

GEOGRAPHY IN AMERICA

GARY L. GAILE

University of Colorado, Boulder

CORT J. WILLMOTT

University of Delaware

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Geography from the Left

Richard Walker

Geography on the left in America has come a long way over the last 20 years. A new generation of scholars has expanded the ranks of left-oriented faculty, bringing the analytic framework and progressive social agenda of Marxism and allied schools of thought into most of the traditional subject areas of the discipline. Only part of this sweep of material can be presented here. While this menu of topics necessitates some overlap with other essays in this book, our purpose is to highlight the special contribution of left theorists and researchers to the development of geographic thought in the 1980s.

Contemporary left geography emerged around 1970, pressed by a mere handful of adherents at the professorial level: Jim Blaut, Dick Peet, David Harvey, and Bill Bunge among them. Its banner was carried by the informally organized Union of Socialist Geographers and its ideas were most prominently featured in the journal *Antipode*; this early history of left geography has been ably told by Peet (1975), so we concentrate here on developments in the 1980s. The last decade has seen a number of new turns. Organizationally, a choice was made to join in the formal subject-area groupings of the Association of American Geographers, as the Socialist Geography Specialty Group (SGSG), and the USG faded away. *Antipode* passed from the editorship of Peet and associates at Clark University to the equally able hands of Eric Sheppard of the University of Minnesota and Joe Doherty of the University St. Andrews (U.K.), and, like rebel publications of the left across the disciplines, became a legitimate, institutionalized journal of the field. It has been joined by another publication of the left, *Society and Space*, whose editorial group has less affinity to Marxism and socialism. At the same time, left geographers now appear regularly in all the established journals of geography (and related fields, such as regional studies, planning, or

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urban sociology), feature prominently on editorial boards, and even act as editors for several mainstream journals and publishing-house series.

The leading role of David Harvey and Doreen Massey in the 1970s is not to be gainsayed: Harvey is principally responsible for (re)introducing Marxist theory into geography, and at the same time becoming the leading urbanist in North America. Massey is responsible for the great turn to industrial studies by left geographers in the late 1970s, and for a renewed enthusiasm for the geographic dimension of social research in the 1980s. As might be expected, with growth has come greater diversity of subject matter and approach, and a more diverse corps of lead thinkers, such as Allen Scott, Michael Webber, Allan Pred, Ruth Fincher, Kevin Cox, Eric Sheppard, Neil Smith, and Andrew Sayer. While a recognizable core of people exists in North America and Great Britain, the wider penumbra of younger left scholars, sympathetic thinkers from a broad range of backgrounds, and friends outside the Anglophone world should not be overlooked. In the U.S., the left is heavily concentrated in the SGSG, but by no means exclusively so. As left geography has edged toward the mainstream, both its currents and its eddies are deepened and broadened by the encounter.

The agenda of left research has not only expanded but deepened. Initially, a great deal was to be gained by bringing the classic insights of Marxist theory to a variety of topics. But the momentum of the search for a better geographic social science has propelled left scholars down several roads. Some went on to develop Marxist theory itself more fully, that it might provide a more complete set of conceptual tools (e.g., Harvey 1982). Others took another look at method, welcoming the clarifications that realism, critical theory, and structuration theory might add to the understanding of social processes and how to grasp them (Gregory 1978; Thrift 1983; Sayer 1984; Pickles 1985; Pred 1986). Another thread was the search for more finely tuned "middle level" theories of such things as labor relations or local government (Storper and Walker 1983; Clark and Dear 1984; Clark, Gertler, and Whiteman 1986).

The demand for a more explicitly spatialized theory of capitalist societies became increasingly urgent in the face of massive geographic realignments in the world, painful absences in our explanations for the fate of particular places, and disenchantment with some popular "global" spatial theories of the 1970s such as center-periphery dependency models or the new international division of labor (Massey 1984; Harvey 1985b; Storper and Walker 1989). Finally, the growing number of women geographers brought feminist concerns regarding the oppression of women into an overwhelmingly male discipline—including its left wing (Women and Geography Study Group 1984). Revived militancy around racism in the late 1980s may well be the next crucial challenge to the left political and theoretical agenda.

Left geographers can be proud of their achievements in a discipline that is not always noted for either its explanatory depth or overriding concern with human oppression and liberation. The left can claim a good deal of credit for broadening the intellectual respectability of the geographic enterprise outside the discipline in recent years, and can claim a measure of intellectual leadership and even hegemony within certain geographic subfields. At a time when prospects for the discipline have not always been the brightest, this large dose of energy for new research agendas and commitment to greater theoretical sophistication has been exceedingly helpful in moving geography forward.

Socialist analyses of urban geographic change have focused upon a wide variety of issues, but perhaps the central one has been the attempt to demonstrate the "unnaturalness" of the urban order under capitalism. That is, urban-development patterns and the city form are not the inevitable outcome of natural scarcity, individual consumer desires, transport costs, or the technological genie. They are, rather, deeply etched by rivers of capital investment and carved out by forces of social difference along class, gender, and racial lines. In a word, things could be different, but they are kept as they are by the powers of a social order that is more interested in exploitation and accumulation than in the human contours of urban life. Left urban geography might therefore be termed the study of the politics of urban space (Cox 1984c).

This agenda was set by David Harvey's maverick study, *Social Justice and the City* (1973), which enjoyed widespread influence throughout the social sciences. A flurry of research has fleshed out the critique in several directions (for an overview, see Badcock 1984). Some work emphasizes the role of the financial system in the provision and orchestration of urban living space (Stone 1975; Harvey 1977; Williams 1976, 1978; Florida 1986; Meyerson 1986). Other writing takes on prevailing economic theories of rent and the land market, with their implications of optimal performance and benign outcomes (Barnbrock 1974; Harvey 1974a; Walker, 1974, 1975; Roweis and Scott 1978; Scott 1980). Particular stress has been laid on the active role of land owners, property investors, and developers in the process of urban development (Ambrose and Colenutt 1975; Massey and Catalano 1978; Boddy 1980; Feagin 1983; Haila 1988). One important theme is the way in which the land market, in concert with class and racial divisions, generates persistent patterns of residential segregation and conflict over the control and renewal of urban space (Harvey 1975, 1978; Cox 1978, 1982; Rose 1981; Hoch 1984; Lauria 1984). Another is the process by which the American city took on an increasingly suburban form as it expanded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, by offering an outlet for surplus capital and social tensions. (Walker 1978, 1981). By the end of the 1970s, moreover, it became apparent that similar forces were at work reconstructing the inner cities through the process of gentrification (Hamnett 1973; Smith 1979, 1987b; Lauria 1982; Hamnett 1984; Schaffer and Smith 1986; Smith and Williams 1986). An important branch of inquiry led toward land-use regulation and the political control of urban space (Walker and Heiman 1981; Logan and Molotch 1986; Plotkin 1987; Heiman 1988b). Another branch led to the sources of widespread homeownership as a key mode of consumption that modifies class relations and the social production of urban space in crucial ways (Rose 1984; Belec, Holmes, and Rutherford 1987; Harris 1986; Pratt 1986a, 1986b; Harris and Hamnett 1987; Florida and Feldman 1988).

