulation of geographical difference.

Fifth, and finally, places may become basing points and arenas for social mobilizations that destabilize or otherwise modify broader patterns of USD (Harvey 1989c). This is because, even as capital strives to transform places, place-based attachments persist in the form of everyday routines, regimes of social reproduction, institutionalized political compromises, and socio-cultural identities. Such place-based commitments are often articulated quite sharply when broader processes of capitalist restructuring destabilize patterns of interplace relations. Consequently, capital’s impulsion to rework spatial divisions of labour in search of new opportunities for profit making may encounter intense resistance from those whose everyday lives, livelihoods, and identities are tightly enmeshed within particular places. The resultant forms of place-based “revulsion and revolt” may assume reactionary or progressive forms (Harvey 1989c), but whatever their political valence, the cumulative impact of such mobilizations is to insert an element of friction into capital’s process of creative destruction. Places, in other words, cannot be creatively destroyed according to the whim of capital; rather, their evolution is an object and stake of intensive sociopolitical contestation and negotiation

(Hudson 2001). The concrete shape of place-based USD is therefore powerfully mediated through social struggles regarding the form, pace, rhythm, and trajectory of capital's process of creative destruction.

Territories and Uneven Spatial Development

The capitalist space-economy emerged in medieval Europe within a fragmented, decentralized mosaic of political-economic spaces. This mosaic encompassed small city-state enclaves, interurban networks, bishoprics, duchies, principalities, and a patchwork of absolutist state structures lacking fixed territorial boundaries (Spruyt 1994). However, following the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, the principle of territoriality became an increasingly foundational basis for organizing political life. Despite continued institutional and geographical diversity among them, states were now understood to occupy mutually exclusive, non-overlapping, contiguous, and sovereign territorial spaces and were reflexively monitored as such (Giddens 1984; Ruggie 1993). Borders were now seen clearly to separate the "inside" from the "outside" of states, and the domestic/foreign divide came to serve as a basic reference point for political-economic activity (Agnew and Corbridge 1994; Walker 1993). With the consolidation of mercantile capitalism, this grid of state territories was entrenched as both statesmen and capitalists attempted to expand international trade, to consolidate national markets, and thereby to increase national wealth (Braudel 1984). The territorialization of worldwide social space continued during the first wave of capitalist industrialization through (a) the intensified regulation of interstate boundaries; (b) the increasing internal parcelization of state space among intergovernmental administrative hierarchies; (c) the development of enhanced infrastructural capacities through which states could attempt to extend their authority over all "points" within their jurisdictional borders; and (d) the imperialist conquest and territorial division of peripheralized zones of the world economy under the yoke of colonial rule (Lefebvre 1978; Maier 2000).

These territorializations were maintained during subsequent rounds of capitalist industrialization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even through phases of profound geoeconomic and geopolitical instability. This is not to suggest that territoriality has remained static within the Westphalian system; its specific roles have evolved significantly. The power and wealth containers of early modern territorial states were superseded by new forms of state developmentalism, nationalism, and welfarism that were likewise grounded upon distinctively territorial structures and strategies (Taylor 1994).

Concomitantly, the concrete geographies of interstate borders and intrastate jurisdictional divisions have periodically been modified, whether through warfare, internal rebellions, legal decisions, or social protest. And, as interstate relations have evolved in relation to the broader dynamic of worldwide capitalist development, new, large-scale territorial institutions (e.g., the European Union, NAFTA, ASEAN, and Mercosur) have been introduced that encompass multiple (national) state structures. Nonetheless, even in the midst of these macrohistorical realignments, the underlying principle of territoriality has been reproduced (Sack 1986). Most crucially, for my purposes, the differentiated landscapes of state territorial organization have articulated, mediated, and modified forms of USD in at least five central ways.

First, as the Westphalian interstate system has been globalized, territory has come to serve as a taken-for-granted category for the understanding of sociospatial organization more generally (Agnew 1994; Häkli 2001). As a result, patterns of USD have been widely conceptualized in territorial terms, whether in institutionalized forms of data collection (e.g., in national censuses, OECD statistical tables, or World Bank development reports), in political discourse (e.g., in debates on spatial inequalities within territorially demarcated areas such as Europe, Britain, the South East of England, or London), or in everyday life (e.g., in popular representations of "Africa" or "the ghetto"). In each case, a unit of analysis is defined with reference to the jurisdictional boundaries of states, territorially demarcated substate areas, or groups of territorial states. It is then treated as a relatively coherent, integrated whole and contrasted to other, formally equivalent units with reference to a particular socioeconomic indicator (e.g., population, unemployment, GDP, or crime rates) or a perceived characteristic (e.g., wealth or poverty, order or disorder). Thus, even though territory represents only one among several constitutive dimensions of USD, it has generally been treated as the most fundamental sociospatial form in terms of which geographical inequalities are to be understood and acted upon.

