

NOTES TOWARDS A THEORY OF
UNEVEN GEOGRAPHICAL
DEVELOPMENT

Notes towards a theory of uneven geographical development

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Preamble

The theory of uneven geographical development needs further development. The extreme **volatility** in contemporary political economic fortunes across and between spaces of the world economy (at all manner of different scales) cry out for better theoretical interpretation. The political necessity is just as urgent since convergence in well-being has not occurred and geographical as well as social inequalities within the capitalist world appear to have increased in recent decades. The promised outcome of poverty reduction from freer trade, open markets and "neo-liberal" strategies of globalization has not materialized. Environmental degradations and social dislocations have also been unevenly distributed. Simultaneously, the uneven geographical development of oppositional movements to neo-liberalism creates both opportunities and barriers in the search for alternatives.

There is nothing new, of course, about uneven geographical development within capitalism or, for that matter, within any other mode of production. There are, moreover, several overlapping ways of thinking about it:

1) **Historicist/diffusionist** interpretations treat the political economic development of the advanced capitalist countries (the West) as the engine of capitalism that entrains all other territories, cultures and places into paths of economic, political, institutional and intellectual progress. Uneven geographical development is interpreted as the product of a differentiated diffusion process from the center that leaves behind residuals from preceding eras or meets with pockets of resistance towards the progress and modernization that capitalism promotes. "Backwardness" (the term is highly significant) arises out of an unwillingness or an inability (in racist versions considered innate, in environmentalist versions seen as naturally imposed, and in **culturalist** versions understood in terms of the weight of historical, religious etc. traditions) to "catch up" with the dynamics of a western-centered capitalism, usually portrayed as the **highpoint** of modernity or even of civilization. Whole populations, cultures and **territories** are thereby **presumed** to be incapable of shaping their own history let alone of influencing developments elsewhere. Occasionally some place "sees the light" (e.g. Japan and more recently much of East and Southeast Asia) and forges ahead. But the rest of the world lives in "the waiting room of

history." There are conservative, liberal and Marxist versions of this historicist/diffusionist argument.

2) **Constructivist** arguments focus on the "development of underdevelopment." The exploitative practices of capitalism backed by the political, military and geopolitical activities of the most **powerful** nation states engaging in imperialist, colonial or **neo-colonial** exploitation of territories and whole populations and their cultures lie at the root of the uneven geographical **development**. Differential patterns of exploitation (of populations, resources, lands) result. Indigenous strengths and cultural specificities stand to be undermined or destroyed by these forces over large tracts of the globe. While the forces at work exploiting the territory are basically external, indigenous comprador classes may collaborate and sometimes acquire enough power to retain a portion of the fruits of **exploitatio**n within the territory and build a good life for themselves. There are conservative (in the tradition of Edmund Burke), liberal (human rights) and Marxist (e.g. dependency theory, unequal exchange, development of underdevelopment and production of space) versions of this constructivist approach.

3) Environmentalist explanations go back at least to Montesquieu and Rousseau. Though their reputation became sullied by association with racism and doctrines of (usually) European cultural superiorities, the thread of argument that attributed developmental differences to underlying environmental conditions never disappeared. In recent years, under the **pressure** of many "green" arguments regarding natural limits, environmental capacities and differential exposure to health problems and diseases (e.g. the impact of malaria in tropical regions) we have seen a "respectable" revival of such thinking in the works of Jared Diamond and Jeffrey Sachs. More benign versions take up the ways in which human adaptations to variegated environmental possibilities underlie territorial specializations, divisions of labor and the creation of distinctive regional ways of life albeit within a framework of continuous capital accumulation. Again, there are conservative, liberal, **bioregionalist**, and now **Marxist/Green** versions of this argument.

4) **Geopolitical** interpretations see uneven geographical development as an unpredictable outcome of political and social struggles between territorially organized powers operating at a variety of scales. These powers can be organized as states or blocs of states but struggles also occur between regions, cities, communities, local neighborhoods, turfs, etc. In past times organic metaphors **were** frequently deployed in which the survival of the fittest territorial polity depended upon competitive strength. More recent versions drop the crude social Darwinism and concentrate on the play of power politics (military, political, economic) and competition between

territorially based organizations for wealth, power, resources and **qualities** of life on the global stage. Imperialist versions stress the abilities of states or collections of states to extract surpluses from the rest of the world and reduce much of the world to a subservient division of labor convenient to the needs of hegemonic power(s). There is room for a good deal of contingency in geopolitical interpretations. Accidents of history (localized social movements, cultural norms, political shifts, revolutions) and geography (resources, human capital, prior investments) can all play a role in defining the forms of struggle as well as their outcomes. Emancipatory struggles over national self-liberation for oppressed peoples contrast, for example, with struggles to maintain the hegemony of some dominant power or powers within global capitalism. Again, there are conservative, liberal and Marxist-realist versions of this argument.

There are, plainly many overlaps between these different approaches. But which basic line of argument is taken becomes important because it sets limits on the terrain of possible debate about the role of uneven geographical development within capitalism and circumscribes what can be legitimated and justified from the standpoint of political action. Under (1), for example, primitive accumulation and the radical transformation of nature can be seen as necessary evils, a stage to be gone through in order to break with tradition, superstition, religion etc. en route to a better kind of society. Capitalism and even imperialism can be seen as progressive movements in world history and if a society has not gone through that then socialists or other "progressive" forces have to do the nasty work (e.g. Soviet dispossession of the Kulaks). Under (2) it is hard to construct the same legitimacy for capitalism and its cognate forms of colonialism, **neo-colonialism** and imperialism. The exploitative and destructive practices are inevitably cast in a negative light. Movements for autonomy (such as de-linking from the global economy) and national liberation coupled with a refusal to engage in certain kinds of environmental transformation are seen as progressive forms of resistance. Under (3) the question of environmental constraints (even imperatives) to uneven geographical development becomes much more compelling, even as the distinction between natural and built environments becomes less and less easy to sustain. Judgments are cast and politics defined in ecological terms and those terms limit possibilities. In extreme versions of the argument, environmental constraints provide norms to which uneven geographical development should conform. Under (4) we are more likely to assume that competitive struggle between political entities is inevitable: the only interesting question is who comes out on top where and why (with historical and geographical "accidents" often playing a key **role**).