The dynamics of capital flows into the built-environment and class struggles in the consumption realm—which had virtually defined the field of left urban geography in the 1970s—was challenged in the present decade from two directions. An emerging feminist critique forcefully placed questions of social reproduction on the agenda, in part to help explain suburbanization, gentrification, residential form, and the like, but also to insist on the centrality of gender difference and the oppression of women in urbanization (Stimpson et al. 1981; Christopherson 1982; Brownill 1984; Rose 1984;

Mackenzie 1987; Pratt and Hanson 1988). Urban geography has been most thoroughly reoriented, however, by the processes of capitalist change which have been at work on American cities in recent years. Such work has often fallen under the rubric of "urban restructuring" (Soja, Morales, and Wolff 1983; Fainstein et al. 1983; M. Smith and Feagin 1987). Nonetheless, advances have been made in key areas of understanding (e.g., see *Society and Space* 1986). One, growing out of the new industrial geography, is a powerful statement that was previously lacking of the relation of urbanization to capitalist production (Scott 1986b, 1988a; Storper and Walker 1989). A second is a consideration of the rise of new office centers in big cities and the accompanying reconstitution of residential areas through gentrification (Walker and Greenberg 1982; Nelson 1986; Smith and Williams 1986; also Walker 1985a; Urry 1986a, 1987). A third is an expansive reinterpretation of urban fragmentation and flux as part of the experience of postmodernity (Davis 1985; Soja 1986, 1989; Dear 1986; Harvey 1987; Knox 1987).

David Harvey has, of course, continued to lead the way in many areas of inquiry (see the essays collected in Harvey 1985b). To understand better the relation of the urban process to capitalism, he undertook a monumental reconsideration of the Marxist theory of capital, in search of an adequate conceptualization of money, finance capital, land rent, fixed investment, crisis, and spatial expansion, among other things (Harvey 1982). This was followed by a sustained investigation of the development of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century that provides perhaps the most complete integration of the various facets of urbanization yet achieved in a single essay (Harvey 1985a). While there has been some difference of opinion between those who take a more unified cut at the city through capital accumulation and those who stress the jostling of other causal forces—from gender to modernist ideology—a positive development running across the work of left geographers in the 1980s has been an increasingly comprehensive and vibrant picture of the immensely complex phenomenon of contemporary urbanization (e.g., Soja 1986; Harvey 1985a, 1985b; Marston and Kirby 1988).

INDUSTRIAL GEOGRAPHY

In the 1970s Marxist geographers, led by Doreen Massey, began a critique of traditional industrial-location theory, reevaluating everything from its neoclassical roots to its efflorescence in sophisticated quantitative models. In the 1980s, they have been responsible for the emergence of a new industrial geography which is a powerful alternative to the traditional field. Some of the consolidated results of this movement are just now appearing in book form.

The impact of Marxism within the new industrial geography is reflected in an emphasis on production and particularly what have been called "spatial divisions of labor" (Massey 1984; Scott and Storper 1986; Storper and Walker 1989). But there is a wide range in scales of analysis and an evolution in the debate that we may be able to capture through a simple tripartite scheme of *micro*-, *meso*-, and *macro-geographies* of capitalist production.

Microgeography of Production

The microgeography of industry above all concerns relations between capital and labor, or employment relations, at the plant level (factory or office). Clark (1981),

Walker and Storper (1981), and Peet (1983) provided early schematics for the way in which capitalists could exploit spatial differences in labor markets to their advantage in plant-location decisions. These models were later augmented by more subtle analytics of "employment relations" (Storper and Walker 1983, 1984; Moulaert 1987), the interaction of place and industry (Massey 1984), and regional adjustment (Clark, Gertler, and Whiteman 1986). Important applications of the labor-market approach to the spatial division of labor can be found in Nelson (1986) and Angel (1987). It has been amplified, in these and other works, by increased attention to plant- and firm-specific machine technologies, work organization, management practices, union organizing, and strategies for coping with uncertainty (see also Storper 1982; Massey and Meegan 1982; Sayer 1986b; Clark and Johnston 1987; Morgan and Sayer 1988; Walker 1988c; Clark 1989b). For all the contributions of the spatial-division-of-labor approach, however, it still has a residual flavor of Weberian location theory with a laborist twist, and has therefore had to be supplemented.

Mesogeography of Production

Mesolevel analysis began with a turn away from the attributes of places to those of industries (Massey 1979). This heralded a salutary revival of interest in specific case studies of sectors (Massey and Meegan 1978; Scott 1983b, 1984a, 1984b; Markusen 1985; Markusen, Hall, and Glasmeier 1986; Bradbury 1987; Storper and Christopherson 1987; Morgan and Sayer 1988; Holmes 1988). At first such industry studies served principally as a backdrop for understanding plant closure and job loss in declining sectors, under the rubric of "restructuring" theory (Massey and Meegan 1982). A spatial-division-of-labor model reasserted itself at the mesolevel when it came to assessing the overall pattern of plant location, and this was dominated by notions of spatial hierarchies of skill and corporate functions (e.g., Massey 1984; Taylor and Thrift 1982; Bradbury 1985) that owed more to core-periphery models (Frank 1968) and the geography of enterprise (Hymer 1972; Watts 1981) than to the new industrial geography.

The mesogeography of industry has moved in more original directions in three respects. The first has been to inquire further into the division of labor and how it is organized (Scott 1983a, 1986a, 1988a; Walker 1988b). Attention has been turned to the dynamics of the *social division of labor*, as expressed in patterns of specialization at the level of the individual plant and firm. This work has drawn in particular upon the theories of Coase (1937) and Williamson (1975) who have provided a strong analytical language for thinking about processes of economic and institutional organization. This language builds on the logic of inter-firm transacting to show which particular sets of production activities will be internalized within the firm, and how the boundaries between firms will be determined.

Research by geographers in the Coase-Williamson mode has been devoted to processes of *vertical disintegration*, i.e., the deepening and widening of the social division of labor as the fragmentation of production activities proceeds (Scott 1983a, 1986a; Storper and Christopherson 1987). This fragmentation is often equivalent in organizational terms to an increase in subcontracting (Holmes 1986), product innovation and diversification (Schoenberger 1988a), and overall *flexibility* of the production system, for it enormously increases transacting possibilities for any particular production activity (Scott 1988b). It has also been shown that vertical disintegration or fragmentation engenders strong external economies within the production system.

Since vertical disintegration tends to increase levels of external transactional activity in any system, it is also associated with rising distance-dependent costs. Groups of producers often seek to reduce these costs strategically by clustering together in geographic space. In this manner, external economies (a nonspatial phenomenon) are transformed into and consumed in the form of agglomeration economies. Localized production complexes are therefore organizational-cum-spatial systems which are mediated through locational processes out of the social division of labor. They are further sustained by local labor markets, whose flexibility under conditions of agglomeration is greatly increased—i.e., information exchange, job search, and job-matching processes are all enhanced by the close proximity of many employers (and job seekers) in one place.

The second direction in which the mesogeography of industry has moved has been to render dynamic the analysis of production, in three ways (Walker 1988a; Storper and Walker 1989):

One is to incorporate the disequilibrium that constantly besets companies in the form of uncertainty and competitive struggle (Clark, Gertler, and Whiteman 1986; Schoenberger 1987; Scott 1983a).

