The Scale of Globalization and the Geographies of Resistance

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Abstract
The paper applies the concept of scale to the analysis of globalization and resistance. After a brief theoretical discussion of resistance movements we present a case study of a series of conflicts which occurred in relation to the construction of the Hyundai automobile plant in Nošovice, in the vicinity of the Beskydy Mountains. The article maps the scales of the conflict – international, national, regional and local, and demonstrates the basic interests of crucial actors at particular levels.

Keywords: resistance, social movements, globalization, scale, Hyundai, Nošovice

Introduction
Even though in current geography globalization has lost much of its late appeal, it does not mean that the concept is dead. Social science concepts have a way of getting out of the academia, gaining a life of their own in the everyday parlance of ordinary people, and structuring and mediating everyday social relations. As we mentioned in the Introduction: The Scales of Globalizations, we are predominantly interested in the scaling of globalization processes. We are led to this emphasis by the fact that the question of scale is often reiterated in scientific literature and almost equally as often ignored in actual research and subsequent analysis of obtained material. We consider scale to be one of the crucial concepts in a systematic and critical study and analysis of globalization and everyday life, allowing for the disentanglement of the divergent and contradictory processes subsumed under the term "globalization" in academic literature and everyday conversations. Globalization has a variety of impacts which sometimes can be traced to the level of states (for example financial markets), sometimes to the regional level (pollution, unemployment) or the local level (socially excluded localities). Some processes cross all levels simultaneously, albeit unevenly (migration flows, for example).

One topic commonly studied in association with globalization is resistance. The aforementioned importance of scale in the analysis of globalization applies in the same extent also to the analysis of the various forms of resistance conceptualized as reactions to globalization. Therefore, we are led to rethink resistance as emerging not as a response to universalist globalization but as a reaction to particular projects with specific purposes. Such resistance movements can be described as rhizomatic since they emerge due to particular reasons and bear many forms (see e.g. Routledge 1996; 2006).

Writing about the development of London's Docklands Keith and Pile (1993) emphasized the importance of scale in the analyses of social conflicts. To them conflicts must be analyzed within "a multi-layered and multi-dimensional geography of resistance" (ibid.: 14). Not only did different groups organize against the development project based on local membership and area-wide reach, also these groups represented differing interests which further complicated
the issue. We consider such a conflict analysis based on sensitivity to the "geographies of resistance" a key starting point for a productive understanding of the analyzed Nošovice case and other cases commonly and summarily judged as conflicts generated by globalization.

We confront the theoretical arguments with the empirical material collected throughout the past six years in and around Nošovice and Nižní Lhoty, two villages in the northeastern part of the Czech Republic, in the vicinity of the Beskydy Mountains, which were chosen by the national and regional governments as involuntary hosts for a 250-hectare industrial zone destined to become the "home" for the Hyundai Motor Co.'s new car manufacturing plant, the company's strategic investment in Europe. In our analysis we focus on the different actors which became voluntarily and involuntarily involved in the conflict preceding the construction of the factory, a conflict which was perceived and portrayed by many, including some of its protagonists, as a symptom of globalization (for further information see Mácha and Drobík 2010).

**Resistance – mobilizations or identity?**

The recent social sciences generally pay a considerable attention to the processes of resistance. There appear to be two principal paradigms for conceptualizing social conflicts and social movements. The first is the resource mobilization theory wherein the responsibility and agency is given to the leaders of the resistance movement. According to this paradigm, power is latently dispersed throughout the society and thus it has to be instrumentalized and deployed for a myriad of purposes (see Guarnizo and Smith 1998: 23). This paradigm places a great emphasis on the role of elites in social movements and significantly underestimates the identities of resistance, the geographical imaginary etc.

The resource mobilization theory approach is often used in research of big and almost professionally organized social movements fighting for example against globalization, global capitalism or cultural imperialism. A special attention is paid to communication channels, management, and fundraising. In this approach, the movement is researched in the political context in which resistance occurs, and the structural impact of primarily non-political civil society, and the role of charities, universities or other NGOs is then studied as well. And last but not least, the approach includes social networks and informal relations in its analysis. The cornerstone of this approach lays in the conviction that the studied actions are done in order to "maximize impact and efficaciousness" (Wiktorowicz 2004: 10). In this regard, we see a serious ontological limitation of this approach which downgrades spontaneous movements without clearly defined goals, without leadership, and without activists willing to sacrifice everything for the purposes of the movement.