In their more extreme forms it is impossible to reconcile these different arguments. I start, however, with the idea that the arguments are not necessarily

mutually exclusive; each has something significant to say about uneven geographical development. This poses the danger that we merely end up with an eclectic and incoherent **mish-mash** of ideas. I prefer to brave that danger. In what follows, therefore, I shall explore the potential interplay of all of these themes in a relational way. The aim is to identify a "unified" field theory of uneven geographical development. I place the term "unified" in quotation marks because, as will become apparent, the sense of unification to be achieved is very different from reductionist or even **organicist** conceptions of how theory might be constructed. For purposes of simplification, I focus exclusively on how uneven geographical development works under capitalism.

The structure of argument

Any theory of uneven geographical development must be simple enough to aid comprehension and complex enough to embrace the nuances and particularities that call for interpretation. I construct the argument around four radically distinct **conditionalities** that have different **epistemological** statuses. A unified field theory rests on combining these conditionalities. The combination turns out to be difficult and I do not claim to have solved all of its problems. I suggest instead a mode of approach that points the way towards the possibility of general theory. The four conditionalities are:

- 1) The material embedding of capital accumulation processes in the web of **socio-ecological** life.
- 2) Accumulation by dispossession (a generalization of Marx's concept of "primitive" or "original" accumulation under which pre-existing assets are assembled — as labor powers, money, productive capacity or as commodities - and put into circulation as capital).
- 3) The law-like character of capital accumulation in space and time.
- 4) **Political**, social and "class" struggles at a variety of geographical scales.

How, then, might these elements be combined into a unified theory? The answer in part depends upon the conception of "theory" being advanced. If theory is construed as a clean logical structure specified in direct **propositional** terms with law-like statements neatly derived from fundamental abstract categories, then the materials I assemble here would be incapable of theorization. But I have a somewhat looser conception of theory in mind: one that acknowledges the power and importance of certain processes that are specifiable **independently** of each other but which can and must be brought together in a dynamic field of interaction. This implies the construction of arguments about how the web of life and accumulation

by dispossession and **accumulation** through expanded reproduction work together and how the dynamics of political and class struggles power continuous changes in capitalism's uneven geographical development.

While the proof of this approach must await its execution, I think it useful to lay out two preliminary points which have been crucial in guiding my own thinking. The first concerns the way in which Marx formulated the relationship between the abstract and the concrete in his work. To comprehend this would require a full-length exposition in its own right, so I confine myself to the following observations. Dialectics, and in particular that version of it which stresses internal relations, is perpetually negotiating the relation between the particular and the universal, between the abstract and the concrete. There is, in Marxian theory for example, no such thing as abstract labor outside of the multiple concrete activities of production and exchange which give rise to it, while the concrete is, as Marx observed, a concentration of so many different determinations that it can never be reduced to a mere particular manifestation of the abstract. Agents (and all of us have agency of some kind) make their own way but do so, to paraphrase a well-known Marxist adage, not under conditions of their own making nor with results that are free of multiple determinations deriving from the actions of others. Much of social theory has been taken up with considerations of this sort: how to relate individual agency (however that is understood) to the evolution of social structures and vice versa. Dialectics avoids the more mechanistic and reductionist versions of this problem and permits the issue to be approached theoretically in an open and fluid way. I shall, in what follows, rely heavily on this dialectical way of assembling together the abstract and the concrete, the universal and the particular.

The second point rests on the conception of space to be deployed (see next chapter). This is crucial since the very term uneven geographical development is predicated upon some conception of what **spatiality** is all about. The tendency in much of social *theory* is either to exclude spatiality altogether from its purview as an unnecessary complication or to treat of it as a simple and immutable container within which social processes occur. Under either of those presumptions a general theory of uneven geographical development of the sort I have in mind becomes impossible. The best that could be articulated is a study of how the laws of accumulation produce uneven development within a predetermined spatial structure. But in recent years many **geographers** backed by the philosophical arguments of Lefebvre and others have come to view spatiality in a different light, as actively produced and as an active **moment within the social process**. Treating of space relationally and relatively rather than as an absolute **framework for social action**, it becomes possible to see the ways in which capital accumulation, for example, creates not only spaces but different forms of spatiality (through such moves as the organization of financial markets in cyberspace). This whole idea opens up the prospect for theories of the production of

space and **spatiality**. This is, as Neil Smith long ago insisted, a necessary precondition for the construction of any general theory of uneven geographical **development**.¹ I examine it in greater detail in the next chapter.

The material embedding of social processes in **'the web of life'**

Uneven geographical developments reflect the different ways in which different social groups have materially embedded their modes of sociality into the web of life, understood as an evolving **socio-ecological** system. The system is open and dynamic and, clearly, there are abundant examples of unintended consequences of social action as well as all manner of environmental shifts that occur simply because of what Whitehead called "the perpetual search for novelty" within nature (including human nature). Geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, historians of various kinds, political commentators and many more have produced in fact a vast body of work relevant to understanding such processes and outcomes. The archive of studies of how daily life is lived within the web of life around the world is therefore immense. The problem is to find a way to make sense of diverse, particular and often quite idiosyncratic geographical variations in relation to more general processes of capital accumulation, social struggle and environmental transformation. This means integrating particular studies into some more general theory of the uneven geographical development of capitalism.