Another is to view location as a process of the technologically driven growth of whole sectors, rather than as the static allocation of plants having known features, or even as short-term restructuring (Walker 1985b).

Yet another is to focus upon the force of external economies that propel growth across wide segments of industry, as well as individual sectors (Scott and Storper 1986; Scott 1988a).

The third direction of inquiry at the mesolevel joins the dynamics of industries with those of regions in a joint process of territorial industrialization (Scott 1988b; Storper and Walker 1989). This goes beyond agglomeration economies to the way in which whole new territories evolve and are affixed to the existing space-economy of capitalism. It builds on the insights of Harvey (1982) regarding spatial expansion and disequilibrium in capitalist growth, but provides a firmer base in the process of production. It also tries to solve the standing theoretical puzzle of the relation of social process to spatial outcomes.

The new industrial geographers, in reaction to much of the statistical and empirical work of regional science, have frequently cautioned against deducing geographic outcomes from industrial characteristics, and generalizing from particular industries and areas to larger social and spatial processes. Thus, Massey (1984) views spatial structures of production in particular firms and industries as only one element in the complex constitution of "spatial divisions of labor." Researchers have acknowledged that the relation between social processes, technological and organizational change, and spatial outcomes such as decentralization and agglomeration, is "mediated" by a multitude of intervening events and processes that defy easy generalization (e.g., Walker 1985b; Sayer 1986a; Gertler 1988). These cautions have helped to liberate industrial geography from monolithic and unidirectional conceptions of industrial development such as that offered by product-cycle theory, but can lead to a kind of explanatory nihilism if carried too far. While the geography of industry is seen as complexly determined, and while industry and regions are seen as mutually constitutive, the specter of essentialism haunts the literature (Storper 1985a). A Marxist-realist

perspective has allowed an uneasy coexistence of the classic theory of capital accumulation and class struggle with new strains of multicausal analysis and fresh empirical study. The solution appears to lie in the way capital accumulation and the constitution of places—what Smith (1984) has called "the production of place"—unfold together through the periodic creation of "new industrial spaces" (Scott 1988b; Storper and Walker 1989).

Macrogeography of Production

The macrogeography of production involves an effort by Marxists to situate industrial geography within a broader social context of the evolution of capitalism. On the level of the economy and society as a whole, many industrial geographers are beginning to view geographic change as most effectively periodized in terms of regimes of accumulation and corresponding modes of social regulation (Storper and Scott 1986; Harvey 1987; Harvey and Scott 1989; Storper and Walker 1989). This work draws inspiration from the French Regulationist School of Marxism, which has always been strongly geographic in its approach (e.g., Lipietz 1987). There is general agreement that the period from about the 1920s to the early 1970s (in North America and Western Europe) can be categorized as dominated by a "Fordist" regime of accumulation, based on assembly-line mass-production sectors which formed large growth poles. The geography of this phenomenon corresponded to large industrial cities concentrated in the Manufacturing Belt of the U.S. and the great industrial region stretching across the North European Plain. These cities experienced a devastating process of deindustrialization and job loss over the 1970s and early 1980s.

There is increasing evidence that since the end of the 1960s or early 1970s a new regime of accumulation has begun to appear, based on *flexible* forms of technology, production organization, and labor markets (whence the designation "regime of flexible accumulation"), although the matter is still fiercely debated (Sayer 1988b; Gertler 1988; Schoenberger 1988b). This new regime is strongly associated with the re-agglomeration of production and the emergence of a series of new industrial spaces in various parts of North America and Western Europe (e.g., Silicon Valley, Orange County, the French Cite Scientifique, the Third Italy, and so on). These new industrial spaces in general occur in areas that remained free from intensive Fordist forms of industrialization. They are typically based on flexible patterns of production, above all high-technology industry and craft-specialty production (Storper and Scott 1988; Scott and Angel 1987; Scott 1988b; Florida and Kenney 1989).

Research at all three levels of industrial geography has been associated with a heightened sensibility to the connection between industrial base and changing local political configurations; as a result, a "new" political geography seems to be emerging as a complement to the new industrial and regional geographies. Thus, as part of the post-Fordist regime of accumulation, new flexible manufacturing complexes that have sprung up at various locations over the last few decades have for the most part appeared in places that have had little or no prior history of industrialization and working-class community development. In such places, the capital-labor relation has frequently been reconstituted on new (flexible) foundations that have significantly benefited capital. A new kind of *politics of place* seems to have been ushered in, involving disorganized labor (i.e., nonunionized) and neoconservative community for-

mation (Storper and Walker 1989). At the same time, the reconstituted transactional relations between producers in new flexible-production localities engender a search for new forms of business-community development, ranging from local growth coalitions to just-in-time collectives of producers and dependent subcontractors.

QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Quantitative methods are used for two purposes: for confronting theory with data, and as a language for theory development. Both uses are quite recent in left geography. It has become increasingly accepted that certain aspects of Marx's economic theory are subject to analysis using these tools (Farhi 1973; Barnbrock 1976; Scott 1980). In the realm of theory development, mathematical models have been particularly influential in increasing our understanding of the relation between labor values and prices, of the factors affecting historical tendencies in the rate of profit, and the possibilities and limitations of unequal exchange.

The implications of this work for economic geography and uneven development have been investigated by several writers in recent years. Sheppard (1987) has modeled the structure of production prices and labor values in space-economy. On the basis of this analysis, it has been shown that a capitalist space-economy is inherently unstable (Sheppard 1982); that inter- and intra-class conflict is a logical consequence of the economic social structure of capitalism (Sheppard and Barnes 1986); and that regional class alliances have a material foundation in spatial variations in rates of exploitation and wage levels that develop in a capitalist space-economy (Liassatos 1983; Sheppard 1984). In addition, it has been shown how introduction of space into the mathematical analyses of Marxist economists has called into question some of the theoretical conclusions of those analyses, including debates over the likelihood of falling rates of profit, the existence of comparative advantage and benefits from trade, and the tendency of intersectoral capital flows to equalize the rate of profit (Sheppard and Barnes 1986; Webber 1987c). They have also brought significant clarification to debates on land rent, concerning the role of rents by comparison to profits and wages, the various kinds of differential rent, and the status of monopoly and absolute rent (Scott 1980; Huriot 1981; Barnes and Sheppard 1984; Barnes 1984, 1988). Not all of the quantitative work by left geographers has been so closely related to a reexamination of aspects of Marx's theory. Clark, Gertler, and Whiteman (1986), for example, have developed an approach to analyzing regional dynamics from a political economic perspective, involving heavy use of statistical analysis (also Gertler 1984a, 1984b).