The new social movement approach offers a different perspective. Social movement scholars increasingly realize that contemporary mobilizations, while being rooted in, and operating within, the general context of neoliberal globalization, are grounded in local power constellations and political processes. Expressed in terms of spatiality, political-economic processes operate over space to yield contingent outcomes in different localities, where everyday experiences, identities and social practices give rise to context-specific community activism in regard to local manifestations of general processes (Stokke and Lier 2009: 83-84). In this way space-specific approaches give us also a potential to think about the spatial context and about the scale-specific representations of activism and resistance. Furthermore, this approach does not necessarily presuppose well-organized movements and thus provides us with conceptual tools and methods to study amorphous and spontaneous movements, the eruptions of grievance and subsequent resistance.

However, neither of the approaches is ideal for the analysis of the following case study. It appears that only their combinations might be of use. It is precisely the concept of scale that forces us to resort to a dual-approach analysis of a resistance social movement, forcing us to
make two key distinctions. A) The Hyundai case is not clear an example of a new social movement since at the top levels of the conflict it was led by professionals and it was a well-planned, tactical, well-organized, and expensive contestation (EPS, state, Hyundai, Beskydčan). No serious questions of identity were raised. B) At the lower strata, the conflict was very chaotic, without leaders, without a specific program and often very separated from the political arenas and even from civil society. Actors here were rather local people living in the area affected by Hyundai, feeling sadness and grievance, seeing the industrial zone as severing all human-nature connections in the local space, being afraid of coming Koreans or only speculating on the price of real estate. In this way, identity, reinforced by emotions, historic memory, and a feeling of responsibility for children was a cornerstone of the struggle for local people. Therefore in our case study we decided to use both approaches and we tried to distinguish the two principal processes which occurred in one place at one time.

**Hyundai and resistance**

In our view, the key to understanding the Nošovice case lays not so much in the common conceptions of globalization-as-an-objective-process (e.g. Boyer and Drache 1996, Dicken 2003) or globalization-as-a-grand-imagination (e.g. Massey 2007) but in the meaning the term has in the minds of social actors. In this sense, globalization is not a grand narrative but rather a set of small narratives which are generated and used at different scales of social life to help to explain events in a person's life, legitimize certain behaviors and attitudes, and help him/her relate to things, structures, processes and people which are new and ambivalent (Mácha and Drobík 2010).

Once again we need to stress one of the great paradoxes of globalization - etymologically it evokes planetary images but as all other social processes it takes place, that is, it plays out in concrete localities associated with different scales of social life. The questions then are in which places globalization actually takes place and how does the character of the place affect the character of the globalization which takes place in and through it.

As there can be traced numerous forms of globalizations, we have to step out from totalizing and incorrect dichotomies when talking about globalizational processes in localities. Our empirical experience has shown that between and besides the local and the global there is a complex geography of resistance often without obvious roles and transparent goals. In Nošovice, on face value, Hyundai, the Czech state and the regional government clashed with environmental activists and some local people in a battle over the land on which the Hyundai plant was to be built. In fact, this did not happen at all. Or, rather, a great number of battles took place between actors who sought different goals and obtained dramatically different results.

As the geography of resistance generated around the Hyundai investment was extremely multilayered and complex, we decided to summarize the principal battles and issues in a systematic table (Figure 1) differentiating between the scales of conflict with the associated issues and actors. Even a brief look at the table immediately shows the multivocality of the conflict which was destined to have no clear winners.
**Figure 1:** A table analysis of Hyundai-related conflicts, issues and involved actors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of conflict</th>
<th>Conflicting parties</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>International</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hyundai vs. Czech Republic</td>
<td>corporate blackmailling of states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czech Republic vs. Poland vs. Hungary vs. Turkey</td>
<td>competition of states for FDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hyundai vs. EPS</td>
<td>global corporate responsibility, workers' rights, environmental issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Industrial zones - Nošovice vs. Dolní Lutyně vs. Mošnov vs. Holešov</td>
<td>competition of regions for FDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EPS+Děti Země vs. Czech citizens</td>
<td>critique of Hyundai x expectations of economic benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EPS vs. Czech government</td>
<td>legality of administrative procedures, public accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EPS+Děti Země vs. CzechInvest</td>
<td>new industrial zones, transport infrastructure development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beskydčan vs. Regional authority</td>
<td>regional transport infrastructure development, nature and landscape protection in the Beskydy Mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural cooperative vs. Regional authority</td>
<td>land and finances for commercial agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The general public (opponents and proponents)</td>
<td>impact on nature and landscape, impact on farmland, impact on local enterprises, employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Sell outs&quot; vs. &quot;sell nots&quot;</td>
<td>land speculation vs. attachment to land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural cooperative vs. small farmers</td>
<td>commercial agriculture vs. subsistence agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local people (opponents and proponents)</td>
<td>impact on the social integrity of the village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The international level**

At the international level we witnessed a very strong international competition of governmental bodies to attract foreign direct investment. The conflict was not only caused by the needs of governments to be re-elected or gain higher budget income, but also by Hyundai's smart manoeuvring leaving the governments at odds which thus could maximize the profit due to the minimization of construction and operating costs.