Second, within the modern interstate system, state territorial structures demonstrate considerable rigidity and, therefore, frequently act as a drag upon the capitalist impulsion to relocate investment activity (Harvey 1985, 2003). In other words, the territorial borders delineated and controlled by states have been much less malleable than the spatial imprints of capital circulation that interpenetrate them. Consequently, such borders impose determinate locational constraints upon the capitalist drive to creatively destroy established sociospatial configurations. Even when the concrete geographies of capital

have been rearranged, the modern interstate system has provided a relatively fixed, stable, and immobile grid of institutionalized sociospatial divisions – a world of parcelized, bordered spaces – for the process of capital circulation. To be sure, state territorial borders and internal jurisdictional arrangements have been modified during the course of capitalist development, in some cases quite significantly (e.g., after major military conflicts, civil wars, or revolutions). Once institutionalized, however, the concrete spatial parcels demarcated by state boundaries are relatively difficult to modify, even as their political-economic functions continue to evolve (Cox 1990; Taylor 1994). As discussed previously, patterns of USD are intimately intertwined with the endemic tension between capital's dependence upon fixed sociospatial arrangements and its equally chronic tendency to creatively destroy those very arrangements in pursuit of fresh possibilities for accumulation. The consolidation of state territoriality as a deep structure of sociospatial organization within modern capitalism directly impacts this contradictory dynamic: it imposes a certain element of fixity, embodied in the worldwide grid of state territories, upon an otherwise restlessly changing geographical landscape (Harvey 1985).

Third, actually existing state territorial borders and internal jurisdictional boundaries have direct, durable implications for the concrete forms in which place-based inequalities and spatial divisions of labour are articulated. This is because different types of state territorial structures and regulatory arrangements organize widely divergent conditions for capital circulation. For instance, the relative costs and availability of labour power, equipment, land, and raw materials, the nature of transportation and communication infrastructures, and the level of taxation and tariffs may diverge significantly among state territories as well as among intrastate (regional or local) political jurisdictions. Such inter- and intraterritorial differences are likely to have profound ramifications for the locational geographies of capital and, by implication, larger-scale spatial divisions of labour. Capitalists in search of cost-competitive locations are most likely to invest in territories (whether neighbourhoods, cities, regions, countries, or superregions) that provide the lowest costs of production and exchange. By contrast, capitalists whose accumulation strategies hinge upon more specialized forms of labour power, interfirm relations, infrastructural conditions, institutional relays, and technological resources are more likely to sink their investments into territories that provide such non-substitutable, territorially embedded socioeconomic assets (Storper and Walker 1989). In this sense, the geographies of (state) territories

do not only interpenetrate place-based patterns of USD but also directly shape them. Consequently, as Cox (2002, 253) notes, there is frequently “some congruence between patterns of geographically uneven development ... and the territorial structure of the state.”

Fourth, in significant measure due to their territorially centralized institutional structures, state institutions have the capacity to mobilize political strategies to influence patterns of USD both within and beyond their borders (Brenner 2004). States may pursue this goal through diverse policy instruments, including industrial policies, economic development initiatives, infrastructure investments, spatial planning programs, labour market policies, regional policies, urban policies, housing policies, international trade agreements, and imperialist interventions, all of which have direct or indirect ramifications for intra- and suprastate geographies of production, reproduction, and circulation. During the twentieth century, national-developmental state institutions came to promote the entire state territory as an integrated framework for economic growth. Relatively non-industrialized rural and peripheral regions were targeted in redistributive policies that aimed to spread urban industrial growth more evenly throughout the national territory. Most recently, across much of the world economy, major urban and regional economies have become strategically important targets for a range of spatially selective policies intended to enhance national competitive advantages in the context of accelerated geoeconomic integration. Throughout these periods, diverse forms of state-led imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism profoundly influenced patterns of USD beyond the state’s jurisdictional borders, whether through the expropriation of raw materials, the construction of markets, or, most recently, the imposition of regulatory conditions favourable to foreign direct investment (Harvey 2003). While the concrete effects of such interventions have varied considerably, and have often been considerably at odds with their declared purpose, these examples illustrate the multifarious ways in which state institutions have attempted to influence patterns of USD both within and beyond their territorial jurisdictions.

