

Interview with Jamie Gough

A- On the (re)assertion of space in social theory, the relation of space and society, and Marxism

Praxis (P): Initially, it may be suitable to start by talking about the (re)assertion of the concept of space in social theory. Since 1960s the concept of space has been increasingly emphasised by various radical work in fields such as sociology, cultural theory, philosophy and economics. This has led to the widespread use of spatial metaphors in social theory, for example, locality, mapping, subject positionality, theoretical/ideological space, (de/re)centring, and so on. These developments put the question of space onto the agenda of any social theory which conceives of space as the dead, fixed and immobile ground on which events (history/time) develop. What were the social and political context lying behind the new academic interest in space?

Jamie Gough (JG): The renewed interest in space within the social sciences has been – as with all such major changes - primarily a reaction to changes in the world rather than *sui generis* intellectual innovation, though this is not to deny any role to the latter. The relation of this change in the social sciences to the wider world can be understood as having two threads. In the first place, in the last thirty years or so spatial-social practices and structures have quite evidently been through major changes, which academics have been confronted with the need to theorise. But during the same period, space has also become more central to *popular consciousness*. Social actors have come increasingly to understand their situation, their problems and their strategies as having spatial dimensions or even as being primarily spatial. Discourses of space have blossomed. Academic social science has, to a large extent, followed and formalised these changes in mass consciousness. Thus in talking of changes in the world impacting on academia I wish to point to the extent of change not just in social practices but also in popular consciousness.

The resurgence of interest in space in social science has coincided with the long period of crisis starting in the late 1960s to early 1970s. The processes which I wish to highlight here can, I think, best be thought of as the impact of this crisis on very long term social-spatial practices characteristic of capitalist industrialism, giving them new form.

The long term practices have a double aspect: on the one hand, increased *inter-connectedness* of the world in economic, cultural and political senses; on the other hand, increased economic, social and (to some extent) cultural *inequality* of territories. These two threads, apparently heterogeneous and even opposites, in reality go hand in hand – as Trotsky suggested long ago with his conception of ‘combined and uneven development’. If one focuses for the moment on the political-economic realm, one finds ever-increasing flows of commodities, money capital, productive capital and (with more barriers) labour. These flows *exploit* existing economic differences between territories: capital flows to particularly profitable territorial socializations to reap locational-technical rents, or flows to low cost locations with a disciplined workforce; such favoured territories can expand their production because they can increase their exports; they can draw on money capital from other territories where the investment possibilities are less or where accumulation of savings is high; workers seek to relocate to territories with stronger accumulation. These

processes have been proceeding over the whole history of industrial capitalism. Economic flows have, of course, been facilitated by interventions by the imperialist states, both into other imperialist states and into the (neo-)colonial world. But at the same time, these flows *reproduce* unevenness and inequality between territories, albeit in changing forms. The flows of capital and labour power into metropolitan centres with knowledge-intensive production reinforce their privileged nature; investment in routine, Taylorised production in the periphery reproduces its culture of absolute surplus value extraction; and value flows (profit, interest, unequal exchange) drain poor areas and benefit rich ones.

Such combined and uneven spatial development has been with us for a very long time, yet social science has not always been interested in the spatial. Very roughly, from the 1920s to the 1960s geography had a low profile within social science. The new focus on geography in the last thirty years is a product of the *combination* of these long-term spatial processes with an acute, global political-economic crisis, centered on a crisis of profitability. This crisis has led to an intensification of uneven development, as weaker parts of the world economy suffer not just stagnation but losses and scrapping. It has led to an intensification of flows, as capital leaves weaker sectors and territories and piles into more profitable, more promising or (speculatively) more fashionable lines of investment, and as workers come under greater pressure to migrate. The imperialist states have sought to deepen these processes through neoliberal reforms both within their own countries and in the Third World, while sometimes attempting to protect sections of capital and labour power against too-rapid destruction.

All this has made space, place and scale central to political-economic discourse *and* to everyday consciousness. Neoliberalism has preached the need to dismantle territorial socialisations, regulation and solidarity in the name of ever-widening markets, exploitation of new trading opportunities, and spatially-free flows. 'Globalisation' has been presented as a technically-driven, and thus inevitable, intensification of flows. In weaker territories it has been presented as a way of 'catching up'. Thus the old certainties of territory, whether national, regional or local, have been called into question. Yet, paradoxically, consciousness of territory and attachment to it have often been heightened. Workers, and sometimes capital, within economically-weaker territories have understood their problems to originate 'outside' the territory, and have sought refuge within it. This can take the form of attempts to protect or strengthen existing sectors or build new ones, often proceeding through localistic inter-class coalitions. The preservation of housing and social infrastructures of the territory also comes to the fore for residents (and sometimes sections of capital too). Thus the intensification of competition and economic flows over space leads on the one hand to greater consciousness of geographical extension, distance and foreignness, but on the other hand also to a strengthened concern with the social and economic resources *within* the territory of the social actor. In both modes, socio-economic space appears as increasingly important.

An intensified consciousness of space has arisen also in the cultural realm. This is, in part, connected to political-economic spatial processes. Spatial economic flows do not

just bear but partially *consist* of flows of particular *cultures* of wage work, of market ideologies, of individualisation, and of commodity consumption. Global flows of media and culturally-laden commodities such as the car which originate in the imperialist countries increase, in the first place, because of corporations' marketing drives. But this does not mean a simple global cultural *homogenisation*. A minor reason for this is that 'traditional' and ethnically-distinct cultures are being mobilised for economic ends. Cultural variety of territories endures also because economic development, and hence social life, are so uneven. But the most important reason for the survival, and indeed deepening, of cultural diversity is people's *resistance* to the destruction or debasement of their cultures, in the sense not just of cultural production and products but of ways of life. The political-economic crisis is of course simultaneously a crisis of forms of social reproduction, of gender, of family and household forms, and of neighbourhood ties, so that social-cultural resentment, anguish and struggle are integral parts of popular resistance. These cultural struggles are, then, embedded in real social-spatial processes. They also take on their own spatial ideologies which are partially real, partially fantastic. For example, 'western' cultural norms or products are pictured as *emanating from* the imperialist countries: this is both true, because of the social-economic agents involved, and false, because these cultures have bases in the social relations of the neo-colonial countries. Or again, an appeal to the 'traditional norms of the territory' can be a defence of supportive social relations which are real, or it can be an invention, a reactionary fantasy.

One aspect of intensified spatial consciousness, which I have touched on already but would like to emphasise a little more, is a heightened concern with the linkages between different aspects of society *within a given territory*. Generalised social crisis appears in mass consciousness as, in the first place, *separate* crises in different aspects of society – the economy, formal politics, social life, manners, cultural production, and so on. But the profound interactions (indeed, internal relations) between these aspects in reality eventually impinge on consciousness in certain ways, albeit often mystified. And the interactions *within territories* are often the easiest to perceive. Thus the long crisis has given rise to renewed interest in 'the urban', perceived as the inter-relations and nexus of local economy, social life, welfare services, infrastructures, culture and so on. People perceive that a crisis or problem in one or another of these aspects impacts locally on other aspects, and thus come to believe that the *urban whole* matters. Similar changes in consciousness can happen at the level of the nation, where people start to perceive problems or crisis as rippling from one aspect to another. This, I think, is a further process accentuating consciousness of territory.

I would therefore see the main origins of the 'turn' of social theory towards space as being the *potential* both better to analyse current societal change and to address more adequately people's everyday concerns. People now often understand their problems in terms of 'the power of space'. Correspondingly, the new academic work has gone beyond investigating the spatial patterns arising from essentially non-spatial processes, and has, as you mention, argued that space – or rather, the spatiality of social processes – is *constitutive* of social relations. Space is thus made integral to social theory rather than a contingent product of it.

P: The ways in which space has entered into social theory, ranging from postmodern and poststructuralist conceptualizations to Marxist-inspired ones, are varied and controversial. How do you evaluate such (re)discoveries of space in social theory during the last quarter of the last century? To what extent have such rediscoveries of space provided an articulated language of spatial differences and differentiation, and thus provided an account of space in relation to social reality that goes beyond the subordination of space to time?

JG: There has been much extremely interesting work on space by social theorists in recent decades. However, I have two broad criticisms of this work. The first is that it is misleading to say, as has been said in different ways by geographers such as Soja and Thrift and sociologists such as Giddens, that earlier social theory ignored space. In particular, Soja and others drawing on Foucault have argued that social theory has in the past wrongly identified difference, possibility and revolt with *historical change* and has regarded space as dead, as given. This seems to me to present a highly schematic history of social thought. In the first place, space has been integral to some key social theories at medium-to-high levels of abstraction, including theories of both right and left. For example, consider in the heyday of classical imperialism the biological theories of supposed racial inferiority and the environmental theories of supposed social inferiority of the colonial world. While these theories were not espoused by ‘great’ social theorists, they nevertheless made up a large body of theory and one with crucial political effects – what I would regard as ‘important social theory’. Turning to ‘respectable’ social theory and ‘great theorists’, consider the notion of comparative advantage of territories in classical political economy, continued in varied forms in bourgeois economics to the present day. This is not simply an application of bourgeois economics to space, on a par with applications to particular markets, but a key field of deployment and ‘truthing’ of the theory both in policy and mass ideology. Or again, one finds in classical sociology from Weber and Simmel to Wirth a fascination with ‘the urban’. Again, I see this as more than an *application* of sociological ideas *to* the urban: urbanism, in its apparent attributes of anonymity, possessive individualism, anomy, instrumental rationality and commodity fetishism, was an inspiration for the *central problematic* of classical sociology, namely the market versus social coherence.

