

Scale, by Andrew Herod, New York, Routledge, 2011, 294pp.

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Undoubtedly, since the late 1980s, we have witnessed a remarkable era in which capitalist material production and cultural transformation are inextricably articulated with specific places, cities, states, and regions. First, an increasing number of transnational corporations(TNCs) break overall production process into sub-divisional party processes and geographically relocate them in specific industrial areas on the globe. As such, economic and socio-cultural properties of place, such as labor market characteristics, prices, purchasing power, entrepreneurial atmosphere, social stability and transparency, and cultural attractions, are considered important factors in TNCs' so-called 'optimal' decision-making. Second, in tandem with such market-oriented globalism, local cultures are incessantly intermingled with both capitalist-led Western (or

mass) culture and local-specific cultural traditions. While it is significant to address the commodification of culture and its spatial diffusion through mass-media, an increasing number of transnational migrants from both below and above are also playing a key role in forming such complicated mix of cultural attributes. After all, geographies of local economy and culture have become those that should be problematized in accordance with their networks and connections with external heterogeneous actors.

For this reason, the notion of (geographic) 'scale' certainly takes a pivotal position in contemporary academic discussion on the complicated material and cultural transformation of local geographies. Although the term 'scale' is one of the major concepts in geography, it has been neither much challenged nor debated until quite recently. Yet, along with the fast advancement of diverse space-shrinking technologies, the increased geographic mobilities of capital, labor and knowledge since 1980s has challenged conventionally dominant geographic scale such as national border. Simultaneously, it is noticeable that other geographic scales, such as human bodies and supranational regional blocs, are getting more important and playing significant roles in transforming our life-world. And, most of all, the spatial turn of social science in recent decades made the concept of 'scale' an attractive epistemological framework, in which fragmented social spaces could be more satisfactorily explained in various disciplines. For this reason,

the question of how we could theorize diverse geographic scales are now much debated.

In this context, Andrew Herod's new book, entitled as *Scale*, ambitiously attempts to explore and clarify the notion of scale, which is a 'foundational concept' in geography, a critical trope in contemporary social science, and simultaneously a much-debated and tricky notion. He certainly succeeded in comprehensively and deeply examining a wide range of debates surrounding it. In the first chapter of this book, which is entitled as "what is scale and how do we think about it?", Herod's argument can be summarized into three points. First, he suggests that conventional geographic thoughts on scale conceived it as an ontological reality, focusing on its hierarchical and concentric nesting principle such as Walter Christaller's central place theory. Yet, for the last decades, such essentialist notion of scale has been challenged by those who theorize it as a social and political construct, which subsequently influences real-world geography. But, most importantly, Herod argues that more recent turn to semiotics and poststructuralist thoughts "have heralded the emergence of a neo-Kantianism" (p. 56), which rather theorizes scale as epistemological rather than ontological. In this context, Herod's well introduces and summarizes key theories on scale, including non-scalar or non-representational geographic thoughts on scale, flat or horizontal ontology of scale, and complexity-oriented thoughts on scale such as actor-network theory.

Second, Herod argues that scale narratives and epistemology not just are contained within the domain of discourse and semiotics, but significantly influence and transform 'real' material geographies. For instance, the term 'global' is quite an ambiguous and slippery concept. Thus the concept can be problematized as a strong geographic discourse that aims at justifying specific practices, institutions, and authorities, performed in the name of 'global'. As the scalar discourse of the term 'global' takes normative, powerful, neutral position, governmental policies gain greater power in implementing various place-marketing strategies, tourist-oriented reconstruction of local landscape, commercialized urban regeneration projects, establishment of export platforms, and so on. This is in parallel with what Neil Brenner previously termed as 'politics of scale' and 'process of scaling' (and perhaps most importantly 'politics over scale') in social construction of space.

Third, in relation to the second point above, while accentuating the metaphorical usage of the term 'scale', Herod suggests it is important "to excavate the connections between representations of scales and how scales function in the material world ... so that changes in the former are not taken to indicate changes in the latter whilst changes in the latter may be seen to be reflected in the former" (p.58). Addressing likewise, he seems to argue that discursivity of scale cannot be transparently translated into scalar construction of material geographies and vice versa. Therefore, we should be careful not to ignore both

relative autonomy of scalar discourses and their material effects and ontological aspects of (socially produced) geographic scale.