Fifth, the territorial structures of the state provide various overlapping institutional arenas in and through which social movements may attempt to modify inherited forms of USD. Insofar as places represent the most immediate geographical terrain on which the disruptive consequences of capitalist creative destruction are experienced, social movements frequently assume a place-based form. Crucially, however, the “nested hierarchical structures” of the state (Harvey 1982, 430) may likewise become important platforms for

social forces concerned to confront the dislocations of creative destruction. Insofar as place-based mobilizations attempt to harness the institutional capacities of the state in pursuit of their agendas, they necessarily assume at least a partially territorial form. Under these circumstances, state institutions (whether national, regional, or local) may be mobilized against capital's strategies of place transformation or at least as a means to reshape the latter to accommodate popular or sectional demands. But meanwhile, capitalists may adopt territorial strategies of their own, harnessing state institutions in order to preserve, modify, or transform the spatial divisions of labour upon which their current or projected accumulation strategies depend. In this manner, the territorial structures of the state become a terrain of political contestation in which diverse social forces struggle to influence the geographies of capital accumulation (Cox 1990). The processes of territorial alliance formation that ricochet throughout all levels of the state apparatus may thus have profound implications for the contextually specific forms in which USD is articulated.

Scales and Uneven Spatial Development

The preceding discussion of places, territories, and geographies of USD has presupposed a third, equally foundational dimension of sociospatial differentiation – geographical scale. In addition to the “horizontal” or areal differentiation of social practices across places and territories (or geographical scope), there is also an equally fundamental “vertical” differentiation in which social relations are hierarchically articulated among, for instance, global, supranational, national, regional, metropolitan, and/or local scales (Collinge 1999; Swyngedouw 1997b). Insofar as any social, political, or economic process or institutional form is internally differentiated into a vertical hierarchy of relatively discrete spatial units, the problem of its scalar organization arises. Thus understood, like other macrogeographical processes under capitalism, USD is profoundly scale-differentiated. Indeed, all of the aspects of USD discussed above under the rubric of place and territory are articulated in profoundly scale-differentiated forms.

The establishment of distinctively capitalist spatial divisions of labour and the territorialization of political power during the course of capitalist industrialization entailed not only the transformation of places, the consolidation of new intra- and interplace divisions, the territorial extension of capitalism beyond its European heartlands, and the territorial segmentation of sociospatial inequality throughout the capitalist space-economy. These

developments were also closely intertwined with qualitatively new forms of scalar differentiation, including, most centrally, three aspects.

First, the *urban* and *regional* scales were institutionalized as key spatial niches for agglomerations of capital and labour, as embodied in major metropolitan centres (Harvey 1982). This urban and regional scaling of USD was constitutively intertwined with the production of the intra- and interplace inequalities described above but cannot be reduced to the latter. It involved not only the polarization of urban spatial organization and the differentiation of cities and city-regions from other types of settlement spaces but also their strategic positioning within a broader hierarchy of sociospatial forms stretching from the local scale to the global scale.

Second, the *global* scale was consolidated as the ultimate geographical horizon for capitalist expansion, as embodied in the world market (Wallerstein 1974). This globalization of capital circulation necessarily entailed a territorial extension of the capitalist system into hitherto unincorporated zones and the crystallization of new forms of core/periphery polarization. It also helped to consolidate the global scale as an encompassing geographical niche within the emergent capitalist interscalar hierarchy.

Third, the *national* scale was consolidated as an institutionalized terrain of mediation within the process of intercapitalist competition, as embodied in the political-institutional hierarchies of the territorial state (Smith 1995). This nationalized scaling of political-economic space has already been examined above, through the analytical lens of (national) territoriality. It contributed to, and was in turn reinforced by, the various forms of interplace differentiation and territorial inequality that were surveyed previously.