Another, somewhat distinct, sense in which space has long appeared in fundamental social theory is that spatial distinctions have been *implicit* in some of the most basic social distinctions. The notion of private property in a capitalist society, central to bourgeois thought from Locke to the present, contains within it implicit ideas of space: the parcellisation of land and real property into distinct, physically-mappable areas is central to bourgeois private property not only because land and buildings have been a key material part of that property but also because this parcellisation allows other types of private property (movable, virtual) to be imagined and legitimated. In particular, the rights of property owners and of civil society vis a vis the state are imagined spatially, an important sense of ‘private and public space’. Another instance of inexplicit use of space is the assumption of a national economy in much bourgeois economic theory, a fetishistic

assumption of territorial boundedness co-extensive with the capitalist state (Dick Bryan's work is particularly helpful in unmasking this).

Another social distinction, that between 'home' and 'work' in industrial capitalist societies, seems to me to be strongly infused with its spatial form. In everyday discourse this distinction is taken-for-granted as a fundamental division of our daily lives, and it is absorbed more or less uncritically by mainstream social theory as the distinction between 'economics' and 'sociology'. The distinction involves not just different social relations (value creation and exploitation versus unpaid caring work and consumption of value) but different *spaces* – the workplace owned by capital versus the home owned or rented by workers' households together with the wider spaces of social reproduction. The distinct nature of these spaces strongly reinforces the tendency in both everyday and academic thought to consider the two sets of social relations as simply heterogeneous and weakly related. And this tendency to think of the spheres as essentially separate is key to their actual reproduction. Workers are to give up their freedom to capital for so many hours a day in capital's place *in exchange for* their 'free time' in 'their own space'. Capital has no *physical* contact with the reproduction sphere, its relation with the latter being purely through paying the wage and selling consumer commodities, thus reinforcing capital's abnegation of responsibility for reproduction. And finally the private space of the home is a powerful reinforcer of individualistic ideologies in the working class. Thus bourgeois social theory, in its fetishistic separation of 'economy' and 'social life', contains implicitly and subconsciously an acknowledgement of the importance of space.

To be sure, the critique of Soja and others of the failure of mainstream social theory to think about explicitly space is apposite in all these cases. The task of radical theory is to expose and make explicit the spatial assumptions contained in these bourgeois notions and their roots in everyday social-spatial experience. In this way we can understand both the social importance of space and the fetishistic misconception of space in bourgeois practices and ideas.

My second broad criticism of the spatial turn is that the meaning and importance of space in society is entirely dependent on the social theory which is being deployed: if the (more-or-less aspatial) theory being used is weak, then the role of space is likely to be wrongly understood. This point is well-exemplified by some of the uses of the spatial turn by postmodern or post-structuralist writers. These writers tend to understand difference between areas (places, territories) as *sui generis* difference, innocent of any processes which construct and span those differences. This follows from their epistemology, a rejection of abstraction (misleadingly termed 'grand narratives'). Thus, for example, post-structuralist authors argue that there are many 'different capitalisms' in different places (true) and *therefore* that it is false to talk of necessary relations and fundamental dynamics of capitalism as such (false). This neglects the way in which places become differentiated through the development of *common* social processes and their contradictions. The empiricist treatment of difference thus leads to theorisations which neglect the real social connections *between* places, their mutual determinations; we have 'uneven' but not 'combined' development. This understanding of area difference can then lead to a particular politics: politics is to be a choosing of different places rather

than consciously-chosen historical change. Thus some authors have followed Foucault's writings on 'heterotopias', places of 'alternative' practices, to suggest that subversion of the social system is (now) to be found principally in *other places* and *other spatial networks*, more or less *contemporary*, rather than through struggle to change social relations in places. If different places are different *sui generis*, and essentially separate from each other, then social difference can be lived by being in a different place. These heterotopias, whether actually-existing or proposed, are not whole countries or continents but, on the contrary, small interstices of society which are seen as at least partially escaping the system's surveillance and normalisation. This amounts either to an assertion of individuals' civil rights in bourgeois society, very timid reform, or anarchism for an elite; in any case, it is a way of renouncing any 'grand' strategy for social transformation. The post-structuralist theorists, like so many utopian radicals in the nineteenth century, do not seriously consider the real connections between places (and those between spatial networks) such as through the law of value, capital flows, material dependencies, or political power, and so are able to forget the severe constraints that 'alternative' places and networks face. Unfortunately, this kind of epistemology and politics of space has become very popular among radical human geographers and many social and cultural theorists in recent years.

The difference that social theory and political stance makes to the understanding of space can be seen in other fields of writing. A politically-important example is the enormous literature accumulated over the last twenty years concerning local and regional agglomerations in particular industries – industrial districts or clusters, learning regions, and so on. This writing shows how space, in this case, proximity, can be significant in shaping industrial efficiency and use of labour power and hence enhancing profitability. This analysis has been taken further by a number of authors such as Michael Porter, Michael Storper and Phil Cooke to argue that the regional agglomeration of industries is the best industrial strategy for both business and government in that it enhances regional competitiveness, thus benefiting both capital and labour in the region. One can see here how this emphasis on territory (indeed, fetishism of it) serves a neo-Keynesian agenda by actively occluding considerations of class conflict.

Another theoretical approach currently fashionable among human geographers is Actor Network Theory. This argues that there exist networks in space comprising humans, animals and objects within which non-humans are as much 'social actors' as are humans and within which human/non-human hybrids emerge. Many types of critique could be made of this approach. The point I wish to make here is that the interest of ANT in concrete material linkages over distance and in place helps to occlude the *social relations* between humans which construct these networks. In particular, relations of *power* are lost in the fascination with material-spatial forms. Indeed, theorists using ANT sometimes redefine 'power' to mean the ability to create or reproduce networks – a circularity which conveniently drains the word 'power' of meaning.

Both neo-Keynesianism and ANT are materialist, albeit in ways which abstract from social relations of power. The spatial turn has also been made by theorists who make cultural readings of space which substantially abstracted from material practice. Thus

much of the – now voluminous - writing on ‘sense of place’ or on ‘reading the city as a text’ makes at best weak connections to people’s material lives. Space then appears as pure consciousness. This is politically problematic, in that local states and capital in the imperialist countries are currently busy ‘creating new spaces’, especially in commercial concentrations and city centres, through the most superficial ‘reimaging’, ‘rebranding’, ‘reimagining’, and so on. These operations are given intellectual credibility by much of the new spatial-cultural theory, and often use the same terminology; place marketing is thus given academic licence to ignore issues of power in urban restructuring.

A somewhat distinct spatial turn in cultural theory is interest in spatial metaphors, to which you referred. I am not convinced that this kind of analysis throws any light on social issues, though they may be interesting for cognitive psychologists. Spatial metaphors are and have been a central feature of all language of which I am aware; this is hardly surprising given the practical importance of space in our daily lives. Like all metaphors these are poetic leaps of imagination which therefore do not have any necessary bearing on real social processes in space. Thus, for instance, the spatial metaphor used in ‘the decentering of the subject’ tells us nothing about the social-spatial processes which may be involved in it.

To summarise the critical points I have made about the spatial turn as it appears in various social theories: none of the theories I have mentioned has an adequate conception of the social relations of power in contemporary society. In consequence, when they seek to incorporate space they end up by fetishising it. One sees this fetishism in the supposed inherent effects of spatial proximity in industries or of spatial-material actor networks, and also in the ‘meanings of landscapes’ abstracted from practice. It is not simply that these theorists have overestimated the importance of space - though the fashionability of space can make this happen. It is rather that the real importance of space cannot be grasped because it is not seen as a moment of (materially-based) social relations; space thus ends up being attributed its own ghostly powers.

P: The argument that space is not a passive reflection or container of social relations but an active component of them has been prominent in the ‘spatial turn’ in social theory. Classical Marxist arguments may be thought to conflict with such an understanding of space to the extent that Marxism privileges time rather than space in the analysis of (capitalist) social relations. One could cite Marx’s concepts of ‘socially necessary labour time’ and ‘the annihilation of space by time’. How should Marxism introduce space into the analysis of capitalist social relations?

JG: It is true that the key foundational concepts in Marxism involve time: the time of different kinds of work; the time-spans of accumulation of capital, such as appears in the theory of the rising organic composition of capital and in theories of crises of overaccumulation; and class struggle as a process with its particular rhythms.

But spatial considerations have been important in the history of Marxist thought. Indeed, Marx’s notion of ‘the annihilation of space by time’ through capitalism’s improvements in communications is actually an acknowledgement of the *importance* of the friction of

distance for capital – which communications have reduced but, of course, by no means annihilated. Within the pre-1914 Second International and the early Comintern, central debates concerned the spatially-uneven development of capitalism at the world scale, theories of imperialism, and the implications of these for the strategy of socialists in the imperialist countries, the semi-colonies and the colonies. This attention to space by Marxists withered with the Stalinisation of the Comintern. ‘Socialism within one country’, communist support for ‘patriotic’ national capitalist development in the neo-colonies, and peaceful coexistence between the two ‘blocks’: all this meant an unproblematic *national* geography of politics. It was not until the generalised radicalisation from the late 1960s that the geographical aspects of Marxism were once again explored.