All interested countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Turkey) tried to attract the investor by offering a lot of incentives - tax breaks, infrastructure etc. The Czech side offered also a qualified work force in a region with a relatively high unemployment rate (i.e. a region...
with relatively low labor costs), free offices, international schools for managers' children and a picturesque view of the mountains.

Another dimension of the international conflict resulted from the activities of the Environmental Law Service (EPS), a professional Czech NGO with an international reach, which publicly criticized the investment policy of Hyundai and its blackmailing of nations.

**The national level**

The competition of localities did not end with the choice of the Czech Republic. Although the hottest candidate was, from the beginning, the Nošovice-Nižní Lhoty industrial zone, the negative attitude towards the project expressed by the owners of the land on which the zone was to be built led to the consideration of other localities. Hyundai was offered the already prepared strategic zones in Mošnov and also Holešov in central Moravia. Hyundai preferred the Nošovice strategic zone for its greatest proximity to Hyundai's sister company KIA's plant in Žilina, Slovakia (cca 70 kms away). There were also strong interests for the owners of industrial zones in Mošnov (City of Ostrava) and Holešov (Regional authority of Zlín region) and Dolní Lutyně (Moravian-Silesian regional authority).

As far as we know, no one ever protested against the Hyundai investment as such. This investment was widely perceived by the public as a great stimulus for the regional and national economy and many people looked forward to it, expecting to ride the wave of investments as subcontractors, suppliers, dealers, or simply employees. That is why we saw a general support for the industrial zone and Hyundai from the side of the media, labor unions, academics, entrepreneurs etc. However, what was seen as highly controversial was its location on prime agricultural land in the immediate vicinity of the Protected Landscape Area of Beskydy in a region with numerous abandoned industrial zones and post-coal-mining landscapes which would be much more suitable for industrial activities.

Because of this location, numerous actors became involved in the negotiations to such an extent that it by far exceeded the national government's and Hyundai's original expectations and worst fears. In addition to the Hyundai-national government negotiations and the competition of countries and regions, another layer (and level) of conflict arose. Its protagonists were Hyundai and CzechInvest (the state foreign direct investment promotion agency) on one side and the Czech NGO Environmental Law Service (Ekologický právní servis, hereafter only EPS) and Děti Země, also a national environmentalist NGO, on the other.

The EPS declared its will to participate in the administrative process of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and started with a strong critique of Hyundai, the Moravian-Silesian regional government and the national government. In this regard, the EPS acted as coordinator of activities of other NGOs (Beskydčan, Děti Země, Půda pro život / Soil for Life). However, at the end, after the last few remaining land owners agreed to sell their property, the EPS together with the other NGOs negotiated a compromise agreement, the so-called Declaration of Understanding in which all parties agreed on respecting some basic criteria during the administrative processes and committed to various obligations.

No other single document better illustrates the complex picture and the multiplicity of demands and struggles generated by the Hyundai investment than the Declaration (see EPS, http://aa.ecn.cz/img_upload/409344c5b28b1bd833e56a44cfd168d/Deklarace_H_projekt_en_final.pdf). Among other things, EPS and Děti Země forced the Ministry of Industry and Trade (represented by CzechInvest) to stop planning new industrial zones on greenfields and prefer brownfields in its investment promotion policy. This had absolutely nothing to do with Hyundai and it illustrates well that the Hyundai investment served as an opportunity to resolve some older issues between the conflicting parties.
Regional level

The NGOs also negotiated restrictions on new transport infrastructure development, especially in relation to the Hyundai investment. This level of conflict was also further enriched by Beskydčan, a regional NGO which acts in the Beskydy Mountains and a long-time opponent of the regional authority on many environmental issues. This NGO did not directly oppose Hyundai, but they were able to block the permitting processes for infrastructure development which should connect Hyundai to the railway and highway system. Beskydčan together with another NGO Děti Země forced the regional authority to compensate for the negative impacts of intensive railway and car traffic by building two corridors for wild animals crossing the Beskydy Mountains.