In close conjunction with the latter trends, processes of USD have been articulated onto several additional geographical scales as well, including (a) the *neighbourhood* scale, embodied in intraurban zones of association and political jurisdiction, and (b) the *supranational* scale, embodied in institutionally demarcated spaces of capital circulation and political regulation that encompass multiple national states (e.g., the European Union, NAFTA, ASEAN). Each of the latter scalings of USD has been intertwined with place-based and territorial inequalities, yet their scalar dimension cannot be reduced to either of the latter. Insofar as each of the aforementioned scales provided an additional niche within the broader interscalar hierarchies of modern capitalism, it contributed to the further differentiation of processes of USD.

Because scales are defined relationally, the institutional and spatial coherence of those listed above can be grasped only with reference to their

distinctive roles and positions within interscalar hierarchies. Concomitantly, because the functions, institutional expressions, and interconnections among these scales have evolved historically, their differentiation should not be treated as an absolute functional requirement for the reproduction of capital. Nonetheless, because the differentiation among the neighbourhood, urban, regional, national, supranational, and global scales has been reproduced even as historically specific spatial divisions of labour and territorial arrangements have been creatively destroyed, they must be viewed as deep structures within capitalism's restlessly changing geographical landscape. In this sense, the process of USD under capitalism at once presupposes and reinforces a historically specific formation of scale differentiation (Smith 1984), which has been intimately intertwined with place-based and territorial articulations of sociospatial difference.

However, just as place-based and territorial patterns of USD have been reworked during the geohistory of capitalism, so too have its scalar geographies. Beyond the initial wave of scale differentiation discussed above, in which specifically capitalist instantiations of the urban-regional, national, and global scales were produced, the scalar configuration of USD has assumed historically specific forms *within* the capitalist system and, concomitantly, has been periodically junked and rewoven. These successive waves of "rescaling" (Brenner 1998a; Swyngedouw 1997b) represent an essential medium and expression of USD under capitalism.

Mercantile and early industrial capitalism involved a generalized condition of "scale relativization" (Collinge 1999) in which no single scale prevailed as the dominant level of political-economic organization. Patterns of USD were articulated at multiple spatial scales, from the urban and the national to the imperial and the global. Within the newly consolidating geographies of early modern capitalism, spatial scales provided a relatively malleable scaffolding in and through which USD could be differentiated among diverse types of places, territories, and zones of exchange.

This situation of scale relativization was rearticulated during the period of territorial state consolidation that began in the eighteenth century and continued through successive waves of capitalist industrialization well into the twentieth century. From this broad period until the termination of national-developmental capitalism (early 1970s), the national scale gradually became predominant at once as a crystallization point for USD and as an institutional locus for political strategies to manage the latter. As Taylor (1994) notes, the effort to impose a spatial congruence between economic

processes and political life within each state's territory also entailed a growing nationalization of key aspects of socio-institutional existence (see also Cerny 1995). To be sure, patterns of USD were articulated at other spatial scales, from the global to the local, but the increasing territorialization of political-economic life during this epoch was inextricably linked to a generalized nationalization of sociospatial inequality (Maier 2000). Consequently, inequality among cities and regions, or in the international arena, was increasingly understood and acted upon as if it could be neatly aggregated upward or collapsed downward into the national scale of political-economic organization. Despite significant geoeconomic crises, military conflagrations, and waves of industrial restructuring that periodically unsettled sociospatial arrangements, this nationalized scalar configuration lasted until the crisis of national-developmental capitalism in the late twentieth century.

The most recent round of worldwide capitalist restructuring of the post-1970s period has decentred the nationalized "scalar fix" (Smith 1995) and engendered a renewed situation of scale relativization. The expansion of the role of transnational corporations and global finance capital since the early 1970s, coupled with the consolidation of a new international division of labour, the emergence of post-Fordist forms of industrial agglomeration, the intensification of international diasporic flows, and the growing importance of new information technologies in mediating worldwide economic transactions, are among the most blatant indicators of this systemic sociospatial realignment (Agnew and Corbridge 1994). Some scholars have characterized these trends with reference to the purported ascendancy of a single spatial scale – as, for instance, in accounts of the "new globalism," "triadization," "Europeanization," the "new regionalism," the "new localism," or the "local-global nexus" (for an overview, see Lee and Wills 1997). By contrast, the argument proposed here is that the scalar architecture of capitalism as a whole – and, specifically, of USD – is being contested and reworked in unpredictable, often uncontrollable, ways (Brenner 2004; Jessop 2000; Swyngedouw 1997b). This line of interpretation builds upon the observation that previously nodal, subordinate, or marginal spatial scales are acquiring a renewed significance in contemporary political-economic processes. The key claim, however, is not that the national scale is being superseded or that any other scale has now acquired a dominance akin to that of the national during previous phases of capitalist geohistorical development. Rather, the significance of the national is now ever more tightly linked to other supra- and

subnational scales of political-economic organization than was previously the case. Concomitantly, patterns of USD are no longer configured around a single, predominant scale of political-economic organization.