Mathematical approaches to Marxist economic theory have been controversial, particularly in the realm of value theory. While their use has clarified the relation between labor values and prices, it has at the same time been argued that there is no direct way that prices can be read from labor values, leading some authors to conclude that labor values are theoretically useless (Hodgson 1981). On the other hand, others have used these analytical developments to show how labor values and other Marxist categories may be calculated empirically (Webber 1987a, 1987b). Geographers have contributed significantly to this empirical literature, calculating the degree of unequal exchange (Webber and Foot 1984), the relation between labor values and exchange values (Gibson et al. 1986), and historical changes in profit rates (Webber

and Rigby 1986; Webber 1987a, 1988). Perhaps surprisingly, these empirical analyses have shown that labor values are in fact very strongly correlated with production prices, and that the rate of profit has indeed shown a secular downward trend.

The use of quantitative and mathematical methods has generated considerable debate. Some have argued that formal, deductive logic can help to clarify Marxian economics, even if the entire project is dialectical in nature (Farhi 1973; Barnbrock 1976; Roemer 1986). It may be objected, however, that supposedly "analytic" models introduce an unwarranted degree of individualism into economic theory (e.g., Roemer 1980, 1986); that their class analysis is more Ricardian than Marxian in inspiration (e.g., Scott 1980; Barnes 1988); that their analysis of competition is neoclassical in spirit (Shaikh 1980); and that they tend toward static formulations where dynamic ones are warranted (Walker 1988a). Similarly, Sayer (1984) argues that extensive statistical analysis is atheoretical and incapable of identifying the causal mechanisms behind observed events, and, equally, statistical work loses the notion of agency and struggle inherent in Marxist political theory.

Despite these criticisms, mathematical and statistical work is becoming more common in left geography. This is not to say that statistical work by Marxist geographers will necessarily be any better than that of their empiricist counterparts (Sheppard 1982; Sayer 1984). However, such work can offer two things to left geography: first, it becomes possible to identify what is happening (is the rate of profit falling?), and secondly, the task of proposing to measure a category forces an exact definition of that category (just what is productive labor?). With appropriate limitations, quantification can contribute to both theory development and empirical analysis within left research programs.

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Marxist political economy has provided the central questions, and some of the most vital theory, in the study of Third World development over the past two decades. The first steps were taken by Paul Baran in the early 1950s, from whose work flowed dependency theory in its various guises (Frank, ECLA, Cardoso, Amin—see the excellent review by Palma 1978). Following on the anti-imperialist politics of the New Left in the 1960s came a second return to the classical Marxism of Marx, Lenin, and Luxemburg in the early 1970s; this later became synonymous with what is loosely called "structural Marxism," but particularly the modes-of-production approach (Foster-Carter 1978). A third current in this broad stream was the historical work of Wallerstein (1974) and his world-systems school.

Yet, just as the theory to explain the backward condition of the Third World had been fully articulated, the "end of the Third World" was being proclaimed on the basis of the internal differentiation of the periphery and the dramatic postwar industrialization of the newly industrializing countries (NICs) in Latin America and Southeast Asia. Within the Marxist camp there are three milestones in the reaction against the sweeping claims of the global theories of underdevelopment. One is Robert Brenner's seminal critique (1977, 1986) of Frank and Wallerstein for undue emphasis on market exchange, and his reassertion of class relations and technical change in economic growth. The second is Warren's return (1980) to the classical Marxist assertion

of capitalism's progressive qualities and the new realities of capitalist growth in the periphery. The third is Lipietz's application (1987) of the French Regulationist school's theory of regimes of accumulation to the dilemmas of Third World industrialization, in a manner that unites Samir Amin's insights into disarticulated development with the methods of production, particularly "bloody Taylorism," and links the rise of flexible accumulation in the core countries to a move toward peripheral Fordism in the Third World.

Geographers have taken up these same themes. Slater (1973, 1977) brought dependency theory into the study of Third World regional and urban development among geographers; Peet (1987) and Watts (1981) have written on modes of production; Bassett (1988) and Watts (1986) have made use of Lipietz; Slater (1987) has taken on the Warren thesis "economism"; and so on. Generally, however, our impression is that, while development studies have been theoretically upgraded, this has happened in a more systematic way in Europe, and it has been overshadowed by other subspecialties within North American geography. Large parts of foreign area studies in American geography are still wanting in rigor and energy. Nonetheless, there is still a good deal to be enthusiastic about concerning the work of the new generation of left development geographers.

An important part of the debate in left development theory in the 1980s is whether the new realities in the periphery—and by extension the extraordinary internationalization of capital since the early 1970s—can be captured by the theory of capitalism outlined by Marx. A strongly dissenting note has been struck by Corbridge (1986), from within the left, based on a post-Structuralist view of Marxism as an economic determinism and unilinear theory of history. Corbridge argues that radical development geography has failed because it is essentialist, oppositional, and confrontational, and cannot explain the existence and peculiarities of the NICs. This dissent is misguided in several ways, however, not the least of which is having overlooked much of the recent work in the field that does not fall prey to the sins he enunciates (Watts 1988).

There are three main fronts along which left research is moving in the 1980s. The first is the study of industrialization and capital accumulation in the periphery (and the NICs in particular). This embraces the general work on transnational capital by Taylor and Thrift (1982), the research on labor-intensive industries taking advantage of cheap labor in Mexico and Southeast Asia (Christopherson 1982; Browett 1986; Scott 1987), the debate on urbanization and labor control in São Paulo (Storper 1984), studies of spatial segregation in South Africa (Crush 1982; Pickles 1985; Mabin 1988), and work on the informal sector (Bromley 1980; Burgess 1982).

Another major focus, harking back to the Marxist classics (particularly Kautsky and Lenin), is the fate of the peasantry (the "agrarian question") in peripheral capitalism, and by extension the whole question of food as a wage good in a world economy. Probably the most insightful work from an explicitly Marxist perspective in this area has been by deJanvry (1981) on the semiproletarianization of the peasantry and the contributions of Harriet Friedmann (1982, 1987) on the international food order since 1945. This entire body of literature has been characterized by a great internal vitality and debate (Watts 1988). Geographers have made a certain contribution to it (Watts 1987). Hecht (1985) has drawn on deJanvry in her studies of Amazonian development in Brazil; Watts (1983, 1986) and Wisner (1977, 1985) have linked the transformation

of the peasantry with the intensification of famine in Africa (also Watts and Bassett 1985); Johnson (1982) has looked at peasant struggles for survival in rural Mexico; and Richards (1985) has made a sustained defense of the environmental knowledge of the peasant farmer.

The third front, and perhaps the most exciting, is the coming together, under Marxist tutelage, of political economy and cultural ecology of the old Berkeley type. That is, people are looking at ecological and resource questions through the prism of the relations of production, class domination, and state intervention. The work of Hecht (1985) and Grossman (1984) falls into this mold. More recently, though not explicitly Marxist, Blaikie (1985) and Blaikie and Brookfield (1986) examine soil erosion and land degradation in terms of the constraints facing local managers at the point of production. A large group of Africanists are examining similar aspects of rural and agrarian development in terms of the articulation of the state with local (household) resource management (Bassett 1986, 1988; Richards 1985; Weiner et al. 1985; Samatar 1985, 1988). And a few are now looking more closely at the key role of women in agrarian systems of production and exchange, and how women's oppression can act as a brake on development (Carney 1986).

Some emerging areas of interest should also be noted. There are the long-overdue beginnings of left scholarship on gender and development (Momsen and Townsend 1987), migration (Crush 1986), nationalism (Blaut 1987), world debt (Corbridge 1987), and the state (Watts 1984).