By signing the Declaration, the regional authority was also forced to abandon its plan on the development of the Dolní Lutyně industrial zone in the vicinity of a NATURA 2000 area. This plan had been strongly opposed by several environmental NGOs (especially Arnika), most of which were not involved in the Hyundai negotiations at all. Both cases show that the conflict did not take place only in one place or over one place, but had a really regional character.

The regional government negotiated separate agreements with land owners, the largest of them being the Nošovice agricultural cooperative. This cooperative functioning more as an agrobusiness than a genuine farmers-run cooperative wanted to stay in business and, as it turned out, its opposition to the Hyundai investment was driven by a desire to get more agricultural land and direct finances for new machinery. When it got what it wanted, it agreed to the project.

A vibrant region-wide debate among the general public also significantly influenced the development of the conflict at this level. Letters to the politicians, newspaper articles, internet discussions, petitions and other expressions of support and opposition created a great pressure on the parties in negotiations, and set certain limits for this discussion.

Local level

Very interesting situation had crystallized at the lowest level of the conflict. Inhabitants of Nošovice and Nižní Lhoty found themselves under a strong pressure from the regional authorities, regional entrepreneurs and labor unions. Furthermore, people in Nošovice became divided into two camps, the proponents and the opponents of the project, some of them land owners. During the negotiation period the regional authority used an enormous power and resources to persuade the people of Nošovice to agree with the investment. The national government even started to talk about the expropriation of land owners in "public interest" to make the construction possible. During this time, more and more people gradually accepted the reasoning of the regional authority which offered to every family a "financial compensation" of 100 000 CZK. By this offer the conflict directly affected families, relatives, and friends in Nošovice who clashed over the morality of accepting this "compensation" and selling the land (also for a very good price). This pressure increased in December 2005 when the regional authority persuaded the agriculture cooperative in Nošovice to accept a compensation of 70 million CZK and different agricultural land. Thus, one of the symbols of resistance, with cogent arguments, producing a certain sense of spatial identity of inhabitants, disappeared from the picture. The extremely tense atmosphere culminated in anonymous death threats sent to those who did not want to sell their land. After that, the three remaining land owners finally accepted the offer and sold their property, making the construction possible.

While EPS, Děti Země and Beskydčan on the one hand, and the national and regional governments and Hyundai on the other, succeeded in promoting some of its interests, the local
people were left to live with the complicated situation. After six years, the village remains deeply divided and the numerous wounds are yet to heal.

**Conclusion**

In our paper, we examine how scale enables us to approach the geographies of resistance seen not as networked activities, but as the activities at specific levels, where specific actors of resistance act predominantly on a particular scale. Escobar argues that "the global is associated with space, capital, history and agency while the local, conversely, is linked to place, labor and tradition – as well as with women, minorities, the poor and, one might add, local cultures" (2002: 248). In this regard, when localities are seen as spoiled by capitalist manoeuvring, it gives them power to position themselves as victimized and oppressed, and it enables them to communicate a sense of unfairness which symbolically helps them to derive power against a global product/actor.

However, as we showed in this paper, the geographies of resistance are more complex. No single approach to the study of social movements is able to account for the rich texture of the conflict in Nošovice. As a matter of matter of fact, we need to admit that this conflict lacked an apparent and well-defined structure of activities and leaders. However, what we consider to be one of the most interesting conclusions of our paper is the fact that the conflict was not only deeply scaled but if we frame it in the globalization context, Hyundai, as one of the potential hallmarks of globalization, was not the crucial agent in this conflict at all. As we have demonstrated, it was not Hyundai but the Czech government, the regional authority, and, subsequently, some local people who were the strongest pro-plant actors. Without their power, money and social pressure, the plant probably would not have been realized. The second interesting fact was the scope or reach of the conflict – the number of actors and the whole geography of conflict are noteworthy. In this sense we also need to emphasize the number of competing localities, places of negotiations and the spilling of the conflict into other areas.

The analyzed case study suggests that both globalization and resistance movements (seen as) reacting to it are very fuzzy terms with an ambivalent character and unpredictable dynamics. Simple dichotomies such as global-local and "grand narrative" approaches to globalization fail to account for the role played by the culture- and place-specific imaginations of globalization and resistance in mediating social relations in everyday life. Scale thus enables us to better appreciate the diversity of processes described as globalization and becomes a key concept and tool for analyzing complex social phenomena in the contemporary world.

**References**