In sum, this discussion suggests five key ways in which scaling processes may influence, and in turn be shaped by, processes of USD. First, the *differentiation of scales* under capitalism generates a hierarchical, but often tangled, scaffolding of sociospatial forms in and through which processes of USD may be organized and reproduced.

Second, scalar configurations are themselves internally differentiated insofar as they contain specific divisions of labour among their constitutive tiers (*scalar divisions of labour*). Whether they appear within political or economic organizational forms, such scalar divisions of labour are one of the key scalar expressions of sociospatial inequality (Collinge 1999).

Third, *scalar fixes* may emerge insofar as interscalar relations are provisionally stabilized around a relatively established scalar division of labour. They thus represent a mechanism through which scale-articulated and scale-dependent forms of USD may be further entrenched (Smith 1995).

Fourth, insofar as scalar fixes are destabilized and interscalar relations are unsettled, *rescaling processes* ensue in which new scales of political-economic organization and new interscalar hierarchies are produced (Swyngedouw 1997b). Rescaling processes may thus undermine established patterns of USD while also producing qualitatively new forms of sociospatial inequality and sociospatial differentiation.

Fifth, insofar as interscalar arrangements are contested, a *politics of scale* emerges in which diverse social forces actively struggle to reorganize the functions, organizational embodiments, and/or interconnections among spatial scales (Smith 1995). Indeed, like place and territory, scale can likewise serve as a basing point for social movements concerned with challenging established patterns of USD. Thus, the specific configuration of scale-based patterns of USD must be viewed as both object and stake of sociopolitical contestation.

Networks and Uneven Spatial Development

These considerations bring us to one final dimension of USD that has attracted considerable attention in recent years – namely, the role of networks and networking as the basis for an alternative, topological mode of sociospatial organization based upon “points of connection and lines of flow, as

opposed to ... fixed surfaces and boundaries" (Whatmore and Thorne 1997, 289). According to Leitner (2004, 248), networks "span space" by establishing horizontal, capillary-like interlinkages among geographically dispersed nodal points. Consequently, "the spatial surface spanned by networks is ... fluid and unstable" insofar as (a) the degree of connectivity among network nodes may fluctuate; (b) patterns of network membership may fluctuate; and (c) multiple networks may overlap, interpenetrate, and crosscut one another (Leitner 2004, 248-49).

Network geographies have long figured centrally in the geohistory of capitalism, and they have been tightly enmeshed with the uneven geographies of places, territories, and scales in nearly all of their concrete forms. Indeed, interfirm networks, diasporic networks, intercity networks, infrastructural networks, interstate networks, and network-based social movements have thoroughly interpenetrated the place-based, territorial, and scalar geographies of mercantile, industrial, and globalizing capitalism that were surveyed above. Three brief examples illustrate the influence of networks upon patterns of USD.

First, the process of capital accumulation has long hinged upon networked relationships among firms. Although firms within the same sector aggressively compete for profit shares, others engage in cooperative relations through forms of subcontracting, information sharing, and diverse "untraded interdependencies" (Storper 1996). While the precise nature of such interconnections has evolved historically, they have powerfully intensified patterns of urban-regional agglomeration and, by implication, broader grids of place-based USD during the history of capitalist development (Scott 1988).

Second, the consolidation of the modern interstate system has likewise entailed various types of networked relationships within and among national state apparatuses. Through international organizations, international treaties, international agreements, and other types of informal regulatory and judicial agreements, networks have played an important mediating role in governing the global interstate system (Rosenau and Czempiel 1992). Networks have also long figured centrally in intergovernmental relations within each (national) state apparatus, where they have generally served to coordinate activities among diverse agencies, branches, and tiers of government. Insofar as these intergovernmental networks have influenced the geographies of capital investment, state activities, public service provision, and sociopolitical struggle, they have also necessarily impacted broader patterns of place- and territory-based USD.