ENVIRONMENTAL AND RESOURCE GEOGRAPHY

The left contribution to environmental and resource studies has been selective, as this remains much "the forgotten dimension" of left geography that Peet (1975) decried over a decade ago. Fitzsimmons (1989) is still chiding us for this neglect. Nonetheless, the quality of work has often been very high, giving it an influence out of proportion to the scale of production. One thinks immediately of the widespread use of Harvey's essay (1974b) on population as a counter to the resurgent Malthusianism of the time.

One of the earliest and most telling areas of work was the refutation of "natural hazard" research, which blamed nature for social catastrophes and the victims for their vulnerability to events such as drought and flood, owing to their primitive and irrational beliefs and behaviors in the face of nature's furies. The left critique pointed instead to the political economic sources of risk, particularly the exposure of peasant agriculture to the vicissitudes of the world market, the erosion of traditional methods of husbandry and social adjustment, increasing pressure on land and people with new methods of production, and new forms of class exploitation (Wisner 1977; O'Keefe and Wisner 1977, 1983; Marston 1983; Watts 1983, 1986). Much of this work has come out of Africa, perhaps because there the transition to commodity production is the most recent, and the degree of human marginalization is the greatest; certainly, calamities have smitten that beleaguered land with haunting regularity in recent years. These trenchant interventions have moved the whole discussion of famine, soil erosion, and environmental degradation among development geographers visibly to the left (Hewitt 1983; Blaikie 1985; Blaikie and Brookfield 1986).

In the advanced capitalist countries, the greatest hazards are often those posed by industrial pollutants, or what are sometimes called "technological hazards." As the

epochal pollution-control legislation of the 1970s took hold in the U.S., it triggered a fierce sequence of political and legal struggles between industry and environmentalists; while the new laws to clean up air, water, or workplace were generally positive, they were often pitifully ineffective (Walker and Storper 1978; Walker, Storper, and Wides 1979). As time has passed, however, attention has turned increasingly to the previously underestimated hazards of toxic substances (Fitzsimmons 1987). Toxic-dump siting has become a favorite pastime for some geographers, but is fervently opposed by most local citizens and activists (Heiman 1988a). Repeatedly, an aroused environmental movement has created obstacles to growth that capitalism must circumvent, typically through the intervention of higher levels of the state (Heiman 1988b).

A considerable source of environmental disruption in the advanced countries—and now spreading rapidly into the Third World—has been the large-scale water project. The theme of hydraulic civilizations has long been a favorite of geographers and their fellow travelers. Yet the leading model for modern capitalist water development is undoubtedly the American West, especially California (Worster 1985). The irrationalities of this model have been sharply criticized, and shown to be the result of the brazen exercise of power by the growers and developers whom it most benefits (Levien 1979; Storper and Walker 1984; Walker and Williams 1982; Westcoat 1984).

The study of nature transformed by human activity in what may be loosely called "rural environs" has led to a reconsideration of the hoary field of agricultural geography. Geographers have joined an assemblage of left theorists from disparate disciplines in tackling the nature of agricultural systems in the advanced capitalist countries, particularly sociologists such as Friedmann (1982), Buttel and Newby (1980), and Friedland (1982). Fitzsimmons (1986) draws on the ideas of the new industrial geography to analyze the structure of farm production in California, while Vail (1982), Pudup and Watts (1987), and Vogeler (1981) focus upon the crucial distinction between capitalist and petty commodity production in even the most advanced farm sectors. Munton and his coworkers in the U.K. are pursuing similar themes, and the theoretical issues are well aired in Marsden et al. (1986). A few left geographers have looked into primary-resource sectors other than agriculture, exploring the relations between economic conditions and the exploitation of both land and the people involved in mining and forestry (Bradbury 1982, 1984; Warf 1988). Hecht's (1988) work on Amazonia, in a very different context, bears mentioning again for its analysis of the political economic origins of resource despoilation.

A quite different perspective emerges from those writers concerned with the immediate consumptive use of nature in parks, nature preserves, and "naturalized" landscapes formerly in other uses. Such areas reveal the most stark contrasts between an apparent state of nature and the often quite exaggerated social machinations and meanings that protect and illuminate it in the properly defined ways. Because societies so generously read their hopes and fears into the verdant landscape of symbols that vital "Nature" presents, the disposition of natural lands cannot be left to chance, nor can their interpretation. Indeed, naturalized landscapes of the most varied kinds, from English gardens to National Parks, have been created by different societies for quite specific reasons, such as luxury consumption and national identity. Raymond Williams (1973) and John Berger (1973) have undoubtedly provided much of the inspiration for this line of thinking, which has been developed in geography by Olwig and Olwig (1979), Cosgrove (1984), Olwig (1980, 1984), and Heiman (1989). The left thus turns

cultural geography's traditional obsession with landscapes on its head, giving political and social substance to the very meaning and definition of that cultural product, "nature's ideological landscape" (Olwig 1984).

While the fragmentation of environmental and resource geography on the left is apparent, Smith (1984) makes a sophisticated effort to integrate the field at the highest levels of historical materialist concepts, in terms of "the social production of nature"—to which Fitzsimmons (1989) has recently appealed once again. In a similar manner, Sayer (1979) injects a useful element of philosophical clarification, in a realist vein, into the debate on the relation between people and nature. On the more active side of left geography's engagement with environmental issues has been the frankly political interest expressed through academic writings. This is apparent with respect to specific issues of the moment, such as hazardous-waste removal (Heiman 1988a), petrochemical plant location (Walker, Storper, and Wides 1979), and Amazonian forest clearance (Hecht 1988). It is taken up more broadly in the reflective essays on the Green movement by Redclift (1984) and the U.S. environmental movement by Fitzsimmons and Goutlieb (1988).

SOCIALIST-FEMINIST GEOGRAPHY

Geographic feminist analysis entered disciplinary discourse at about the same time, motivated by many of the same social issues as historical materialism. Realizing that conventional concepts and methods were inadequate to exposing the condition—and oppression—of women, feminists developed an independent theoretical base that saw gender as a socially constructed category which changed over time and varied by place (for further discussion see Little, Peake, and Richardson 1989; Mackenzie 1989). This led many feminists to adopt (and subsequently adapt) the historical materialist framework for examining the overall development of gender relations.

Much of the initial work on the "geography of women" concentrated on empirical documentation of the spatial constraints facing women, and this remains the focus of mainstream research (for a review see Zelinsky, Monk, and Hanson 1982; see also Stimpson et al. 1981 and Wekerle, Peterson, and Morley 1980). Feminist geographers have contributed heavily to the effort to make women's plight more visible (Bowlby, Foord, and MacKenzie 1981; Hanson and Monk 1982; Women and Geography Study Group 1984). Studies of "women's place" in contemporary society have ranged from the home, to the labor market, to city life in general (e.g., Hayden 1984; Christopherson 1982, 1983; Cooke 1984; England 1986; Nelson 1986; MacKenzie 1987, 1989; Little, Peake, and Richardson 1989). Increasingly, attention has turned to the active role of women in altering gender relations and social practices in response to such things as neighborhood transformation (Holcomb 1981; Brownill 1984; Rose 1984; Breitbart 1985), running single-parent households (Klodawsky and Spector 1985; Klodawsky and Mackenzie 1987), labor-force segmentation (Christopherson 1988), and industrial restructuring (Massey 1984; Mackenzie 1986; Murgatroyd et al. 1985) (see generally Andrew and Moore-Milroy 1989; Bowlby et al. 1989).