Capitalist activity is always grounded somewhere. Diverse material processes (physical, ecological as well as social) must be appropriated, used, bent and re-shaped to the purposes and paths of capital accumulation. Conversely, capital accumulation has to adapt to and in some instances be transformed by the material conditions it encounters. Theory has to address two issues: first, the rules of capital circulation and accumulation need to be specified and, secondly, a methodology must be established to track how those rules get tangibly expressed and actively re-shaped through socio-ecological processes.

The conventional approach to the second question is to insist that case studies be "theoretically informed". What this all too often means, however, is an introductory and concluding chapter in which the works of major theoreticians are in the forefront of argument, separated by a case study in which it is often hard to discern even a trace of influence of any of the theoretical work appealed to at the beginning and the end. The issue of how theoretical work might in turn be informed and advanced by case study work is rarely if ever addressed. What sometimes happens instead is that theory is judged inadequate, when the real question should be how to advance the

N. Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Reprint Edition, 1990).

theory. This conventional approach to the question arises I suspect because "theory" is all too often understood as a bundle of **stationary**, already fully specified arguments and propositions, ready-made to be applied to and tested against the "real" world. This positivist approach to theory testing is a problem. Theory should be understood instead as an evolving structure of argument sensitive to encounters with the complex ways in which social processes are materially embedded in the web of life. My aim here, therefore, is to talk through the problematics of a general theory of uneven geographical development that both loosens up the conception of how theory in general works at the same time as it tightens the dialectical integration of theoretical work and the tangible practices of historical-geographical **materialism**.²

These difficulties are exacerbated by the habit of many influential and thoughtful practitioners such as Braudel and Habermas, to view the abstractions of capital accumulation as somehow "outside of daily life, **apart** from what some like to call "the **lifeworld**." Braudel, for example, conceives of capitalism as the top layer of a three-tiered structure. The lowest layer is constituted by "material life" defined as that "stratum of the non-economy, the soil into which capitalism thrusts its roots but which it can never really penetrate." Above this layer:

comes the favored terrain of the market economy, with its many horizontal communications between different markets: here a degree of automatic coordination usually links supply, demand and prices. Then alongside, or rather above this layer, comes the zone of the anti-market, where the great predators roam and the law of the jungle operates. This - today as in the past, before and after the industrial revolution - is the real home of capitalism.³

Braudel sees everyday material life before 1800 as being lived in local ways that are only marginally affected by capitalism. At one point he does express some doubt as to whether this continued to be true after the arrival of the railroads in the nineteenth century. There are certainly areas of the world even today where it would be entirely reasonable to argue that the macro processes of capitalism merely cast a shadow over daily life. But this is less and less the case. Consider the role of Enron - a quintessential "predator" in Braudel's terms — in the California energy crisis. The shortages and the rapidly rising price of electricity as well as the indirect budgetary consequences affected everyone in California and beyond. Consider the effects of fiscal crises and structural adjustment policies in Mexico, Argentina, Mozambique, Indonesia, Thailand and Korea (just to name a few); the daily lives of almost

The closest I have come to laying out the general principles of what I mean by "historical-geographical materialism" is in D. Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Basil BlackweU, 1996).

F. Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800*, translated by M. Kochan (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973); *Afterthoughts on Material Civilization and Capitalism*, translated by P. Ranum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977). The actual quote is cited in G. Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1994) p. 10.

everyone in those countries were profoundly altered. As the financial crisis progressed in Southeast Asia in 1997-8, for example:

unemployment soared, GDP plummeted, banks closed. The unemployment rate was up fourfold in Korea, threefold in Thailand, tenfold in Indonesia. In Indonesia, almost 15 percent of males working in 1997 had lost their jobs by August 1998, and the economic devastation was even worse in the urban areas of the main island, Java. In South Korea, urban poverty almost tripled, with almost a quarter of the population falling into poverty, in Indonesia, poverty doubled.⁴

The riots and violence (mainly visited on ethnic Chinese) that followed in Indonesia, for example, tore apart a lot of the social fabric. No place or person was immune, though the effects were clearly stronger in some places than in others. Innumerable social struggles have also erupted against capitalism (the Zapatista movement against NAFTA, the large number of documented anti-IMF riots, for example). It is impossible, I conclude, to sustain the view that capitalism has only a shadowy relation to daily life or that the adjustments and adaptations that occur in daily life are irrelevant for understanding how capital accumulation is working on the global stage. Braudel's formulation is inappropriate to our contemporary world.

Polanyi, for his part, saw what he called a gradual "disembedding" of the market economy from the social system. By the time "the great transformation" (the rise of the market economy) was complete, the logic of commodification (of land, labor and money, none of which are actually produced as commodities) and of capital accumulation had been imposed upon social life as a set of fictions and abstractions. The problem, as Polanyi saw it, was to re-embed capital accumulation and market relations in a regulatory and institutional framework that would curb its excesses while sustaining some of its virtues (such as freedom of choice and decentralized decision making). Polanyi's argument is not, of course, that the circulation of capital is materially outside of the web of social and ecological life, but that the abstractions that drive it are separated from the broader logic that would derive from social and ecological processes taken as a whole.⁵ This leads to a host of potentially destructive consequences within the web of life, particularly for the environment and for labor. This seems to me a more solid formulation. The danger, however, is that we construe the abstractions and fictions of capitalism's logic as the property of some mystical external force — "capital" - outside of the "web of life" and immune to materialist influences when they should be characterized, rather, as the product of a perverse and limiting logic arising out of the institutional arrangements constructed at the behest of a disparate group of people called capitalists. Capitalists adapt to new conditions: indeed one of the more outstanding things about capitalist historical

⁴ J. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: Norton, 2002) p. 97.