It might be said that the Marxist debates on spatially-uneven development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were not really about space since they were premised on more fundamental, *aspatial* theories of capital accumulation and class. But in fact these debates on space were crucial to clarifying ‘aspatial’ issues. Thus the debate on imperialism - overaccumulation versus underconsumption theories and so on – clarified the (aspatial) theory of crisis. The debate on differences between imperialist and colonial countries in how class alliances should be developed threw light on class alliances and socialist strategy in general. In that sense the debates around space *were* fundamental to developing Marxist theory. This relates to the point I made earlier about bourgeois social theory, that it is misleading to say that space has not played a significant role in fundamental social theory.

In fact, a central role for space fits naturally into Marxism. Marxism focuses on materially-based social relations. The strictly material aspects of these relations - bodies, their dependence on the ecosystem and the ‘second nature’ of artifacts, work and activity as material-temporal processes, and the impact of these activities on the ecosystem – these are all in space and subject to space. A Marxist understanding of social relations cannot therefore avoid considering how bodies, work, artifacts and ecosystems exist and move in space. And the spatiality of these movements must have profound impacts on the social relationships of which they are the material part.

To emphasise this *material* spatiality is not to overlook the moments of individual consciousness and social ideologies. Social-spatial relations regarded in their material aspects are lived consciously, perceived in particular ways, and imbued with multiple meanings; these ideas of space range from the fully conscious and scientific through the fantastic to the unconscious. Our activity in space is premised on these understandings of it. It is therefore vital in Marxist analyses to always *consider together* these moments of materiality and consciousness in spatial activity and spatial-social relations, without conflating them or losing the tensions between them. The work on space of Henri Lefebvre in the 1960s, which has been an inspiring starting point for all subsequent Marxist work, is important in this connection. Lefebvre distinguishes between different structures of spatial consciousness: ‘perception’ associated with discrete spatial practices; ‘conception’ associated with the overall spatial reproduction of the society (‘representations of space’); and lived experience (confusingly termed ‘representational

space'). The first two he pictures as conscious, systematising knowledge ('savoir'), the third as more intuitive or unconscious ('connaissance'). But it seems to me that most social-spatial relations involve all three of these, and it is their relationship which is crucial. Local boosterist ideology, for example, a form of 'representation of space', is only significant if it has purchase on spatial practice of investors and if it chimes with and affects the daily lived experience of local people. Lefebvre's structuralism - characteristic of French Marxism at the time - creates a problem with adopting his work *as a theoretical framework*. Fortunately, his writing is fascinating because of its subtle dialectics and imaginativeness which break through its structuralist foundations.

Marxists, then, should see social relations as intrinsically spatial. Leaving aside its clumsiness, one could speak of 'social-spatial relations'. This approach avoids the rather mechanical categories often used in the literature: 'first space' denoting the impact of social relations on space, and 'second space' denoting the impact of spatial arrangements on society. Rather than thinking in terms of these *external* influences, one needs to think of space as an *internal* moment of social relations. Consider, for example, the interplay of the social and the spatial in the separation between home and waged work. One can *try* to think of this in first/second space language. The wage relation and the production of consumer commodities make it desirable and possible for workers to live away from their work - 'first space'. The spatial separation of home and work provides the sites for the construction of two quite different sets of social relations, namely caring in the home and exploitation at work - 'second space'. But these arguments are really a futile attempt to separate the dancer from the dance. It is better to think of the separation between home and work as simultaneously social/economic and spatial, these two moments being internally, logically related. This does not mean that one should never use the language of first/second space. Social relations and spatial arrangements respectively sometimes develop with a relative autonomy or in tension with each other, and it is then often useful to trace their mutual external influence.

I should add that I think Marxists need to be careful in formulating the relationship between society and space where 'space' includes, as it ultimately must, the determinate, finite surface and the ecosystem of the planet Earth. Marxists from Lefebvre to Harvey to Neil Smith and Phil O'Keefe have spoken of the 'social construction of space and of nature' - 'nature' here denoting the ecosystem. Now, social practices undoubtedly construct their own proper spaces. But as materialists we have to note that all these socially-created spatialities have to co-exist on the Earth - so many square kilometers of land and sea arranged in a particular pattern on a sphere. This co-existence is, to put it mildly, far from trivial! Similarly, it is true that social practices radically alter the ecosystem. But the ecosystem has its own material logics which exist logically-prior to human's impact; humans only *partly* create this ecosystem (let alone 'nature' in the sense of the fundamental laws of chemistry, physics, and biology which underlie it). The hubristic view that society totally constructs space and nature derived, I think, from the marginalisation in Althusserian Marxism of nature (including human nature). My point is that, even if one leaves aside the *politics* of ecology, from a purely *analytical* point of view one needs to notice the limits of 'the social construction of space and nature' posed by the material facts of the Earth's surface.

*P: David Harvey, perhaps the most significant figure in Marxian understanding of space, in his book *The Limits to Capital* shows us that space (territorial complexes, geographical fixes) is a necessary aspect and thus moment of capital accumulation. His interest in space proceeds partly through developing Marxist ideas about time, particularly in his concept of 'socially necessary turnover time'. How do you evaluate Harvey's contribution?*

*JG: Let me first say that, in considering the history of incorporation of spatial concerns into Marxist economic work, one should not forget the work by Marxist economists in the last 50 years or so on imperialism and the world economic system (for instance Amin, Frank, Emmanuel and Mandel, and in a younger generation Hugo Radice, Robert Brenner and Richard Bryan). It is sometimes not noticed that these authors deal with 'space', since they are not 'geographers' and are not concerned with the abstract theorisation of social space as such. This is where the David Harvey has carried out crucial work. His *The Limits to Capital* sets out to set Marxist value theory within space at a high level of abstraction and in a systematic way. In doing so he explores and sets out themes which were sometimes only implicit in the Marxist literature on imperialism and world capitalism. *The Limits to Capital* is such a important book in a large part because it explores not only how capital reproduces itself in space but also the many types of *contradiction* within capital accumulation and class relations which are played out in and through space. This elaboration and exposing of contradictions makes the work truly anti-capitalist, in the spirit of *Capital*.*

Harvey's work explores the capitalist space economy very richly through a number of threads. He explores ground rent, which both organises capitalist production across space and disrupts it. He maps out the spatialities of different circuits of capital - productive, property, money and commodity capital - and explores how the differences between these spatialities disrupt these interdependent circuits. He considers how these circuits may achieve limited and temporary degrees of coherence within particular territories (regions, nations, and so on). Thus he explores how the relations in territory between particular forms of productive capital, property and land capital, labour power, and its reproduction through housing and other services, and the regulation of all these by the state, can tendentially construct more-or-less durable coherence which promotes accumulation. But he also is concerned with how overaccumulation of capital, focused into particularly territories, can result in devalorisation, transfer of capital over space, and a redrawing of spatial division of labour. It is here that the notion of 'spatial fixes' enters, denoting how capital can use spatial mobility to counter its accumulation problems. I think one needs to be careful in using this term: some authors have treated it in a functionalist way, implying that there are spatial fixes *to* the crisis tendencies of capitalism themselves, whereas Harvey means a dynamic of capital which throws up new problems and reproduces crisis tendencies in new forms.

Harvey's notion of 'socially-necessary turnover time' arises within his discussions of investments in communications infrastructures. He argues that the most important pressure towards such investment is the wish of capital to reduce the cost of delivering

commodities to distant markets, and the wish to reduce capital tied up in commodities by speeding their transport, that is, to reduce its turnover time. I would agree with him that these have been the essential dynamics of investment in goods transport and the electronic delivery of commoditised services. However, the wish of individual capitals to reduce the turnover time of their capital does not imply that there is a *socially-necessary* turnover time for capital. Turnover times of elements of capital are very varied; firms may sometimes choose to increase them, as often happens when capital intensity is increased; and, unlike the case of different rates of profit, there is no social process through which different turnover times are commensurated. Thus for me, the importance of Harvey's work does not lie in this concept.

Harvey goes on to show how infrastructure investments can both strengthen the competitiveness of territorial economies which they serve, but also disrupt them by encouraging a reconfiguration of spatial divisions of labour (something which Keynesian cheer-leaders for infrastructure investment would do well to learn!). Harvey later went on to show, in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, how these ever-changing spatialities in the history of the capitalism are bound up with cultural transformations.

Since its publication in 1982, the central concerns of *The Limits to Capital* have not been strongly taken up in urban and regional research, despite the very rich possibilities which it offers. This is doubtless due to the overall shift to the right amongst academics in this field since the 1980s. For me the most important weakness in Harvey's work on space is his consideration of the relations between capital and labour within and across territories. This plays only a rather minor role in *The Limits to Capital*. The downplaying of class struggle and its variety and complexity was I think one reason that Harvey, for a period in the 1980s, used regulationist notions of post-Fordism from which such complexity is largely expunged. Since the 1990s Harvey has, it is true, considered inter-class relations through his contribution to debates on the necessary spatial scales of workers' and residents' organisation. But he has not considered in any depth the capital-labour relations in production at workplace and locality scales, nor the combined but uneven development of these relations across territories. For these aspects one needs to turn to the work of some radical historians and to work on the spatiality of industrial investment and labour relations carried out in the 1970s and 1980s by Marxists such as Dooren Massey, David Gordon and Andrew Friedman. Some of my own work has attempted to analyse these capital-labour relations and how they are constructed within and between localities.