Let alone the conclusive chapter, the remaining chapters of this book are (rather conventionally) structured in accordance with a series of hierarchical concentric model of scales, ranging from the body and the urban to the regional, the national, and the global. For instance, he suggested the model of scale “as a spider’s web ... in which scales are not represented by areal hierarchies but by connections between different nodes/points in the web” (p. 52). By this suggestion, he accentuates that shorter connections between nodes/points might be considered to represent ‘local’ or ‘regional’ whereas longer ones might be considered to represent ‘global’ links. Yet, unsatisfactorily, at least in my view, such network-oriented and radical imagination on geographic scale is not well developed in the structure of the main body of this title. But, simultaneously, such structure is conducive to clarifying diverse discourses and discursive construction of each scale in various literatures and material practices.

Introducing geographies of the body as a scale, the second chapter focuses on critically reviews tensions and inter-construction of various dualistic thoughts on the body, such as biological entity vs. social construct, bodily totality/integrity vs. volatile and fluid body, and consciousness vs. unconsciousness. In various fields including philosophy, geography and other social sciences, the body has been differently conceptualized.

The body is not just a material space in which mind and biological organs are contained. But it is also conceived as a landscape in which social discourses and culture is inscribed, a place at which diverse lines of power are inter-connected, and a spatial project through which performative practices are executed and embodied. Based on this problematic, the author examines various bodily configurations such as gendered bodies, abject bodies, racialized bodies and capitalist bodies. And he successfully summarizes theoretical lens to view these bodily politics (for example, Cartesianism, feminism, biologism, racial theory and postcolonialism psychoanalysis, Marxism, phenomenology, cyborg politics, and actor-network theory). The heterogeneous approaches to and conceptualizations of scale represent the fact that the body has a long historical trajectory of micro-politics from setting up certain social norms and the exclusion of other bodies to challenging such dualistic and predominant bodily discourses.

Chapter 3 examines the urban scale, a central element of social and spatial organization in the formation of modernity and capitalism. First of all, the author investigates the overall history of urban geography, ranging from establishment of ancient cities to classic cities in Greek-Roman era and early industrial cities. Thus, the author shows “how understanding of the urban vary historically and geographically” (p. 125). In the second part of this chapter, the author explores how the urban was considered an analytic focus of social science, including Chicago school of

urban sociology, central place theory and positivist/mathematical approach to urban space, urban political economy, and locality study. Yet, these approaches are, as the author also points out, commonly grounded on the distinction between the urban scale as a coherent scale and the spatial extent of cities. In other words, they conceived the 'urban' not just empirically observable analytic object, but also as a spatial category which has its own ontological mechanism (or law) that is disproportionately distinguishable from the regional, the national, or the global. In comparison to these approaches, the author introduces the 'urban as network' approach, which puts stronger focus on the city as "a node in a network of linked cities divided into core and periphery" (p. 119). The city networks are "systems of horizontal ... relationship among specialized enters, providing externalities from complementarity/vertical integration or from synergy/co-operation among centers" (p. 119-120). Especially, the author suggests that the scale of cities has emerged as "a strategic regulatory coordinate in which a multi-scalar reterritorialization of state institutions is currently unfolding" (p. 123). By the emphasis, the author argues that the post-Fordist capitalism has resulted flexible, networked urban systems of capital accumulation in tandem with the decentralization process of the nation-state's territorial governance. Therefore, understanding the urban scale as something horizontally networked can be a critical approach relevant to narrating neoliberal globalization of world national

economies and its spatial complexity.

In Chapter 4, Herod investigates the scale of 'region', which modern geographers conceived as a "geography's central concept, the one which allowed the discipline to claim its privileged place as an integrative science" (p. 126). It is still common that modern geographers classified region in functional region, formal region, and vernacular region. Such classification is based on the assumption that the 'regional' is something that can be (operationally) defined, identified and (consequently) analyzed. In the first half of this chapter, the author investigates 'early regionalization' in the discipline of geography, ranging from pioneering geographic thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Johann Gatterer, and Alexander von Humboldt to noteworthy modern geographers such as Ernest Ravenstein, Halford Mackinder, Paul Vidal de la Blache and other French Vidalian geographers, Friedrich Ratzel, Albrecht Penck, and Alfred Hettner. The author also compares Richard Hartshorne, who argued for the 'region' as an analytic tool for describing areal differentiation, with Carl Sauer, who argued for geography as the study of 'landscape' that is objective, observable, and material aspect of region. The author also addresses the famous debate on the discipline of geography between Hartshorne and Schaefer, in which the former argued for regional and integrative science and the latter argued for positivist spatial science. Finally, in the section entitled as 'regional geography reconstructed?', the author accentuates the fact that "the nature of regionalization

had been transformed under capitalism” (p. 159). In other words, as human capacity to produce nature increased, the scale of region is more affected by various capital flows and their conjunctions. So, we are left with geographic studies to understand the capitalist mechanism of regionalization and regional transformations.