⁵ K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 edition).

geography is precisely its flexibility and adaptability. New institutional arrangements are constantly being constituted in response to the circumstances of material embedding of capital circulation within the web of life. Capitalism has modified its behaviors, for example, through its encounters with environmental limits and constraints. What Marx called the "elastic" powers of capital in its quest for surplus value have to be incorporated into the theoretical argument.

Other theorists postulate the existence of protected spaces (dubbed "heterotopic" by Foucault) within which daily life and affective relations can function without being dominated by capital accumulation, market relations and state powers. Habermas turns to Husserl's concept of "the lifeworld" understood as that sphere of both non-human and human thought and action outside of the economic, technical and bureaucratic rationality given in the concepts of capital and the state. In Habermas's case, there is a manifest desire to retain a humanism in which personal passions and concerns, individual moral and aesthetic judgements, communicative ethics and dialogue carry their own distinctive and autonomous meanings. Formulations of this type guard a space against the overwhelming power of "capital logic" theory and the seemingly anti-humanistic stance which that logic dictates.⁶ I am sympathetic to that overall aim but think it erroneous and self-defeating to presume the existence of some heterotopic or segregated "lifeworld" space insulated from (even if in the long run in danger of being penetrated and swamped by) capitalist social relations and conceptions. To accept such a division between "lifeworld" and "system" entails abandoning everything Marx taught us regarding the principles of historical materialist enquiry. Marx, after all, sought a critical knowledge of *everyday life*. His method entailed "a ruthless criticism of everything existing." Though Marxism has fallen victim on occasion to its own abstractions, the fundamental line of enquiry must center on the dialectical relations between abstractions and concrete events.

If it is invidious to view daily life and the lifeworld as something "outside of the circulation of capital, then we have to concede that everything that now occurs in the workplace and in the production-consumption process is somehow caught up within capital circulation and accumulation. Almost everything we now eat and drink, wear and use, listen to and hear, watch and learn comes to us in commodity form and is shaped by divisions of labor, the pursuit of product niches and the general evolution of discourses and ideologies that embody precepts of capitalism. It is only when daily life has been rendered totally open to the circulation of capital and when political subjects have their vision almost entirely circumscribed by embeddedness in that circulation that capitalism can function with affective meanings and legitimacy as its support. Under such circumstances the body becomes "an accumulation strategy"

J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2, Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).

and we all of us live our lives under the sign of that condition⁷. This is now true even for those populations trying to subsist on less than \$2 a day and who are often viewed and treated as if they are disposable and redundant populations.

It is undeniable, of course, that capitalism has promoted and evolved institutional frameworks and specializations of function that promote the development of discourses so abstract as to be opaque to the mass of the population. This is particularly true of the financial system with its derivatives and hedge-funds, its junk bonds and currency futures, its complex rules of behavior and the gyrations in valuation of assets that seem to make it a world of its own, the focus of immense speculative energies seemingly unrelated to the world of material production and consumption. The task for critical enquiry, is to penetrate to the underlying meaning of such phenomena and to explore their ramifications for daily life. How to do this is the big question. Gramsci's insights are here of considerable relevance:

The active man in the mass has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say that he has two theoretical consciousness (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with his fellow workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. But this verbal conception is not without consequences. It holds together a specific social group, it influences moral conduct and the direction of will, with varying efficacy but often powerfully enough to produce a situation in which the contradictory state of consciousness does not permit any action, any decision or any choice, and produces a condition of moral and political passivity.⁸

"Common sense," Gramsci argued, is:

The conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is developed. Common sense is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space ... Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is.

This bundle of beliefs held in common contrasts with "good sense" that connects life activity with understanding in a profound and critical way:

Each one of us changes himself, modifies himself to the extent that he changes and modifies the complex relations of which he is the hub. In this sense the real philosopher is and cannot

D. Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

A. Gramsci, *Selections from The Prison Notebooks*, translated by Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971) p. 333.

be other than, the politician, the active man who modifies the environment, understanding by environment the ensemble of relations which each of us enters to take part in. If one's own individuality is the *ensemble* of those relations, to create one's personality means to acquire consciousness of them and modify ones own personalty means to modify the *ensemble* of these relations.⁹

Given the fetishisms that attach to and the opacities that mask processes of capital circulation and accumulation, we cannot expect anything other than "common sense" conceptions of the world to regulate the conduct of daily life. The disjunctions and cognitive dissonances are important. There is no way we can expect the rules and laws of capital accumulation to enter into the socio-ecological world in an unmediated way. But by the same token, this means that the activities of capital circulation and accumulation are refracted through actual discursive practices, understandings and behaviors (including the passivity and "common sense" that Gramsci identifies). These mediations shape the uneven geographical development of capitalism in important ways. But this then brings us back full circle for if it is indeed the case, as I shall later argue, that territorial competition plays a crucial role in the progress of capital accumulation, then the uneven and disparate structures of "common sense" that arise within the different spaces of capitalism play a shaping if not constitutive role. If, for example, "common sense" in Silicon Valley is founded in beliefs with respect to rugged entrepreneurial individualism and venture capitalism then the relative success of that region versus the staid sociality of the British shires or the religious intensity of Karachi is not hard to predict. The geography of "common sense" appears to me to be the proper subject of cultural geography and anthropology.

Lefebvre likewise provides key insights. His project is to liberate Marxism from its dogmatism and to integrate an understanding of "everyday life" into Marxian theory. "The method of Marx and Engels" he insists:

consists precisely in a search for the link which exists between what men think, desire, say and believe for themselves and what they are, what they do. This link always exists. It can be explored in two directions. On the one hand, the historian or the man of action can proceed from ideas to men, from consciousness to being - i.e. towards practical, everyday reality - bringing the two into confrontation and thereby achieving *criticism of ideas by action and realities* ... But it is equally possible (to take) real life as the point of departure in an investigation of how the ideas which express it and the forms of consciousness which reflect it emerge. The link, or rather the network of links between the two poles will prove to be complex ... In this way we can arrive at a *criticism of life by ideas* which in a sense extends and completes the first procedure.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid., p. 419, p. 352.