This work suggests, however, that integrating gender relations into geographic analysis is not just an empirical question of disclosing the spatial element in women's oppression (McDowell 1983). It requires modification of geographic historical mate-

rialism at the most fundamental level. A lively debate has been taking place over the force of patriarchy as opposed to class in history and geography (Foord and Gregson 1986; McDowell 1986; Gier and Walton 1987; Knopp and Lauria 1987; Johnson 1987). Some theorize patriarchal relations independently of class, perhaps as a separate mode of production, while others subordinate patriarchy to capitalist class relations. In either case, it is largely agreed that feminist historical materialism must see gender as constituted simultaneously with class and the development of social production (Gregson and Foord 1987; Lerner 1986). This necessitates a shift in focus to the intersection of production and the reproduction of biological and social beings, and a richer concept of "human nature" as creative, androgynous, and changing. It also brings sexuality, and all it implies for the psychic life of individuals, profoundly into the picture (Hartsock 1987). If a single theme must be extracted from this for the geographer, it is that gender is a fundamental parameter of the appropriation, creation, and alteration of environment, physical or human (Breitbart, Foord, and MacKenzie 1984). Both men and women act on the world, and do so in gender-structured ways; as they do, they change themselves, altering their ways of working, of gendering, of loving, and oppressing one another. These alterations in the patterns of women's and men's activity are a profound and prognostic source of environmental change.

REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY AND LOCALITY STUDIES

The 1980s have witnessed a resurgence of interest in regional geography on the left. Long associated with synthetic description, environmental determinism, and cultural modes of explanation, regional geography was part of the corpus of traditional geography rejected by the spatial-science school in the 1960s. The left went even farther, in the 1970s, laying a pox on both houses for their apparent "fetish of space," or attribution of exaggerated causal powers to distance and place in social affairs (Castells 1977). A lone voice for a socialist reading of spatial relations was Henri Lefebvre (1975, 1987), who influenced Harvey (1973), but was largely overlooked in the rush to learn what other disciplines had to say about social theory (Massey 1984, 52). Soja (1989) would attribute this to the prevailing failure of modern social science to handle the spatial dimension in human affairs, including the impoverished theoretical state of traditional geography that made it incapable of reversing the general tide. Indeed, Soja (1980) was among the first to raise a voice against the relegation of space and place to mere containers or playing fields for social processes, resonating with the roughly contemporaneous call of Gregory (1978, 119) in Britain. While the reaction against spatial science and synthetic description led radicals to underestimate the actual importance of geography, it nonetheless produced a generation more thoroughly steeped in philosophy, the social sciences, and historical materialism than had ever been present in the discipline before. The left was poised, at the beginning of the 1980s, to look out upon the landscape of human affairs with new eyes.

The "reconstruction of regional geography" (Thrift 1983) has come from several directions and claimed various sources of inspiration. One that we have already touched on is the powerful stream of the new industrial geography. After initially calling for a move from regional to industrial studies to understanding the declining fortunes of many areas, Massey came to the conclusion that the particulars of regional

history and conflict could not be omitted from a theory of spatial divisions of labor, and that, to put it crisply, "geography matters" (Massey 1979, 1985; Massey and Allen 1984). Industry-restructuring theory came to serve as principal inspiration for regional and local studies (e.g., Hudson et al. 1983; O'Keefe 1984; Peet 1987; Graham et al. 1988; Warde 1988; Warf 1988). Harvey was similarly drawn to the peculiarities of capitalist urbanization in Second Empire Paris (Harvey 1985a). Scott's inquiries into territorial clustering of industry led him toward an increasingly spatialized theory of industrial organization (Scott 1988a, 1988b; also Storper and Christopherson 1987), which has been followed up by Storper and Walker in a theory of territorial industrialization in which the essence of capitalism is its ever-shifting regional foundations (Storper and Scott 1988; Walker 1988b; Storper and Walker 1989). Soja has, of course, been in the thick of this renewed urban-industrial geography, bringing his acute powers of kaleidoscopic spatial analysis to bear on the problem (Soja, Morales, and Wolff 1983; Soja 1986, 1989). Clark and Gertler, among others, have also been reasserting the importance of regionalism in their studies of labor and capital relations in a spatially fragmented division of labor (Clark 1981; Clark, Gertler, and Whiteman 1986; Clark 1989b; Gertler 1984a, 1984b).

A different cut on the regional-development problem has been taken by those working through the optic of time geography. Prominent among this group are Gregory, Pred, and Thrift (Gregory 1981, 1982, 1986; Pred 1981, 1984a, 1986; Thrift 1981, 1983). Having soon outgrown the restrictive initial formulation of Hagerstrand, these theorists took strongly to the work of sociologist Anthony Giddens (1979, 1981, 1984) and his structuration theory of the dialectic of human agency and social structure; Giddens reciprocated by rediscovering the importance of space in human affairs, thanks to association with Gregory and Pred, and a reading of Hagerstrand. Giddens' method appeared as a freshet to those most chary of the structuralist tendencies in Marxist geography and most keen on restoring the human face of daily life to grand theory. Yet Giddens has not been able to transcend Marxism as the principle framework of left inquiry, and the foundation of this group's work remains implicitly, if somewhat uneasily, historical materialist (see also Storper 1985b; Gregson 1986; Watts 1987). Their closest antecedents may be found in the historical work of the British Marxists, particularly E. P. Thompson, and the French *Annales* school, particularly Fernand Braudel. Thompson's populist and activist approach to class formation and Braudel's rich investigation of everyday material life bookend the concerns of the new regionalists in their historical studies of the rise of capitalism. Indeed, the former's spirited engagement with things peculiarly *English* in capitalist development, and the latter's close attention to the geographic ebb and flow of life in Europe—thanks to Vidal's impact on French thought—make them apt models for a geography integrated with other social sciences, and yet aware of its own potential contribution. (For an assessment of Braudel, see Baker 1984; Pred 1984b; Kirby 1986).

Certain geographers and sociologists have vigorously advanced this spirit of collaboration without capitulation of geography to more muscular disciplines (Gregory and Urry 1985). This venture has been joined most strikingly under the rubric of "locality studies" by the CURS initiative (Murgatroyd et al. 1985; Urry 1986b; Boddy, Lovering, and Bassett 1987; Cooke 1988). This project, conceived by Doreen Massey as a way of advancing the study of contemporary regional transformation in Britain (cf. Massey 1984; Cooke 1986), has been criticized for a lack of integrative theory

(Smith 1987a; Harvey and Scott 1989); but the danger may be more one of large, collective research projects losing their focus, than of erroneous conception or political drift. The best of the locality studies can be very good indeed (Warde 1988; Beauregard 1988). On the American side, especially the West Coast, regional transformation has been conceived much more in the dynamic terms of capitalist growth than in industrial restructuring, urban decline, and job loss (Cox and Mair 1988; Scott 1988b; Storper and Walker 1989). This would also be true of Harvey's (1985a) Paris study, in which that city's local transformation is seen as emblematic of the highest form of capitalist development at the time, and the locus of social conflicts, the resolution of which set the political agenda for whole nations during the next half century or more.