Chapter 5 explores the scale of nation. Herod explores the national scale’s origins, mainly focusing on Tilly’s political theory of European nation-states’ establishment, class-based Marxist state theory, feminists’ critique on the inherently patriarchal nature of modern state, and theories on national imagination and territorial expression of national capitalism. In the second section of the chapter, the author reviews the organismic (or biology-based geopolitical) conception on state and critiques social construction of national identity and national scale. Herod especially emphasizes how Friedrich Ratzel’s Darwinian metaphors on state play a key role in the formation of geopolitics and political geography. Yet, the author argues that current conception of state as a spatial contain emerged in the early twentieth century, which was “reinforced by the Keynesian Macro-economic politics of the 1930s, in which the national scale was discovered” (p. 191). Also such conception was universalized by the establishment of political and economic organizations of states, such as the United “Nations”, and their spatial representation of states. Finally, the author explores the deterritorialization process of the national scale by focusing on

the encroachment of national governance by supranational blocs and local governments. And he argues that contemporary states should not be thought of as a spatial container and closed political system, but a porous, open, and networked system. The term “new medievalism” emphasizes such flexible and multifaceted nature of contemporary nation-states, which reminds us of the importance of networked and horizontal conception of geographic scales.

The final chapter of this book explores the historical trajectory of the term ‘globalization’, which is not just a space-shrinking phenomena of global integration but also a strong metaphor which justifies specific political, economic, and cultural intervention of powerful actors in local geographic issues. By addressing that European “global consciousness” originates from the pre-Christian era (p. 213), Herod explores how such conception had developed through European geographic exploration and systematic colonization of non-European lands and people. What is most important in Herod’s critical review is that the ‘global’ scale and globalization itself is a strong discourse which posits itself onto the status of neutral universality, unescapable human progress, and rationality. By approaching to Gibson-Graham’s feminist critique on the term ‘globalization’, he accentuates how the local, which is the same term for the ‘non-global’, has been awkwardly interpreted as ‘passive’, ‘backward’, ‘irrational’, and ‘static’ spatiality. Therefore, the author recedes from the essentialist notion of the term

'glocalization', which is "a representation that presupposes the global and the local pre-exist the global" (p. 234). The second part of this chapter explores discussions on global cities, emphasizing that they can be better understood from horizontal conceptualization of global scale because they are critical nexuses and nodes of global capital accumulation. Herod explores John Friedmann's world city hypothesis, Saskia Sassen's emphasis on global financial cities, Peter Taylor's argument for the formation of worldwide urban hierarchy, and Neil Brenner's observation of global cities as sites of "reterritorialization for post-Fordist forms of global industrialization" (p. 240). Based on such discussion, the author proceeds to emphasize that we need to put eyes on the interconnected nature of contemporary cities and thus to challenge the fictions of boundary, limit, fixity, and embeddedness by addressing Manuel Castells, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and Bruno Latour. In sum, the author emphasizes not just the 'discourse' of the global scale, but also the ways in which particular actors and their works produce the discourse and institutionalize it through material practices.

As I addressed above, this new title is undoubtedly a well summarized and discussed introduction to understanding the term 'scale' for students and professional researchers in geography and other social sciences. While not falling into the trap of essentialism which consider geographic scale as hierarchically organized, ontologically given, and mutually exclusive closed system, Herod made efforts to intensively

explore the historical and discursive formation of each geographic scale without ignoring the material relationship involved in such conceptual formation. As he conclusively emphasizes, we should remember that “it is important to avoid any kind of scalar fetishism ... and to destabilize a litany of dualisms that are frequently aligned with one another – global=abstract=space=powerful, whilst local=concrete=place=weak” (p. 254). Also, when we use the term ‘scale’, it is important to acknowledge that “how we have been trained to examine the world shapes how we see it” (p. 257). By reading this book, many readers can find helpful information and implications to unfamiliarize, critically review, and unlearn their ‘long-disciplined’ familiar conception of geographic ‘scale’.