P: We would like to ask you about methodological issue in conceptualizing the relation of space and society. Harvey, in one of his articles, asks a crucial question: "Geographical space is always the realm of the concrete and the particular. Is it possible to construct a theory of the concrete and the particular in the context of the universal and abstract determinations of Marx's theory of capitalist accumulation?" On the other hand, Andrew Sayer argues that "theorising about space itself largely requires an abstraction from particular configurations". These two different conceptions of space point to significant methodological debates. In this context critical realist methodology has attracted considerable interest within Marxist-inspired geography. It opens up the possibility of

exploring a single object of analysis at different levels of abstraction (or spatial scales) through the concept of 'underlying causalities'. However, John Michael Roberts in his article¹ which will be published in this volume criticises critical realist methodology for ignoring the internal relations between the necessary, the general and the abstract and the contingent, the particular and the concrete, and thus for confining space to the realm of the concrete and the contingent. We know that you are critical of critical realist methodology in Marxist geography. What is your opinion of using critical realist methodology in conceptualising the relation of space and society? What does critical realism provide in underpinning Marxist geography and what are its pitfalls?

JG: Harvey clearly believes that spatial considerations enter at a fairly high level of abstraction – precisely the processes he discusses in *The Limits to Capital*. Sayer, on the basis of his work on critical realism, doubts that theorising “about space itself” abstracted from particular configurations is possible or productive. In my view Harvey is in the right here. Critical realism *has* made important contributions to radical social science. It has defended the notions of abstraction and of necessary relations not only against the dominant approaches in social science, empiricism and postivism, but also against the onslaught of postmodern thought. It has argued, correctly, that the concrete can be, and indeed must be, constructed from abstractions. Many avowed critical realists, including ones interested in space, produce fine work.

But for me critical realism, at least in Sayer’s formulation, suffers from understanding the distinction abstract/ concrete as a duality. I think this is derived from the dichotomous understanding of the necessary and the contingent in mainstream British philosophy in the twentieth century. I agree with John Michael Roberts that this is a central flaw in critical realism. One needs a more dialectical approach in which abstractions, including necessary relations, are *developed towards* the concrete both by combining heterogeneous processes (‘over-determination’) and by developing the varied potentials within the abstractions. The latter needs to acknowledge that abstract structures and processes may be inherently *contradictory*, so that their development towards more concrete forms will find both variety (including spatial variety) and tensions which cause change through time. With such an approach, the question ‘does space enter at the level of the concrete or the abstract?’ appears mis-posed, because of the dichotomy it implies. Rather, space can potentially enter at all levels from the most abstract to the completely concrete and specific.

If one then considers the spatiality of capitalist *political-economic* relations in particular, I would argue that space enters ‘already’ at a very high level of abstraction. As I have already implied, the bourgeois form of private property implies the parcellisation of space. And the fundamental relation between capital and labour - both their separation and the form of their interdependence - implies the spatial separation of the workplace from the home; this separation is necessary for the definition of capital and labour, but also causes systematic problems and disruptions of that relation. The formation of the value of a commodity embodies abstraction from, and commensuration of, the particular

¹ J.Michael Roberts, Realistic spatial abstraction? Marxist Observations of a claim within critical realistic Geography, *Progress in Human Geography* 25 (4), 2001.

spaces in which it is produced. Similarly, the core concept of capital as pure quantity of value that seeks to expand itself implies the ability of capital to be mobile in space, to abstract from spatial particularity and to spatially expand without limit. On the basis of these very abstract forms of spatiality, somewhat more concrete ones develop. One such is the distinction/ interdependence between productive and money capital, with their distinct spatial dynamics. Another is the development of territorial economic coherence and its contradictory relation with the mobilities of different kinds of capital, in particular with the tendential hyper-mobility implied by the spatial abstraction of capital as purely quantitative value. And so on. In this kind of way, space gets woven into the argument at all stages. One uncovers contradictions which have both spatial forms and spatial underpinnings. And in this way one can develop towards fully concrete analyses of particular cases, sometimes introducing additional, contingent spatial considerations. In contrast, Sayer's view that space enters only in contingent ways seems to arise from his *dichotomous* treatment of contingent/necessary relations.

¹ John Michael Roberts, Realistic spatial abstraction? Marxist observations of a claim within critical realism, *Geography, Progress in Human Geography* 25 (4), 2001.

B- On the concept of scale and the rescalings of capitalism

P: The work on space starting in the 1970s turned its attention during the 1990s to the concept of scale. Neil Smith, for example, has argued that an investigation of geographical scale is crucial for understanding how spatial differentiation takes place. On the other hand, Neil Brenner, a prominent figure in the discussions on scale and scalar restructurings, complains that recent research confuses the concept of scale with other geographical concepts such as place, territory and space. He proposes, rather, to use the concept of scale purely to refer to "the vertical orderings of social systems and relations within hierarchal scaffoldings of intertwined territorial units" in order to avoid overstressing the concept, and limits the concept of scale to cases where multiple spatial units are differentiated and (re)hierarchised. What do you think of the concept of scale? Do you agree with Brenner's critique of the use of scale in social-geographical analysis? If there is confusion in current work between scale and other geographical concepts, we need to clarify these concepts and the differences between them. According to you, what do place, space and scale mean? What are their divergences and convergences?

JG: Geographical terms are very slippery and are used in different ways by different authors. I use 'space' as an inclusive term for all geographical phenomena; some authors use it to mean what I, using normal language, call 'distance' or 'separation'. 'Place', 'territory' and 'area' I use more or less interchangeably – though 'place' is usually a small area and is often used in discussions of meaning or feeling. 'Scale', in its core definition, refers to qualitative differences in the size of areas over which particular social processes are enacted. It therefore cannot be reduced to any other spatial term.

Brenner wishes to adopt a wholly relational definition of scale. For him, the 'scale of a territory' (whether considered in the general or particular) has no meaning in itself. 'Two or more *different* scales' has meaning to the extent that social practices link territories of

those scales and assign those territories particular roles. Now, I agree with Brenner that the *relation between* social processes at different scales is always important, and that the processes taking place at one scale cannot be adequately understood except in relation to those at other scales. A manufacturing sector in a locality, for example, including its internal functioning and relations, is nearly always strongly constructed by both final markets and flows of capital at larger spatial scales. But I think that Brenner's approach wrongly downplays social relations and dependencies *internal to* a particular scale. In a given territory and historical time, particular types of relation are often enacted more at some scales than others. To be sure, this role of each scale may be to some extent 'assigned' by processes at other scales. But this role also always has substantial causes in *the spatiality of the processes internal to that scale*. For example, within world manufacturing industries, the local scale is the privileged one for reproduction of labour power and its hiring; and this is due to the requirement for daily reproduction outside the workplace and the material limits of the daily journey to work. Through this and other internal processes, the local scale (in a given time and territory) acquires a particular social character. Thus to understand the scalar division of social relations within manufacturing one needs to consider the substance of the relations within each scale, their characteristic distances and their embedding in a territory of a particular size. The allocation of different relations to different scales – Brenner's multi-scale relation - is then constrained by the logics of each scale.

To take this point a bit further: in recent years I have found it interesting to think about the nature of a particular scale, the social-spatial practices internal to it as well as its insertion in practices at other scales. For example, what is the logic of the scale of locality in contemporary advanced countries? What are the social, economic, cultural and political processes that have *this scale rather than others*? Analytically, this concerns how local-scale distances and local agglomeration are useful or constraining to social actors. One can ask how particular social processes – including ideologies - 'use' the local scale. This, I believe, is a non-trivial and fruitful way of posing the question of scale.

P: Since the 1970s capitalist social relations have been recomposed through the constitution of new spaces such as sub-national and supra-national spaces. In the wake of the capitalist crisis there have been attempts to rescale social relations at different spatial levels. In your works you have criticized the dominant theoretical views within 'critical' approaches to rescaling, particularly institutionalist and regulationist views, for ignoring contradictory, varied and struggle-driven aspects of capitalist social relations. Drawing on Marxist value theory you have emphasised capital as self-expanding value based on contradictory social relations, and thus pointed to the contradictions within (re)scalings and their recompositions in varied forms. Could you explain your objections to the dominant views in critical approaches to (re)scaling? What can be proposed as an alternative theoretical framework?

JG: The most popular way of picturing current rescaling is as a more-or-less direct effect of technological changes in communications and information processing, themselves exogenous to society. This is the dominant view in public and popular discourses and

among some bourgeois academics, and is therefore a formidable obstacle to any serious analysis. For institutionalist and social-economic theorists also, concrete technological changes are important, but are articulated with economic processes which in turn have strong 'social' and 'political' mediations. The 'social' and the 'political' are understood as *fundamentally* outside the economic; the capitalist economy is not understood as always-already social and political. Hence conflict, for instance class, gender or 'racial' conflict, is acknowledged but is not seen as intrinsic to capitalist economies. In Keynesian tradition, the political aim is to reduce social conflicts and increase 'economic efficiency', understood in concrete use value terms, leading to increased profits. Accordingly, institutionalists can propose political or 'governance' reforms which would reduce social conflicts *and* increase profitability. Rescaling is seen as essentially driven by the technical-organisational efficiency of the economy, so that, for example, regions have gained a new role *because* inter-firm relations and knowledge flows within regions have become more important to competitiveness. Institutionalists argue for political reforms which aim to increase such efficiency gains by, for instance, strengthening regional skills formation, opposing social discriminations which have no basis in a worker's efficiency, or developing institutions for knowledge transfer. Thus institutionalists, while claiming to give a 'political' reading of the economy, theorise it in a fundamentally depoliticised way which abstracts from the relations of private property and exploitation. Correspondingly, their understanding of rescaling ignores the ways in which it has been driven by social power.