¹⁰ H. Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, Volume One, translated by J. Moore, (London: Verso, 1991) p. 145.

Lefebvre identifies a series of **critical** points where this operation can be conducted. He proposes a critique of (a) individuality (private consciousness); (b) of mystifications (mystified consciousness); (c) of money (fetishism and economic alienation); (d) of needs (psychological and moral alienation); (e) of work (**alienation** of the worker); and (f) of freedom (the power over nature and human nature). Lefebvre highlights the necessity of *critique* as the **epistemological** underpinning for any attempt to integrate everyday material concerns into some broader framework. Lefebvre takes us from the field of mere description of the everyday (paralleling Gramsci's "common sense") to a consideration of the possibility of its transformation (searching for Gramsci's "good sense"). The critique of everyday life entails the construction of a set of **possibilities** for its transformation, taking us from the passivity that Gramsci describes to one of revolutionary action. **Socialism**, for Lefebvre, is nothing less than the transformation of everyday life. But these transformations are occurring willy-nilly all around us. The world is therefore replete with possibilities. But the possibilities are seized upon unevenly, depending upon the degree to which the **politics** of good sense trump the passivity that common sense typically imparts. The uneven geographical development of everyday life is the product of processes whereby we make ourselves and our world through transformative activities, with respect to both discursive understandings and daily-life practices.

My sense from reading Gramsci and Lefebvre and reflecting on numerous specific case studies is that it is entirely possible to construct a mode of what might be called "bottom-up **theorizing**." Let me be clear that I am not here advocating a return to some version of the inductive method in which a whole series of empirical enquiries provide raw materials for the extraction of synthetic generalizations that can then take on the role of theoretical propositions. Marx's method of descent from the surface appearance of particular events to the ruling abstractions underneath is very different. It entails viewing any particular event set as an internalization of fundamental underlying guiding forces. The task of enquiry is to identify these underlying forces by critical analysis and detailed inspection of the individual instance. I stand, in short, to learn far more about the urban process under capitalism **by detailed** reconstruction of how a particular city has evolved than I would **from** collection of empirical data sets from a sample of one hundred cities. From this perspective we see that all case studies necessarily internalize theory construction. "Doing theory" is, therefore, an inevitable concomitant of all forms of historical-geographical **materialist** enquiries. Through activities of this sort it then becomes possible to **re-formulate** and advance whatever general theory (such as that which Marx advances in *Capital*) we have at hand. The final chapter of any case study should therefore be about how the case study has advanced the theory and with what general effects.

We also need here to examine more closely the metabolic relations between capital accumulation and "nature" since it is often and plausibly argued that this puts us on a qualitatively different terrain with respect to theory construction. Certainly, as Smith argues, an understanding of uneven geographical development depends upon first understanding "the production of nature" through capitalistic activities.¹¹ Physical and ecological conditions vary **greatly** across the surface of the earth. The temptation to homogenize the category "nature" (as often happens in philosophical debates) must be avoided. Nature should always be regarded as intensely internally variegated - an unparalleled field of difference. The possibility to mobilize and appropriate physical surpluses varies enormously from one environmental context to another and the geographical circulation of capital reflects that simple fact. But the possibilities also depend upon technologies, organizational forms, divisions of labor, wants, needs and desires as well as our cultural predilections (including those articulated in "common sense"). This natural world is, furthermore, in perpetual flux, with anthropogenic influences looming larger and larger in scale and importance over time. The implications are legion. Paul Burkett puts it this way:

Nature's capacity to absorb or adjust to the human production process is itself largely determined by the combined qualities of the material objects, physical forces, and life forms constituting particular ecosystems and the terrestrial biosphere as a whole. The myriad forms, and the spatial and temporal **unevenness**, of human impacts on the biosphere can only be understood in terms of the qualitative variegation and differential resiliency of nature within and across ecosystems. Of course, uneven and **differentiated** human ecological impacts also implicate the specific features of human development, as compared to other species. The social division of labor, in particular gives the level and qualitative differentiation of human production a peculiar momentum relative to extra-human nature.¹²

In transforming our environment we necessarily transform ourselves. This is Marx's most fundamental theoretical point concerning the dialectics of our metabolic relation to nature. "The antithesis between nature and history is created," Marx and Engels observed, only when "the relation of man to nature is excluded from history."¹³ And if that relation is seen as dialectical, as a matter of internal relations, then the particularity-universality problem is **directly** confronted. On the ecological side, therefore, we have to understand how the accumulation of capital works through ecosystemic processes, re-shaping them and disturbing them as it goes. Energy flows, shifts in material balances, environmental transformations (some of them irreversible) have to be brought thoroughly within the picture. But the social

Smith, *Uneven Development op. at.*

P. Burkett, *Marx and Nature: A Red and Green Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999) p. 21.

K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works, Volume 5* (New York: International Publishers, 1975) p. 55.

side cannot be evaded as somehow radically different from its ecological integument. There is, as I argued in *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, nothing unnatural about New York City.¹⁴ The circulation of money and of capital have to be construed as ecological variables every bit as important as the circulation of air and water. The concept of embeddedness in "the web of life" understood both in ecological and social terms therefore becomes crucial to the theorization of uneven geographical development. This is the kind of work that political ecology has embarked upon with significant results.

This dialectic has unfolded, however, without us being particularly cognizant of the ways we re-make ourselves. Even when there was some collective sense of how "the mastery of nature" (just to take one example) might contribute to human enlightenment and emancipation, the unintended consequences of human actions have been so vast and unexpected as to disrupt and in some instances even reverse some of our most cherished hopes. The unexpected outcomes feed our Frankenstein fears instead. All the problematics posed by environmentalism here loom large. The question of how capital accumulation works through the physical, chemical and biological processes that surround us becomes a compelling issue for critical work.