Third, in addition to their place-based, territorially grounded, and scale-differentiated forms, social movements have deployed networked modes of organization in order to pursue their goals. From the international socialist movement to ACT UP and the global justice movement, the activities of social movements have depended upon networked ties as a basis for both communication and mobilization across places, scales, and territories. Social movement networks are generally embedded within, and intertwined with, places and territories, and they are always articulated in scale-differentiated forms. Yet, their geographies cannot be reduced to any of the latter dimensions of sociospatiality. Insofar as networking strategies impact the ability of social movements to influence ongoing processes of sociospatial change under capitalism, they also influence historically specific formations of USD.

In sum, networks may impact patterns of USD in at least two central ways. First, networks generally crosscut place-based, territorial, and scalar patterns of USD. In so doing, network formations may reinforce, interrupt, or destabilize intraplace divisions, spatial divisions of labour, territorial borders, interterritorial relations, or scalar hierarchies. Concomitantly, networks may also reinforce rather than alleviate extant geographies of sociospatial inequality, whether place-based, territorial, or scalar (Leitner and Sheppard 2002; Sheppard 2002).

Second, and contrary to popular representations of networks as non-hierarchical and democratic, many actually existing networks are internally stratified and externally exclusionary. They contain power hierarchies that marginalize some social forces at the expense of others, both within and beyond the network (Leitner and Sheppard 2002). They may be manifested through the differential abilities of participants to influence network operations; through the establishment of a division of labour within the network that differentially allocates resources, tasks, and burdens among participants; or through the establishment of distinctive rules of closure that limit participation within the network to particular individuals, groups, or organizational entities. While these network-based power relations may be expressed in variegated socio-organizational forms, they express USD insofar as they are articulated in distinctively geographical patterns.

The question of how network geographies are impacting contemporary patterns of USD is a matter of considerable scholarly contention. Many scholars of globalization have suggested that networks are today superseding the geographies of place, territory, and scale upon which the long-term geohistory of capitalism has been grounded. Alongside predictions that territoriality

is being dissolved due to processes of deterritorialization (see, e.g., O'Brien 1990), this position has recently been articulated through several influential interventions, including Castells' (1996) notion of the "space of flows," Amin's (2002) arguments for a "non-scalar and topological" interpretation of globalization, and Marston, Jones, and Woodward's (2005) proposal for a "flat ontology." Of course, these authors' diverse intellectual and political concerns cannot be reduced to the specific theme of USD, but they do commonly imply that inherited formations of sociospatial inequality are now being transcended through a radically new form of sociospatiality, based upon an ontology of networks.

It is not possible to settle here the question of how inherited patterns of USD are being remoulded through emergent networks. Nonetheless, the arguments developed in the preceding pages are intended to underscore the limitations of any approach that privileges a singular dimension of sociospatiality. The observation that networked forms of sociospatial organization are gaining a renewed significance is potentially productive insofar as – much like Smith's (1984) initial reflections on scale over two decades ago – it directs attention to a previously neglected dimension of sociospatiality. However, this useful observation does not logically translate into the claim that places, territories, and scales no longer exist or no longer serve to mediate processes of USD. To proceed otherwise is to engage in the methodological fallacy of network-centrism: it entails a reduction of the *mille-feuille* of modern sociospatiality into a singular, totalized form, that of the network. The preceding analysis suggests that the key issue is not the *replacement* of places, territories, and scales by networked geographies but the co-constitutive *rearticulation* of each dimension of sociospatiality in relation to one another, through ongoing strategies and struggles over the present and future shape of USD.

Coda

By way of conclusion, it may be useful to comment on the concept of a "new political economy of scale" around which this book is organized. On my reading, this concept usefully underscores the increasingly reflexive ways in which scholars are analyzing the production and transformation of scalar arrangements within contemporary capitalism. At the same time, the preceding discussion suggests two specific modifications to this concept.

First, as understood here, scale cannot be the "object" of political-economic analysis, for scales exist only insofar as key political-economic processes are scale-differentiated. From this point of view, it is more appropriate

to speak of *scaled political economies* – that is, of the scaling and rescaling of distinctive political-economic processes – rather than of a political economy of scale per se.

Second, because of the endemically polymorphic character of sociospatiality, a scaled political economy is most powerful when it is reflexively linked to place-, territory-, and network-sensitive approaches to sociospatial theory. In other words, a scaled political economy can in itself depict no more than a silhouette of sociospatiality; it becomes most intellectually powerful when it is reflexively combined with studies of the political economies of place, territory, and networks.