For me, a central problem with regulationist accounts of rescaling is the regulationists' starting point of looking for more-or-less stable long term forms of capitalism in which its crisis tendencies have been effectively managed and postponed. New spatial arrangements are then analysed to see to what extent they have achieved such a form; if they promise such stability then they are termed 'spatial fixes', departing, as I have already mentioned, from Harvey's use of the term in which the 'fix' is seen as always-already contradictory. It is true that many regulationists since the 1990s have responded to criticism by downplaying the role of stable regimes, picturing current rescalings as transitional and problematic, and introducing some role for class struggle. But these attempts to add more dynamism to the regulationist account run up against another fundamental assumption of regulationist theory, the existence of two distinct, separately given, structures, the economy and the state (or 'regime of accumulation' and 'mode of regulation'). In Althusserian fashion, the state is pictured in fundamentally institutional terms, rather than as a moment in social relations of power, in particular class relations. Regulationist accounts of rescaling then oscillate between seeing 'economic' processes as the powering dynamic (technologies, production methods, trade, money flows,) and seeing specifically 'political' (state) processes as the key (hollowing out of the nation state, new transnational and regional forms of governance, and so on). These two types of explanation cannot be reconciled or synthesised because what underlies them both, namely class struggle, is not the analytical starting point. Regulationist accounts thus often resemble institutionalist ones because of their common understanding of 'economic' and 'political' change as fundamentally external to each other, albeit interacting.

A Marxist approach to rescaling of political-economy needs to be based on the social-spatial relations and processes of the contemporary capitalist economy and states. (as an aside, in terms of formal geographical categories, these are expressed not only in rescalings but in territorial uneven development and economic and political flows between territories; but I will speak here through the ‘window’ of scale.) The social relations of political economy operate at *every* scale: reproduction within the home and neighbourhood; local labour markets; territories of collaboration and of competition between productive capitals (whose scale varies enormously with the sector); scales of flow of money capital, and of final markets supplied; scales of organisation of workers from the workplace to the globe. Within these scales, especially the larger ones, there is spatial uneven development, so, for example, whereas the scale of the flow of money capital may be substantially global, it is flowing between territories of production which are very different. Whereas the scales of different aspects of political economy are very different, and each also differs sharply between sectors, all these scales are mutually articulated by the imperatives of the circulation of capital (C-P-C-M and so on). Because of these *necessary* relations between processes at different scales, none are more important than others. Thus one cannot say (even today) that the global scale governs or constructs all others, since the social relations at lower spatial scales, such as the reproduction of labour power largely within localities, is a necessary moment in the circulation of all capital. An important implication of this is that state intervention and other forms of non-market governance may respond to tensions at *any* scale. Despite the importance of global flows in the present period, interventions at smaller scales still have a logic.

For Marxists, these spatial-social relations at different scales are always relations of *power*: between capital and labour, between sections of labour (gender, ethnicity), between different capitals and fractions of capital. The spatiality, in particularly the scaling, of these social relations is an integral and essential part of how these forms of power operate and how they shift. This scalar politics is always complicated because different parts of the circuit of capital operate at different scales, and also because of the heterogeneity of sectors making up territorial economies. The scale at which particular aspects of the economy are carried out may be more-or-less consciously changed by social actors: by individual firms and even individual workers, and by collectives of capital or of workers. This *may* follow a logic of efficiency (for example firms’ pursuit of upscaling to obtain economies of scale), or it may be aimed at strengthening their power (firms upscaling in order to exert discipline on their workforce).

Particular states and spatial scales of them may *or* may not ‘follow’ these changes of scale by capital and labour. But I think we are going to discuss the state’s relation to capital and labour later in the interview.

P: Much work on contemporary rescalings pictures them as neoliberal tout court. You have criticised this work for underestimating the variety of strategies adopted by capital (and sometimes by workers). You have pointed to two related yet distinct strategies with different scalar aspects, namely neoliberal strategy and a strategy of productivism and

territorial integrity. Could you explain what your approach provides in analysing capitalist social relations and also in struggling against them?

JG: Many people on the left see *all* contemporary actions of states and capitals as being neoliberal pure and simple. Now, it is certainly important to register the dominance of neoliberalism worldwide since the 1980s, and to understand the logic of neoliberalism as a strategy to subordinate labour to the discipline of capital. But it is also important for socialists to understand the *contradictions* of this strategy for capital itself, and also the influence on state actions of *working class resistance* to neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has contradictions for capital because contemporary capitalism, given its forces of production and level of technique, cannot function efficiently without very substantial forms of socialisation of production and of the reproduction of labour power. By 'socialisation' here I mean forms of coordination beyond markets, including but not limited to the state. There is therefore a constant pressure on capital to introduce, or concede, all manner of forms of non-market coordination, from arrangements for knowledge transfer, to arrangements to regulate investment, quality and pricing of oligopolistic infrastructures, to inculcation of habits of wage work among the never-employed, to measures to provide affordable housing in growth regions. Moreover, working class resistance has in some cases been successful in preventing wholesale cuts to welfare services. I and my collaborator Aram Eisenschitz have discussed such attention to socialisation as 'neo-Keynesian', 'centrist', 'productivist' or social democratic. Its essential class relations include a divergence from the neoliberal principle of pure competition between capitals: some degree and type of cooperation between capitals is necessary, often taking the form of state-capital corporatism. In *some* cases neo-Keynesian initiatives also seek to integrate workers or residents, to create at least some degree of active cooperation of the latter with capital and the state, rather than the purely disciplinary agenda of neoliberalism. This is done partly to head off overt working-class opposition; but it can also be a recognition by capital that workers with substantial skills, a sense of self-worth and some interest in their work can be more productive than neoliberalism's slaves. To recognise the logic of neo-Keynesianism in the present day is simply to remember that the capitalist mode of production is always riven with contradictions, even – perhaps especially - when capital seems at its most triumphant. And it is to remember, as the Open Marxists rightly emphasise, the constant presence of labour within capital.

The distinct spatialities of neoliberalism and Keynesianism are integral to their nature as class projects. Neoliberalism seeks to dissolve constraints and ties which bind capital to territory, and to use capital's enhanced mobility to discipline labour particularly, but also to discipline states and individual capitals. Capitals are to no longer be able to use territorial protections to avoid devalorisation; the therapy of destruction of capital values, which can tendentially raise the rate of profit, is to happen at larger and larger spatial scales. In contrast, the logic of Keynesianism is towards at least some degree of territorial integrity, of strengthening ties within territories, of seeking cooperation between capital, labour and residents through an ideology of the 'unity' of the territory across classes and other social divides. Space is thus integral to both strategies, as material actions and as ideologies. And the strategies are in conflict with each other not

only in the class relations they seek to promote but in the spatial forms of these relations. This point highlights the importance of space to class politics.

At what scales does Keynesianism attempt to construct this territorial cohesion? In the postwar boom, the dominant spatial scale of Keynesianism was the nation. But during that period one should not neglect important forms of sub-national regional coordination (for instance, in federal states) or local coordination (for instance cities in the US), nor international forms (for instance the good-as-gold dollar as world currency). In the present long wave of stagnation, Keynesianism has again been applied at varied spatial scales, of which the sub-national region is the most obvious; one example of these is the regional initiatives put forward by JDP government. But some contemporary *national* initiatives have a Keynesian character, as do also some forms of protection and regulation by the three *world-regional* economic blocks.

In fact, the application and articulation of neoliberalism and Keynesianism over the last thirty years of world crisis has been very complex, reflecting precisely the contradictions of accumulation and class relations. Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell have usefully distinguished two phases of neoliberalism: a first phase of 'roll back' in which pure neoliberal principles are applied in order to destroy the ties of the previous Keynesian order; and a subsequent 'roll out' in which some elements of re-regulation are introduced and some glaring problems of inefficiency addressed. I am less happy with the denoting (in structuralist fashion) of both these phases as 'neoliberalism' *tout court*, since this minimises the contradictions between neoliberalism and elements of Keynesianism. It is true, though, that there can be forms of *melding*, of at least temporary 'peaceful coexistence', between these strategies. For example, neo-Keynesian 'community' initiatives can be more effective than pure neoliberalism in pushing the never-employed into waged employment, that is, a key aim of neoliberalism itself. This points to the way in which the changing articulation of neoliberal and Keynesian elements needs to be analysed, as fully as possible, for the *tensions* between and within classes which they express.