This becomes even more evident when we insert the word "built" in front of the word "environment." For the city as the noted urban sociologist Robert Park once remarked, is:

man's most consistent and on the whole, his most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in more after his heart's desire. But, if the city is the world which man created, it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live. Thus, indirectly, and without any clear sense of the nature of his task, in making the city man has remade himself.¹⁵

We have, however, largely surrendered our own individual right to make the city after our heart's desire to the rights of property owners, landlords, developers, finance capitalists and the state. These are the primary agents that shape our cities for us and thereby shape us. We have abrogated our right to make ourselves to the rights of capital to make us through the passive acceptance or mindless embrace of the restructuring of daily life by the projects of capitalist class interests. If the results are not too prepossessing, then we have to reclaim our right to change them. Critical and dialectical method is vital to understand not only where we have been and how we have been re-made but also to understand where we might go and what we might collectively aspire to become.

The rich variety encountered in the how, why and where of the material embedding of social processes in the web of life must be an integral consideration in

¹⁴ Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* *op. cit.*, p. 186.

¹⁵ R. Park, *On Social Control and Collective Behavior* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1967 edition) p. 3.

any attempt to construct a general theory of uneven geographical development. But at this point in our history, we do not approach this question empty-headed as to the general nature of the social process of capital accumulation. And it is to these matters that we now turn.

Accumulation/devaluation by dispossession

All societies generate surpluses (defined as. use values greater than those required for immediate consumption) for survival. The more elaborate the social system the more important and necessary the surpluses become. Favorable natural conditions make surplus generation easier but the class appropriation and centralization of surpluses depends entirely upon political developments and the formation of class powers. Appropriating surpluses produced by others or seeking command over those natural conditions that permit the easy production of surpluses has been a long-standing human practice. The only interesting questions are: who gets to do the appropriating, how much surplus can be appropriated and how does the surplus get used? Theocracies (like Ancient Egypt or the Incas), imperial states (like Rome and China), urban plutocracies or democracies (Classical Greece and Venice), feudal orders of various kinds, all depended upon surplus generation and appropriation by a certain kind of political and class power. Political, military and social struggles over surplus appropriation and use have been both frequent and often violent.

The rise of the capitalist class did not depend initially upon its capacity to generate surpluses. It rested, rather, upon its ability to appropriate them, treat them as their own private property and launch them into circulation in search of further surpluses. While commerce, banking and usury provided opportunities to gain profit, capitalism as a social system eventually came to depend upon the formation of a proletariat and the employment of wage labor. Surplus generation could then be assured internally within the system on a continuous basis. Traces of attempts to work in such a way can be found in many areas of the world at different times (particularly in Arab and Chinese trading areas and around the Mediterranean) but in each instance the rise of a bourgeoisie to a hegemonic position was thwarted by other class powers (usually religious or state-based). For capitalism to become dominant as a social system required that the bourgeoisie emerge victorious over other class forces controlling surpluses. How and why this occurred in Europe (and then only in certain parts) is a matter of controversy but that it did first occur there on a self-sustaining basis is not in doubt. The ability of merchants to roam the high seas and appropriate surpluses from around the world (sometimes peaceably, sometimes violently) and to concentrate them in Europe (thus making cities and states heavily dependent upon their activities) coupled with the dissolution of feudal powers (the transformation of serfs into wage laborers) and the appropriation of church domains in certain areas

had much to do with it. It was in part the weakness of other class powers controlling the surplus that accounted for the unique conditions for the bourgeois conquest of power in Europe.

Once the European-centered capitalist system was formed, struggles over the appropriation, control and use of surpluses did not cease. Indeed the evidence points to continuous struggle in part to preserve bourgeois and capitalist class power (against, for example, the threats of socialism, communism or various forms of theocratic reaction). Even more important, however, has been the unceasing search to extend capitalist power to territories, sectors and domains in which surpluses (or favorable natural conditions for the production of surpluses) were not yet incorporated into the circulation of capital. Accumulation through dispossession is to be construed therefore as a necessary condition for capitalism's survival. This proposition (a generalized version of Luxemburg's argument that continuous imperial expansion is a necessary condition for the survival of capitalism) requires more detailed specification.¹⁶

To begin with, surpluses come in a variety of forms. Natural resources and other conditions in nature provide for the possibility of rapid surplus production so that open access to and control over resource rich sites becomes a shadow form of accumulation through appropriation. The perpetual search for natural resources of high quality that can be pillaged for surplus and surplus value production has therefore been a key aspect to the historical geography of capitalism. To the degree that these resources and resource complexes are unevenly distributed so a certain kind of uneven geographical development results built around conditions of, say, agricultural productivity or the presence of oil reserves. Land, use values that can be commodified, money commodities (gold), labor powers (including skills), cultural artifacts and local customs, social networks, and the like, provide more direct targets for appropriative activities. All of these are geographically differentiated and located and their appropriation therefore depends upon spatial strategies to gain access to and command over them.

Consider, for example, the appropriation of cultural histories as commodities to be consumed through tourism. The search for monopoly rents on the part of capital creates a premium on the commodification of phenomena that are in other respects unique, authentic and therefore non-replicable.¹⁷ Pillaging of cultural histories, the collection and exhibition of unique artefacts (museums of all sorts) and the marketing

R. Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, translated by A. Schwartzschild (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968); see also Chapter 1 (above) and D. Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); *A Short History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

D. Harvey, "The Art of Rent: Globalization, Monopoly and the Commodification of Culture", *Socialist Register* (2002) pp. 93-110.

of places as somehow unique environments has in recent years become big business. But for this to occur entails the wholesale appropriation by capital of all manner of things which it has little or nothing to do with creating. Furthermore this appropriation carries over into the realms of individual creativity (consider how the music industry has pillaged regional traditions as well as new genres of music generated out of the conditions of daily life (such as **hiphop** and **rap**)). Thus is the creativity embedded in the web of life appropriated by capital and circulated back to us in commodity form so as to allow the extraction of surplus value. This is appropriation of creativity and affective cultural forms by capital and not direct creation by capital itself.