An important complement to the prevailing economic and sociological approach to regional transformation and locality studies is a revived interest in the cultural dimension of urbanization and regional development. This work rejects the uncritical approach of traditional regional geographers toward cultural regions and landscape interpretation by scrutinizing the political-economic foundations of culture and ways of seeing implicated in the conventional concept of landscape itself (Blaut 1979; Cosgrove 1983; Cosgrove and Daniels 1987; Daniels 1988). Cosgrove (1984) examines the historical sweep of landscape interpretation from renaissance Europe to industrial America. Olwig (1984) focuses upon regional landscapes widely believed to be natural, and how that condition is invented during periods of dramatic regional change. Pudup (1987) takes up the "problem of Appalachia" in the dominant American vision and shows the discordance with reality, while emphasizing the distinctive economic and social history of that singular region.

The same is being done for the urban landscape. Harvey (1985b) delivers a vibrant political analysis of conflict over Paris and its monuments, one which resonates strongly with the work of nongeographers Berman (1982) and T. J. Clark (1985) on images of nineteenth-century urban transformations under the onslaught of a rising capitalism. Recent work has emphasized the cultures of urban consumption, now typically clothed in the decorative symbols of postmodern architecture (Harvey 1985b, 1987; Davis 1985; Knox 1987; Soja 1989). However, cheek by jowl with such consumer delights as gallerias, luxury plazas, and new museums are immigrant enclaves that are home to vigorous small-business activity and intensive labor exploitation (Zukin 1982; Sassen 1988). Geographers of an only mildly left stamp have been making some trenchant observations about the stamp of race and racist practices on such immigrant and "deviant" neighborhoods in North American cities (Anderson 1987, 1988; Godfrey 1988).

Explorations of culturalist themes often run parallel between Marxist and humanist geographers, and indications of a general revival of cultural geography are afoot (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987; *Society and Space* 1988). While one should not underestimate the differences between idealist and materialist points of entry into the analysis of culture formation, some nimble theorists have been able to work both sides of the fence, to good effect; but the material-cultural hermeneutic remains a poorly understood and greyish area of analysis (Sayer 1988a).

As a result of these various lines of work, there is now something recognizable as a "new" regional geography to which scholars can lay claim and on which they can formulate their research agendas (Pudup 1988; Gilbert 1988). Virtually everyone in the left of geography has been looking closer to the ground for answers to persistent puzzles of difference in time and space, despite seemingly unifying systems of world

markets, capitalist production, central states, national culture, or modern media. All have been concerned, despite important disagreements, with the interaction of structure and agency, place and time, the specific and the abstract. The program of the new regionalism appears to be capturing the middle ground between the immediate and the global as a significant level of social causality.

The first keywords are "regional transformation": regions are formed and transformed by human activity; indeed, they are defined by social function and integration, not physiographic boundaries (Massey 1984, 108). The second is "locale" (Thrift 1983, 40) or "territory" (Scott and Storper 1986): the mesolevel formations at which critical social processes take place—not region as a container for action, but as a force in the production and reproduction of industries, genders, or classes. And the last is, somewhat prescriptively, the local becomes the general: the way in which locally incubated changes in social relations or forces of production become decisive for nations, capitalism, or the world at large (Storper and Walker 1989). But enthusiasms for this new trend must be weighed against the loose coalition of interests pursuing it, and their often-disturbing lack of clarity on the scale of analysis or ways in which local studies illuminate critical causal forces in a realist manner; the result is often a false sense of concreteness in which a wealth of empirical detail elides a poverty of theory (Sayer 1988a; Cox and Mair 1989).

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY AND THE STATE

Geographic questions about the political economy of the capitalist state have changed over the last five years, reflecting broader theoretical debates as well as changing economic and political realities. In place of descriptive or deterministic explanations of the state apparatus, there have emerged conceptions of the state as a complex set of social relations that shape peoples' political experiences and practices in places. The state is seen to be reproduced and contested through an array of sites that span the workplace, residential community, political arena, and family.

Two broad areas of research on the state can be identified. The first is "state-centered" and takes up questions of the nature of political relations within the state apparatus. The second is "society-centered" and deals with interactions between state institutions and the broader social politics within which they are located, including the role of the state in reproducing and transforming social relations in capitalism. Much of this geographic research has concentrated on North American and European states, and focuses upon either the national or local scale, rather than attempting comparisons of state forms at different scales. The local state has received particularly close attention, probably reflecting the rise of interest in the state within subspecialties other than political geography, such as urban studies; and it must be said that the work of North American researchers brings in local government in a more vigorous way, on the whole, than similar British work on the left (Fincher 1987).

State-Centered Research

In the past, state analysts have been concerned with describing the functions performed by different branches of the state apparatus (e.g., local, regional, central), and classifying expenditures as productive or legitimating (Dear 1981). These concerns were encouraged by O'Connor's analysis (1973) of the capitalist state, and by British

researchers such as Cockburn (1977). But new themes are emerging, as analysts grapple with a range of theories of the state and changing political circumstances. There is an interest in the politics of interaction between central and local government, and the social relations of bureaucracy within the state. These concerns have arisen in part in reference to the local socialist governments of mid-1980s Britain, like the now-fallen Greater London Council (Boddy and Fudge 1984). They have also been evident in new research on the North American state, which seeks to understand local political relations (Johnston 1983; Cox 1986; Pinch 1985; Lauria 1986; Kirby 1989). G. Clark (1985), for example, discusses the role of judges and courts in defining local government autonomy in the U. S. and Canada.

These new directions raise important issues for further research. One is how different allocations of functions between state apparatuses influence degrees of local government autonomy. Patterns of specialization within the state may permit both variation in local government arrangements, and in possibilities of contesting dominant relations within the state (Kirby 1989). A second issue warranting further attention is how the social practices of government workers, particularly bureaucratic policies, procedures, routines, and ideologies, help to influence state actions (Walker and Williams 1982). Under what conditions may state workers actively contest dominant managerial practices, opening up possibilities for struggles over the relations between state and society?

Another significant line of investigation is into the language or discourse of the state (Clark and Dear 1984; Clark 1988a, 1988b). The state is not only being viewed as an institution with determinate rules and impacts, but as a participant in the ongoing construction of social life. Drawing on poststructuralist interpretive studies of texts and discourse, Clark (1989a) is pursuing research on the narratives that set the terms of debate over local political issues and the proper province of state action. In a similar vein, Johnston (1983) inquires as to texts of political managers and the political organization of space, and Kirby (1988) takes up the interpretative dimension of place and local context in political life.

State-Society Relations

Urban geographers have pursued this slant on the political economy of the state, often focusing upon how changes in state form and policies influence the daily lives of urban residents and workers. There are a number of themes in this work, all proceeding apace and generating new insights. Here we can identify three.