From a political point of view, the importance of acknowledging and analysing forms of Keynesianism in the present day is to guard against its dangers for the working class. Precisely because of the dominance of neoliberalism, productivist strategies promising more consensual class relations can be attractive to working class people. The territorial ideology of these initiatives, which promises to protect the territory against the worst pressures of 'globalisation' and to respect its traditional economy and culture while 'modernising' them, can be very appealing. But this kind of programme can serve to draw workers into cooperating with business while getting few if any real concessions from it, so that 'cooperation' is in substance simply a more effective form of discipline for the employers. Similarly, community-based initiatives in reproduction can end up being funded wholly by workers or, as 'self-help', by their unpaid work. Neo-Keynesian programmes are also typically divisive in favouring the more privileged sections of workers (dominant ethnicities, men) over others. Moreover, most importantly, cooperation of workers more closely with their employers in the name of increasing productivity draws them more fully and consciously into *competition* with workers

employed by competitor firms and in other territories. Thus the class relations of the productivist programme actually perpetuate the disempowerment and fragmentation of the working class.

This is not to spurn all the *concrete policies* which could be labelled Keynesian or social democratic. Improvements in welfare services or measures to create jobs in the public sector, providing they are paid for by taxing capital and the rich rather than the working class, would be a step forward for the working class. But such a radical programme is never *offered* by capital in the contemporary world (however much such measures might increase productivity), and can only happen under pressure of mobilisations of the working class. Moreover, these mobilisations need to campaign directly for these concrete policies, rather than joining in a territorial coalition ‘between everyone’ for greater productivity and more effective competition against other territories. Indeed, demands that capital should pay for welfare services and job creation cut across the politics of inter-class ‘cooperation’.

C- On the contemporary national state and its scalar restructuring

P: Another significant part of the rescaling we are discussing is the transformation of the state. The form of the national state has changed since the 1970s, and there is now a substantial critical literature on this. However, such literature has been built on the problematic distinction and opposition between global flows of capital and territorial sovereignty of national state. It thus tends to conceive of contemporary changes as the ‘hollowing-out’ of the nation state both upwards to supra-national levels and downwards to sub-national levels by transnational flows of capital. Leaving aside the empirical reality of hollowing out of the national state, such approach ignores the social and political character of such flow of capital and conceives of it as a technically-given ‘thing’. Moreover, Kevin Cox warns us that a taken-for-granted understanding of the national state is problematic in that it ignores the variety and differentiation within nation states, for example uneven subnational patterns of capital accumulation and class relations; he therefore proposes using the concept of ‘capital’s scale division of labour’. In this context, the concept of scale seems to be very important for an understanding of the nation state in a way which includes its varied and differentiated aspects. In one of your works with Aram Eisenschitz, you said that “the state debate within Marxism needs to take on board that social relations of the state can be strongly scale dependent”. In your recent work published in this volume you use a conceptualisation of scale in the analysis of the restructurings of the nation state and the EU. What, then, can the concept of scale provide us with in dealing with the state question?

JG: Theorising the state within capitalism is always the most difficult thing, and theorising its geography is no less so! I have done some work on this in recent years but my ideas are still fluid and in need of development. Let me sketch some of my current ideas about the scaling of the state, including here all the state’s main functions.

My starting point is that the state needs to be understood, fundamentally, not as an institution (bureaucracies, electoral procedures, powers, resources, and their scaling) but

as a set of social relations embedded in the inter- and intra-class relations of the whole society. The state both reflects, and is an active moment in, the class and other social struggles of the whole society and the accumulation of capital which provides the material basis of that society. The essential dynamics of the scaling of the state follow from this. But this immediately raises a difficult issue: what is the inertia and what are the continuing effects of the *inherited* institutional structures of the state and their scaling? This question has been raised very pertinently by Kevin Cox. Looking at the histories of the developed capitalist countries since the second world war, it is striking how much *continuity* there is in the sub-national scalings of the respective states, even though these differ sharply from each other; this tends to suggest a large inertia in these structures. These structures may be ones which do not have any obvious logic in *contemporary* class relations or accumulation patterns. To take an admittedly extreme example, the German state has a strongly federal structure which originated principally in the wish by the allies after 1945 to weaken the West German nation-state; yet this scalar state structure remains and continues to have important effects.

The inertia of state scaling may reside not simply in the state apparatus itself or even its legitimating role. Rather, the scaling of the state may have the effect of reproducing capital and labour in spatially-uneven forms which in turn reinforce that state scaling. Let us consider some examples in the US. The traditionally strong role of US cities in economic regulation, and the existence of city-based medium-large capital (including property capital), seem to have reproduced *each other* over time. Similarly, State government and utilities and financial institutions confined within State boundaries may have been mutually supporting. Or again, States' different laws on union organising, as in the 'right to work' States, may have served to perpetuate the role of State governments in employment law.

If one leaves aside for the moment the question of inertia, one can propose that state scaling is shaped by a number of class-economic relations. Firstly, there is the banal but important issue of minimum efficient scale: state services, qua economic enterprises, need to operate at such a spatial scale as to garner internal economies of scale. Secondly, there is spatial uneven development. If, for example, sub-national regions within a country are strongly differentiated from each other (economically; culturally; politically), then there will be a logic for the existence of regional government. Thirdly, the characteristic distances of the social relations through which capital and labour are reproduced, and the forms of dependence and social solidarity which they involve, will affect the scale of any corresponding state interventions. Thus for instance the neighbourhood or village level of the state in developed countries is now weak because few of the daily social and economic interactions and forms of socialisation take place *within* this small scale of territory. And strong flows of money, productive capital and commodities across national boundaries, however these have developed, subsequently tend to weaken *some* of the regulatory functions of the national state - though this point is often made too crudely. Fourthly, elite-capture theories of the state, while crude in their ignoring of accumulation pressures, do seem to me to point to real, if limited, processes. Particular units of the state can be strongly and durably influenced by particular sections of local capital (and, less usually, sections of labour). Particular scales of the state can be

influenced by particular types of capital: for instance, local government in many countries is chronically influenced (if not run) by local property capital. The existence of that scale of the state, and its perpetuation in the long term, then may owe something to the interest and social weight of the corresponding sections of capital (or labour).

These varied processes which construct the scaling of the state, and their development over time, mean that it varies strongly between nations. This applies not only to sub-national scales of the state but also to those above the national level, that is, the extent to which the state intervenes in international projects and quasi-state bodies.

P: Much of the debate in recent years around 'globalisation' and the nation state has revolved around the divergences and convergences between national state and national scale [economy?]. How do you see this question?

JG: Divergences between the scales of the national state and capitalist economic processes are often presented by the left as the reason - and by the rightwing, excuse - for a (purported) decline in the economic powers of nation states. A first comment is that there is nothing new in this divergence. As I argued before, the characteristic scales of different parts of capital circulation are, and always have been, diverse. Many important economic-social processes take place over sub-national scales; and, since the dawn of European mercantilism, many have taken place at super-national levels. A second, obvious but often glossed-over point, is that nation states in the contemporary world are qualitatively different from each other in relation to economic scaling. The imperialist states have qualitatively larger capital, stronger forms of accumulation and more stable class relations within their territory than the neo-colonial states; and, overall, they *benefit* from the international flows of productive, money and commodity capital across their borders, whereas for neo-colonial states the opposite is generally the case. As a result, the imperialist states can strongly influence, and in many cases directly run, the affairs of neo-colonial states. The latter are not only 'hollowed out' by the TNCs which invest in them and control their exports, but are directly controlled by qualitatively more powerful states. Furthermore, the size of the territory's economy (GDP) makes an enormous difference to its degree of closure. Among the imperialist countries Belgium has far greater flows across its borders as a proportion of its economic output than the US; in that sense Belgium is far more 'globalised' and the US more closed and 'self-sufficient'.

My main point on this topic, however, concerns the interpretation of the international level of state-based institutions – the IMF, WB, WTO, branches of the UN, and so on. A popular interpretation of the current activity and evident importance of these institutions is that state economic regulation has moved upwards in scale from the nation to the international level *because of* growth of international economic flows (TNCs, banking, trade). Thus we have: first, increased international economic flows; then the scale of the state reacts to this; then the new scale of state seeks to 'regulate' with essentially the same aims as before. This kind of account is popular in both public discourses and among academics. It is thoroughly economicist, both in reading off state geographies directly from economic geographies, and in ignoring the political content of (quasi-)state regulation at each spatial scale. It is true that the international quasi-state organisations

would not exist without international flows of capital in its varied forms, and that their importance tends to increase, other things being equal, with the growth of such flows. But these organisations essentially date from the late 1940s. Their increased importance in the last thirty years is not a result of some mythical paralysis of nation states but, to the contrary, has been a decision made and pursued by nation states – or rather, by the imperialist nation states which control these international organisations. The imperialist states, led by the US, have used the international bodies to impose on the whole world a new spatial-political *strategy*, neoliberalism. This has been imposed on other nation states: the IMF and WB have imposed ‘structural adjustment’ on neo-colonial states; the WTO has attempted to impose free trade on all states (though, effectively, mainly on the Third World) and, going beyond the question of trade, has imposed neoliberal ownership rules, which operates mainly to the advantage of TNCs based in the imperialist countries. Thus the increased role of the international bodies has been principally a *cause* rather than effect of increased international economic flows. It has been due not to an erosion of the power of the nation state but a decision by the dominant nation states, under pressure from capital, to impose neoliberalism worldwide.