Dispossession occurs in a variety of ways. External coercion by some superior power (merchants, states, colonial powers, multinationals, etc.) entails the penetration of some pre-existing social order and geographical terrain to the advantage of that power. The long history of merchant capitalism as well as colonial, **neo-colonial** and imperialist endeavors is fundamentally of this sort. Robbing the world of use values has a long history in the bourgeois pantheon of infamous deeds. But it would be wrong to conclude that this is the only or even the dominant form. Once the power of capital circulation and its cognates (eventually technological and military superiority) had been clearly demonstrated, there was a standing temptation for subordinate groups to collaborate with external **capitalist** power to gain control of their own surpluses. Whole social formations that had suffered mightily from the depredations of capital could conclude that if they could not beat capitalism they may as well join it. State and factional class powers in non-capitalist social formations can mobilize surpluses internally (sometimes by force) and circulate them as capital **through** world trade. There is a long history of such activity as countries as diverse as Japan during the **Meiji** restoration and, more recently, China have used state powers to mobilize their own internal surpluses for circulation as capital in the world market. **In** other instances (such as South Korea or Japan after World War II) it is the combination of external influences and internal powers that accumulated surpluses for capitalist development. A whole series of "comprador" bourgeois and capitalist class factions have sprung up using powers of appropriation in different places (with or without access to state violence) as part of the network of global capitalism. Ambitious factions, often working at the local level, can extract surpluses (sometimes through vicious means) at the expense of fellow citizens as part of a strategy of self-insertion into the world market. Success or failure, determined in the rough waters of international competition, is never guaranteed and this year's success story can easily become next year's failure (as in the recent case of Japan). Uneven geographical development is a corollary of such diverse processes. Clearly, there is a great deal of contingency in the when, where and how of accumulation through dispossession. But the general proposition still stands: that there is an aggregate degree of accumulation

through dispossession that must be maintained if the capitalist system is to achieve any semblance of stability. Uneven geographical development through dispossession, it follows, is a corollary of capitalist stability.

But this tells only part of the story of accumulation through dispossession. The other half looks more closely at the cannibalization of assets that goes on within the capitalist system itself as factions (such as finance capital) seize opportunities to appropriate assets of others (such as farmers or industrialists) or as territories or regional configurations of capital (cities, regions, states) seek to acquire or destroy the assets of rivals through commercial competition and/or geopolitical maneuvers (including military interventions and disruptions). Acquisition through mergers and asset stripping are likewise common enough capitalist practices. The destruction of assets (as in the case of the destruction of a very well-developed Indian handicraft textile industry to make way for cheap British exports of cotton goods in the nineteenth century) can be just as important as their absorption into new configurations of uses. During capitalist crises, we have argued, capital gets devalued which means that surplus values and eventually the surpluses that lie behind them are diminished or destroyed. Crises of devaluation provide multiple opportunities to acquire assets "on the cheap" and those with the power to ride out the crises can emerge much enriched. On the world stage this has meant, as Arrighi shows, major geographical and also scalar shifts in the hegemonic center of capital accumulation over time (moving from the Italian city states to the Netherlands to Britain and then to the United States). But crises also spark intense geopolitical rivalries and power struggles between factions and territories as to who is going to bear the brunt of devaluation and where. The aim of appropriating or controlling the surpluses of others is not, in this case, to absorb them into the circulation of capital but to have the power to devalue them and even destroy them (militarily if necessary) thus confining the impacts of devaluation to the places of others. Financial control through indebtedness is now the chief means for imposing the devaluation of capital elsewhere. We have to look no further than the structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund for examples of how this works. Devaluation is, then, place-specific (witness what happened in Argentina after 2001). The patchy geographical effects of this across regions or states is registered as uneven geographical development.

Capital accumulation is necessarily materially grounded in the web of socio-ecological life. But capital accumulation is not only about the production and circulation of surpluses as surplus values. It is also about the appropriation of the assets of others. Any theory of uneven geographical development under capitalism must incorporate accumulation/devaluation through dispossession as a fundamental force if it is to be of any general validity and utility.

Capital accumulation in space and time

We have at hand a reasonably good approximation to a general theory of capital accumulation in space and time.¹⁸ This theory operates on the presumption that original accumulation has already occurred and that a capitalist class and a proletariat have already formed; that a "facilitative state" enforcing certain institutional arrangements (law, contract, private property and individual juridical rights) is firmly in place; that the material world in which processes of accumulation occur has been rendered pliable and **manipulable** to capitalist ends. Capital accumulation is, furthermore, assumed to possess the following fundamental characteristics: (1) activity is expansionary and growth is accepted as both inevitable and good, (2) growth is sustained through the exploitation of living labor in production, (3) class struggle is endemic but not threatening, (4) technological change (or "progress") is inevitable and accepted as a good in itself, (5) the system is contradictory and inherently unstable (conditions of production of capital in the work place perpetually conflict with those of realization of capital in the market, for example), (6) crises are inevitable and are characterized by **overaccumulation** (a condition in which surpluses of capital and labor exist side by side with seemingly no way to bring them together), and (7) if the surpluses cannot be somehow absorbed then they will be devalued (written down, sold at a loss or even physically destroyed). Overaccumulation crises can be at least temporarily relieved either by a temporal shift (the absorption of capital and labor surpluses in long-term projects such as large scale public works) or through a spatial fix (dispersing or exporting capital and labor surpluses into new and more profitable spaces).