The role of the state in the process of creating the city continues to be a central theme. Harvey's recent essays (1985a, 1985b) on urban development and planning, including a detailed historical analysis of Haussman's transformation of nineteenth-century Paris, indicate how state intervention in the built environment is intimately connected to shifting patterns of accumulation, class formation, and political struggle. Analyses of postwar housing policies in the U.S. and Canada have helped to illuminate the role of the state in sustaining an intensive regime of accumulation and mass consumption of suburban housing (Walker 1981; Florida and Feldman 1988; Chouinard 1988a). Work on territorial politics and the formation of local growth coalitions provides important insights into how local social relations shape struggles over state intervention in the built environment and the location of economic activity (Kirby 1982; Kirby, Knox, and Pinch 1984; Kirby 1985; Logan and Molotch 1986; Leitner n.d.; Mair

1987; Cox and Mair 1988). Recent work on gentrification explores the state's role in facilitating the physical and social transformation of urban neighborhoods (Lauria 1982; Smith and Williams 1986).

Social-service provision and the decline of the welfare state is another important area of research. Dear and Wolch (1987) describe and explain the origins of policies of deindustrialization, and their social and spatial effects in contemporary cities. Wolch has also drawn attention to the significance of voluntary workers and organizations in the implementation of social policy in the U.S. and Britain (Geiger and Wolch 1986; Wolch 1987). Chouinard (1988a, 1988b, 1988c) links postwar changes in Canada's assisted housing policies to changing conditions of intensive accumulation and social struggle. Focusing upon cooperative housing, she argues that class capacities to resist privatization and recommodification of housing assistance have been limited by the policies and procedures of the state, and by the ways in which people have contested state regulation of cooperative housing nationally, and within localities.

The impacts of urban social movements on the politics of localities have also received considerable attention, following on the powerful (though post-Marxist) work of Castells (1983) (for reviews see Cox 1984a, 1986, 1988). Cox has long written about urban social movements and neighborhood conflicts, struggles that help to form the political relations of North American cities and their governments (Cox 1978, 1982; Cox and McCarty 1982). Cox has tried to situate such turf politics within the context of postwar urban development (Cox 1984b; Cox and Mair 1988). In their most recent work, Cox and Mair (1988) argue that possibilities for effective struggles to legitimize competitive growth-coalition strategies have increased with economic uncertainty and the penetration of capitalist commodity relations into daily life. Lauria (1986) shows how struggles over responses to plant closings help to shape the apparatuses of the state in localities. Knopp (1987) and Knopp and Lauria (1985) have investigated the role of gay movements in local politics and urban renaissance. Slater (1985) treats the relation of new social movements to state power in Latin America. Marston (1988) looks at the political mobilization of the Irish in nineteenth-century American industrialization.

Work on the general theory of the state and politics also continues, as the political economy tradition responds to changes in world capitalism. Peter Taylor's efforts (1982, 1985, 1987), deeply influenced by Wallerstein's world-systems approach, are notable in this regard, especially his sensitivity to the political problem of geographical scale. North American state theory includes Chouinard and Fincher's (1988) attempt to specify concrete terrains of struggle over state development, where the social relations of the state are explained in reference to precise spatial, economic, and political context. Current social processes of state formation are likely to continue, and this research will surely include closer attention to the social construction of political identities or subjectivities and the role of political experiences in state development.

Left geography has clearly cut a broad swath across the discipline. No movement of this breadth can be expected to be unified, and our purpose has been to embrace many divergent tendencies within a wide spectrum of the left, rather than to exclude anyone on the grounds of adherence to Marxism or any other core theory. A few of

CONCLUSION

the authors mentioned might chafe a bit at their inclusion with others of either more radical or more liberal stripe, but the purpose has been to indicate the range of activity and intelligence being applied to virtually the whole field of human geography. This was meant to be a celebratory essay, not a critical position paper, since the internal disagreements on the left have been well aired recently in the pages of *Society and Space* and *Antipode*.

Marxism has for long provided the fulcrum of opposition to conventional theory in geography, but there has been a movement away from Marxism in the 1980s for political and intellectual reasons. The challenges to orthodox Marxism as the flagship of progressive social theory are well known, and appear in various guises under the topical headings considered here (e.g., Smith 1987a versus Cooke 1987; Corbridge 1986 versus Watts 1988). Some geographers on the left, particularly those arrayed around the journal *Society and Space*, have now entered the lists of the new "post-Marxists," who draw succor from such varied sources as Foucault and the poststructuralists, Lyotard and the postmodernists, and feminism (see *Society and Space* 1987). Some of this represents a healthy diversification and extension of left inquiry, and a justifiable suspicion of overblown claims to thoroughgoing knowledge of how society works, where it is headed, and how it ought to be changed (Graham 1988). But very little Marxist work in geography ever adopted such a stance (Beauregard 1988), and much of the criticism lapses into longstanding idealist, Weberian, or individualist responses to Marxist theory that cannot stand up to close scrutiny (e.g., Duncan and Ley 1982; Saunders and Williams 1986; Dear 1986). As a result, historical materialism still holds sway in left geography.

Most of the current disputation involves reasoned quarrels generated by real difficulties of social theory and political strategy that need not portend major ideological schisms within our ranks (*Antipode* 1989). It is important that such concerns not be unfairly inflated into theory-bashing of an unnecessarily contentious sort (Watts 1988). Unity has its virtues when one contemplates the relatively limited numbers of American geographers who remain avowedly left in purpose and outlook, and the enormity of the task before us in expanding and consolidating the considerable achievements of left geography over the last two decades. In that spirit, this chapter is dedicated to John Bradbury, a good socialist and a fine person whose unexpected death leaves us visibly diminished.

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The Urban Problematic

Sallie A. Marston | George Towers |
Martin Cadwallader | Andrew Kirby

This chapter has modest goals when compared to the field it aims to document. Over three-quarters of the American population is now urban (employing standard definitions), and almost any empirical analysis, and much theoretical conjecture, must in some way touch upon the realities of urban life. Any attempt to provide a systematic documentation of this work would stretch the chapter to impossible lengths. So, indeed, would an effort to overview the many ways that have been tried to distinguish the urban realm from rural life. Here, the approach is simple, but not necessarily noncontroversial. It assumes that urbanization and social change go hand in hand, and that modern society is essentially urban, at least within the U.S., which is the focus of this chapter.

THE HISTORICAL LEGACY OF URBAN GEOGRAPHY

American urban geography was slow to develop, for two reasons. In the first instance, the dominant discourse that developed in the early decades of this century was essentially both regional and exceptionalist in nature. Although the systematic investigation of urban phenomena was not excluded from geography, there could be no effort made to develop general principles of urban organization (as were developed in Germany by Christaller, for example), or to join the debate on the nature of social organization within urban settings. As Platt observed, the city was simply "another item in the regional pattern" (Platt 1931, 52). A little more privilege was given to urban study by Huntington and Carlson, who noted that "urban geography [is] an important phase of regional geography" (Huntington and Carlson 1933, 401). They continued: "the subject includes such topics as the location of cities, their size, growth and functions; the density of population of cities, and their relation to the hinterland, or surrounding

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