Moreover, the strategy being pursued by the international quasi-state bodies is quite different from the Keynesian, productivist or nationalist strategies predominantly pursued by nation states up until the 1970s. There has not been ‘a transfer of regulation upwards’ but rather a radical change in the strategy (and therefore forms of regulation). Thus the (limited) upward change in scale of the state since the 1970s is powered not by ‘economic globalisation’ but on the contrary by the adoption of a new political-economic-spatial strategy by decisive sections of capital and (hence) by the dominant nation states. This argument illustrates the point I made earlier: rescaling needs to be understood not simply in terms of ‘economic logic’ but as part of changing class relations.

P: A consideration of the Regional Development Agencies, which have emerged as a new scale of economic ‘governance’ since 1990s, would contribute to our talk on the state and its rescaling. The setting up of RDAs leads to a considerable change in the institutional formation of (nation) states, especially for states which have been strongly centralised. They seem also to involve significant change in the form of the state, that is in the relation of so-called ‘economy’ and ‘politics’. The setting up of the RDAs is presented as a response to the ‘imperatives’ of new economic conditions. Nevertheless, there have been competing arguments on their setting up and objections to them. Recent discussions on the setting up of the RDAs in Turkey, as part of sharp rescalings in the process of the accession to the EU, provide a case of struggle concerning them both within capital and between capital and labour.

In this context, Marxist understanding of the setting up of the RDAs seems to be very important. What do the RDAs represent within the context of wider rescalings? What is the importance of the regional scale in current state restructuring? In particular, Britain has experienced considerable subnational rescaling of the state in recent decades. Why did such a centralised state need to constitute the RDAs? What were the social forces supporting, and raising objections to, the setting up of them? Have there been competing arguments within British capital on the RDAs? What were the responses of the labour

organizations and left? In sum, what are the class relations lying behind such rescaling of state in Britain?

JG: One needs to be careful in specifying the trend here. It is true that since the 1970s a number of west European states which were strongly centralised have introduced new regional levels of the state with substantial economic and well as social remits, notably France, Spain, Italy, Britain and Belgium. In some countries (here excluding Britain) there has also been a substantial transfer of powers from central to local government. But one should remember that regional economic policies have long been an important phenomenon in the federal countries, notably the US, Canada, Australia and (West) Germany, and that in countries such as the US cities have long been important in economic development. However, regional and local economic interventions *have* increased in importance in some of the federal countries too. Differences between countries are amplified if one takes into account differences in the *underlying processes* of state scaling we have just discussed, such as the degree and forms of economic uneven development, scales of economic relations, influence of fractions of capital, and so on, which of course differ enormously between countries. All this indicates the need for country-specific analysis.

The dominant academic theorisation of increasing *regional and local* economic intervention has been that of institutionalist and erstwhile-regulationist theorists which I have already touched upon. Since the publication of Piore and Sabel's the *Second Industrial Divide*, this school has been busy mapping various kinds of economic coherence and specificity at the regional and local levels – industrial clusters, knowledge regions, innovation milieux, and so on. While finding precedents, and occasionally direct ancestors, for these regional agglomerations in the classical industrial districts of the nineteenth century, these authors have argued that they are mostly newly-emerging, representing the kind of new paradigm of sectoral organisation proposed by Piore and Sabel. The institutionalist authors then argue that rescalings of the state have more-or-less directly *followed* from these technical-organisational changes in the economy. They also, normatively, propose that such regional governance should be strengthened in the name of 'making regions more competitive and prosperous'. In turn, in a nice hermeneutic, some regional and local governments and economic agencies have enthusiastically embraced these academic theorisations as offering them a reason for their existence and a ready-made strategy. For example, a strategy of fostering 'clusters', popularised by the business guru Michael Porter, has become very popular with regional agencies in the US and Britain.

As my earlier remarks suggest, I regard this account as economistic in ignoring relations of economic power, the contradictions of class rule, and the quite different political strategies which can emerge from these. Within the approach to state rescaling which I have been suggesting, let me sketch out an analysis of the emergence of new types of regional economic intervention in England; I will make brief comments on the Turkish case, using my very inadequate knowledge of it.

In Britain, serious economic state institutions at the 'regional' level were first introduced in the 1970s for Scotland and Wales (nations subsumed in the British state); subsequently, in 2000 Regional Development Agencies were introduced in England. In both cases, the RDAs were set up in the most depoliticised manner possible: their boards are unelected (though those in Scotland and Wales subsequently become subject to new elected assemblies in the late 1990s); they have avoided any public debate on strategy or even priorities; they have presented their task as economic regeneration guided by technical considerations and implemented by neutral technocrats. An eloquent symptom of this lack of politicisation was the result of the referendum held in the North East Region of England in 2005 on whether an *elected* assembly should be set up which would, among other things, have controlled the RDA. The vote was strongly against an assembly: if the actions of regional agencies are apolitical, why bring electoral politics into them? This depoliticised nature of the RDAs is, I think, the key to their emergence. In neo-Keynesian fashion, they can address the inadequacies of the socialisation of production and reproduction of labour power, while *at the same time* not disturbing the disempowerment, fragmentation and depoliticisation of the working class achieved by neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has dominated British political economy since the mid-1970s. It has achieved increases in the rate of profit on capital and terrible defeats of organised labour and consequent demoralisation of the working class. The exceptional ferocity of neoliberalism in Britain, however, has meant that many aspects of the coordination of production, infrastructures and welfare services have been destroyed in such a way as to damage productivity. Capital has therefore looked for ways of restarting certain forms of economic and social coordination, but without provoking demands from labour or 'excessive' demands from business itself. The RDAs offer a good way of doing this: they have operated in a depoliticised manner; their fragmentation between regions and mutual competition reduce their ambitions so that they do not intervene 'excessively'; and appeals to a non-class 'good of the region' can be used to stifle 'sectional' or 'selfish' demands by workers or residents. The regional *scale* of these agencies has thus been central to the class-political project which underlies them.

In Turkey, the recent moves of the JDP government to introduce regional economic coordination seem, as in Britain, to reflect a demand from some sections of capital to improve socialisation of production and reproduction and thus improve productivity and innovation, particularly in export sectors. The predominantly neoliberal stance of the national state since the 1980s may have left this policy 'gap'. It seems to be envisaged that regional initiatives for reproduction of labour power will strongly involve Islamic organisations rather than, or as an agent for, state provision. This could be an attempt to ensure that improved welfare provision does not elicit demands with a socialist dynamic, and to maintain it in conservative, clientalist and patriarchal forms; if so, it is a similarly depoliticising strategy to the British case.

There is, however, an important underlying difference between the Turkish and British cases. This concerns an issue to which I alluded earlier, namely the role in state scaling of the links between fractions of capital and units of the state. The rescalings of state and governance which have taken place in Britain in the last 30 years or so have *not*, to my knowledge, been the subject of debate between fractions of capital. This is partly because

British capital, through its long historical formation, is strongly unified; in particular, industrial, commercial and banking capital have been united in their wish to foster accumulation within Britain as a base for export of capital overseas. The strongly-internationalised banking sector, which might have been expected to have been indifferent or even hostile to projects of regional productive regeneration, seems rather to have seen the latter as an opportunity to increase their investments in the depressed regions (whether in industry, commerce, commercial property or housing). The leaderships of the trade unions, too, have supported the setting up of RDAs, since they appear to address the employment problems of the depressed regions, and because they adopt a class consensus, neo-Keynesian approach. In contrast, in Turkey one may discern considerable divisions and tensions between large capital, now substantially linked into international networks, and small and medium exporting firms; the former is linked to the Kemalist central state bureaucracies, while the latter is substantially represented by the JDP. The JDP's proposals for regional development may, then, be a response to pressures from a particular fraction of Turkish capital. The smaller size of firms in this fraction of capital means that they may be more dependent on collective, public forms of infrastructure and service provision than large and transnational firms where innovation and labour power formation take place substantially *within* the corporation. This could explain why the JDP proposals have been opposed and watered down by the central Kemalist bureaucracy. If this interpretation is right, we can perhaps see exemplified in Turkey the point I made earlier, that durable links between levels of the state and parts of capital and labour *may* be a factor in rescaling of the state.

D- On the spaces and scales of resistance and hope

P: Our last questions in this long interview are on the spaces and scales of anti-capitalist struggles and socialist strategies. Neil Smith, in his article 'Homeless/global: scaling places', discusses scale as setting boundaries and thus as functioning as a means of constraint and exclusion. However, he also insists that the politics of scale can become a weapon of expansion [?resistance] and inclusion. In your work, while discussing contemporary (re)scalings of capitalist relations, you have taken up the question of how an oppositional strategy should use scale. What do you think of current anti-capitalist struggles and their scalar strategies? What should we propose for workers' resistance and socialist strategy in contemporary capitalism? What should its spaces and scalar aspects be?

JG: I have already criticised the territorial-productivist approach as a strategy for the left. It disarms workers and residents in dealing with capital within their own territory (nation, region), and it exacerbates divisions between workers in different territories. What kind of spatiality, then, should a socialist approach embody? By a 'socialist approach' I mean one which pursues the interests of the working class against capital without compromise, and which culminates in the collective, democratic control of the major economic resources.

Note first that, at a fundamental level of analysis, the capital-labour relation is ubiquitous and has no particular scale. It operates and reproduces itself *within* workplaces, firms,

neighbourhoods, regions, nations and across the capitalist world – that is, *at every scale*. To be sure, it is unevenly developed spatially. In the global South, particularly in the poorer countries, a large proportion of the population survives outside the wage relation. But in every country the capital-labour relation is dominant politically, and also circumscribes non-capitalist production economically. Capital-labour relations combine contradictory elements of coercive (neoliberal) and collaborative (Keynesian) relations. These are combined in very different ways in different sectors and places, reflecting the tension between them.

A number of ideas about the spatiality of socialist strategy flow from these simple observations. Firstly, at what scales should the struggle of workers against capital take place? Various traditions on the left privilege particular scales, whether it be syndicalists who privilege the workplace level, union bureaucrats who prefer national negotiations, or those who talk about internationalism while neglecting basic organisation at smaller scales. But if the capital-labour relation is ubiquitous, then *workers' organisation needs to take place at every spatial scale*. In each workplace workers can resist capital's attempts to extract more surplus value. Within localities, regions and nations there are labour markets in which firms (and collectives of firms) and workers (and collectives of workers) bargain over employment conditions. These labour markets are governed by social, cultural and *political* processes as well as 'economic' ones. All the scales of labour markets from neighbourhood to the globe are structured by the (spatial) investment strategies of capital, and capital flows are often the direct object of struggle by workers. And international migration of workers and its politics affects labour markets. Struggles at *each of these scales* are needed, and they reinforce each other because the basis structure, the basic problem, is the same. Note that struggles at smaller spatial scales are not merely a small part of larger struggles; they potentially have *within them* the substance of socialist politics, that is, an assertion of workers' interests irrespective of capital's plans. Thus in socialist strategy, no scale should be left out or regarded as qualitatively less important than others.

A second point is that, because of the capital-labour relation is ubiquitous, *a socialist strategy can and should develop a consciousness that workers everywhere have fundamental interests in common*. The processes through which these common interests appear – through which they are *realised* - are complex and varied. They may appear through the effects of workers' actions on labour market conditions: an offensive by one group of workers or workers in a particular area can push up wages and conditions for others within the same labour market (of whatever scale). The success of one group of workers can provide a political inspiration to others, showing the possibility of winning. And it may cower other employers into granting concessions or at least refraining from making attacks on their workforces. Offensives of particular sections of labour may lead to capital agreeing to politically-enshrined rights whether at regional, national or even international levels which then benefit other workers. Or workers may take solidarity action with others in a dispute which does not directly affect them. One task of a socialist strategy is therefore to stimulate all these forms of solidarity at higher spatial scales, whether the solidarity is conscious or not. These actions, rather than abstract propaganda

about workers' common interests, are the way in which consciousness of common interests can develop.

Thirdly, because the fundamental capital-labour relation is developed with many variations, including over space, *socialist strategy has to consciously address differences between workers, in a number of dimensions*. Most obvious are differences in employment conditions, including security of employment and hours work as well as wages. The tension between coercion and cooperation in the labour process produces many important differences in the experience of work, for example between Taylorised workers and professional workers granted considerable autonomy. A further kind of difference is in the social sections of the labour force employed, distinguished by ethnicity, gender, age and so on. Workers' struggles within a territory of given extent are often undermined by these various types of differences. Solidarity between workers across space is also often blocked by them; an obvious example is failure of solidarity of workers in the North with those in the South on grounds of their 'race' or the 'primitive' labour processes in which they are employed.

The spatial forms of socialist strategy are also constructed by struggles in the realm of reproduction, and by the need to relate them to struggles in production. We discussed earlier the separation – social, spatial, ideological – between home and 'work', which is so deeply embedded in capitalism, and increasingly so as capitalism develops. This tends to produce, even on the left, two spaces of politics, those of 'the economy' and of 'social life' respectively, with the former dominated by men and the latter by women. But this split is deeply disempowering for the left. In the first place, working class people reproduce themselves through a *nexus of* production relations and relations of social life; these have a thousand connections with each other, are mutually dependent, and indeed should be regarded as internally related. Moreover, capital has enormous power over the reproduction sphere: through the material and intellectual resources and social relations which people acquire from their waged work; through the commodities people consume; through capital's influence over welfare services; and because of capital's impact on the physical environment. Struggles around reproduction are thus a key part of *anti-capitalist* strategy. Their connections to production need to be shown through struggles which violate the separation of the two spheres. Here, as in production, socialist strategy is opposed not only to the neoliberal offensive against welfare services and state transfer incomes of non-workers, but also to productivist and nationalist strategies which seek to integrate the working class through limited provision of welfare services in forms which embody conservative social relations (dependent on and reinforcing the family and gender distinctions, for instance).

Such struggles for better social services, public transport services and housing are generally conducted at a mixture of local, regional and national levels, depending largely on state arrangements, while struggles over state income transfers are mostly directed at the national level. The forms of consciousness developed in production and reproduction struggles respectively may reinforce each other at a particular spatial scale. For example, the enormous struggles around housing and transport which took place in northern Italian cities in the late 1960s were reinforced by, and reinforced, the high level of militancy and

incipient workers' control which existed in the large factories. This, incidentally, provides another reason for the importance of the local level in socialist politics.

P: In some of your recent work you have put considerable emphasis on the relation between the spaces of labour organisation and the spaces of capital investment. Could you explain the implications for socialist strategy?

JG: As I mentioned just now, differences in employment conditions and social characteristics of the labour force create important barriers to solidarity. But the greatest barrier to building workers' collective organisation and consciousness is something we discussed earlier: *the competition between workers arising from competition of capitals across space*. Neoliberalism orchestrates this competition in order to impose discipline on workers. Productivism, while promising to protect workers from such competition, in reality promotes it through different means, using competition with capitals outside the territory to ensure control – either soft or hard – over workers inside it. Thus the competition between capitals operating in different territories, mediated by either of these political approaches, reproduces workers' relation of subordination to capital and pits workers against others. Note that this competition can be between workplaces owned by the same firm.

This spatial competition proceeds through shifts in investment between territories within a given industry, and through shifts in investment in and out of the industry. Decreasing competitiveness and declining profits of a workplace will be expressed, at some point, in a drying up of investment, the devalorisation of the workplace as an asset, and possibly its liquidation into money capital. Withdrawn capital may be invested within the same industry in another location, or may flow into other sectors. Conversely, the actuality or prospects of good profits from a workplace tend to lead to new rounds of investment in it, and this is likely to reinforce its competitiveness at least in the short term. Particularly if final demand is strong, this new investment may come from capital outside the industry. The problem for labour of competition with workers elsewhere is thus not simply a matter of spatially-uneven markets (different pay rates, different local final demand, and so on) but rather is an expression of capitalist control over investment and disinvestment, in particular decisions concerning its sector and its location. In other words, *the key problem is the sectoral and spatial mobility of capital*. A socialist strategy to build solidarity between workers in different locations - localities, nations or continents - therefore needs to influence, and ultimately control, these investment flows.

How can labour unions and popular organisations move in this direction? One feasible starting point is *monitoring* by workers within an industry of the shifts in productive capacity within it. Unions, in association with sympathetic researchers, could track flows of investment into the industry and disinvestment from it, trends in rundown of capacity and of closures of sites, and trends in investment in capacity and opening of new sites. This would involve also monitoring the productivity of labour (output in dollars per worker) within the industry as a whole, its change over time, and its uneven development between sites; this determines the relation between jobs and final demand. In this way workers across the industry could develop a picture of aggregate capacity and its relation

to final demand. This would show whether there was over-capacity - with a likelihood of imminent closures or rundown of capacity some locations, or under-capacity - with a likelihood of further investment in new or existing sites. They could also develop a view of the geographical shifts which capital was carrying out within the industry. The impact of changes in the labour process, whether absolute or surplus value extraction, and their relation to productivity and number of jobs could also be understood. This kind of tracking of capital could be carried out within industries whose competition for final markets and capital flows occur at any scale. Thus it could be done within localised industries such as many service industries, national industries, or internationalised ones such as most manufacturing sectors.

The *process* of monitoring itself could have important organisational and ideological gains. It could create networks of workers' organisations spanning different locations, and develop a consciousness of their common situation. This might then lead to workers' organisations *putting demands on capital* with regard to industry investment and disinvestment and their geography. For example, workers faced with disinvestment motivated by their strong union organisation could be in a better position to demand that reinvestment took place in their workplace (or locality). Where capital was seeking to impose a higher intensity of work than the existing industry norm by investment in greenfield sites, unions at the new site might bargain for better labour processes. These demands could be directed either to a single multisite firm or to different firms.

The tendency of such bargaining would be for the development of *workers' plans for the industry*. These would comprise targets for aggregate investment and disinvestment, the kind of labour processes this investment enables, and the location of investment and disinvestment. This *points towards* the type of planning of investment which would be possible in a socialist society, that is, one where investment funds were owned and controlled by a democratic state. A very important model of such planning has been put forward by Bob Devine. Socialist planning would consist primarily not of central planning of prices nor of planning of interchanges (inputs/outputs) between workplaces. Rather he argues that the crucial requirement is the planning of investment: its quantity, its quality, and its location. Thus the kind of monitoring, bargaining and planning of investment which I have talked about feeds naturally into Devine's model of a socialist economy.

Organisation and struggle around investment thus aims to develop solidarity between workers across a determinate scale, by addressing the flows of investment which capital is carrying out at that scale. Depending on the industry, that scale could be local, national or international. Thus this type of struggle always draws on organisation at the workplace and local level, but it would often seek to connect with workers' organisations at larger scales. Once again, the task is to creatively relate not only struggles within each scale but struggles at every spatial scale.