How, then, can a more explicit theory of uneven geographical development be constructed internal to this general way of understanding capital accumulation? The argument runs through a number of theoretical steps.

Market exchange

Bringing together labor power and means of production at a site of production and sending the **finished** commodity to consumers entails spatial movements of

The account that follows is largely drawn from my own writings in D. Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982) and the relevant essays in *Spaces of Capital* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001). For a critical appraisal of this work see N. Castree, J. Essletzbichler and N. Brenner (eds.) "Symposium: David Harvey's *The Limits to Capital: Two Decades On*," *Antipode* 36 (3) (2004) pp. 401-549. Other major contributions can be found in Smith, *Uneven Development op. cit.*; E. Sheppard, T. Barnes and C. Pavlik, *The Capitalist Space Economy: Analytic Foundations* (New York: Routledge, 1990); M. Webber and D. Rigby, *The Golden Age Illusion: Rethinking Postwar Capitalism* (New York: Guilford, 1996); K. Cox (ed.) *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the Power of the Local* (New York: Guilford Press, 1997) and many others.

commodities that take time. Transport costs are incurred and this limits the spatial range over which exchange is economically possible. This is particularly important with respect to the daily flow of labor power between place of work and place of residence. The spatial range over which commodities can move depends upon transportation capacities and the means, cost and time taken. But in any given historical-geographical situation the spatial range and time taken are roughly known and a very specific spatio-temporal structure to capital accumulation arises.

The classical location theory of Lösch, Weber, and others would at first sight appear helpful here. The difficulty is that this theory - at least in Lösch's case - presumes an equilibrium arising out of rational trade offs between rising transport costs over distance and corresponding diminution of demand. Profitable activity is **limited** to geographically specific market areas. But capitalism is about growth not stationary state **equilibrium**. The problem is to see how spatially confined market structures evolve in relation to both growth and technological dynamism. Furthermore, commodities do not take themselves to market: they are taken there by merchants. The constant probing of spatial barriers and opening up of new spaces is their forte. When local markets were restricted by high transport costs, as in the middle ages, merchants became itinerant peddlers who sold their wares on the move over vast areas. The prospect of buying cheap and **selling** dear has led to the construction of all manner of different methods and means of marketing. Wildly differing ranges of similar goods have arisen **depending** upon the forms taken by merchant capital and trade. In more recent times much attention has properly been paid to commodity chains, to social relations and structures within the market system, the power of merchant **capitalists** (as **monopsonists**, for example) and how these mediations not only **facilitate** transfers of commodities but also set up innumerable points for the extraction of value and surplus value (as processors, wholesalers, retailers all mediate the flows, employ wage labor, and take their cut). Uneven geographical development is produced by such means.

The coercive laws of spatial competition

Capitalist producers in competition with each other seek to gain advantage and higher profits by adopting superior technologies and organizational forms. This advantage is, however, temporary and ephemeral since competitors will (unless prevented by monopoly controls, patent laws and the like) catch up or even leapfrog over into new **technological/organizational** mixes. From this we derive the **inevitability** of technological and organizational dynamism within **capitalism**. Production functions constantly change and the **geographical** landscape of capitalism becomes unstable. Capitalists occupying superior locations likewise gain excess profits. This advantage is **likely** to be temporary also for two reasons: other capitalists

can find similarly advantageous **locations** or, if the excess profits mm out to be relatively permanent, then they may be "taxed away" by high land rents/prices: the excess profits will by siphoned off by a landlord class. But the search for excess profits generates a locational dynamism within production that parallels technological and organizational dynamism. Trade-offs exist between these two ways of gaining competitive advantage (e.g. capitalists can stay with their old technologies in highly favored locations). The coercive laws of competition nevertheless produce perpetual instability within the geographical landscape of capitalism.

Geographical divisions of labor

Small pre-existing geographical differences, be it in natural resources or socially constructed endowments, get magnified and consolidated rather than eroded by free market competition. The coercive laws of competition push capitalists to relocate production to more advantageous sites and the special requirements of particular forms of commodity production push capitalists into territorial specializations. This can occur in a variety of ways. Besides the more obvious regional specializations in production due to different resource endowments, differences between constructed endowments (built environments for example) have effects. This brings the urban process into focus as central to the theory. But different sectors of the economy such as command and control functions, research and development, production, marketing and finance are organized differently and have their own distinctive locational requirements and spatial range (e.g. money can move much more easily over space, especially as credit, than commodities or production activities). Financial control can be and increasingly is located in one place while merchant activity and production occur elsewhere. Agglomeration economies (including those achieved through urbanization) generate a locational dynamic in which new production tends to be drawn to existing production locations. Much attention has been paid in recent years to the "self-organizing" dynamics of concentration and centralization of capital in space. Circular and cumulative causation within the economy then ensures that capital rich regions tend to grow richer while poor regions grow poorer. The tension between geographical centralization and dispersal is omnipresent within the geographical landscape.

Monopolistic competition

Monopoly is a foundational concept because (a) monopoly control over the means of production in the form of private property arrangements lies at the very basis of capitalism, (b) the end result of competition is likely to be monopoly (witness the incredible rise of monopoly and oligopoly powers in the recent period of neo-liberal

dominance) and (c) **capitalists** seek out monopoly powers because this provides greater security, **calculability**, and allows for **rational** structures of exploitation. Conventional location theory **correctly** appeals to a theory of **monopolistic** competition because whoever controls the property rights at a particular location is a monopolist in absolute space and time.

In the past, high transport costs and other barriers to movement (tolls and tariffs) meant the existence of many local **monopolies**. In the early nineteenth century, for example, the local brewer, baker and candlestick maker were all protected from competition by high transport costs. By this measure, nineteenth century capitalism, though small scale and dispersed, was far less competitive than now. But as spatial barriers diminished so many local industries lost their monopoly privileges. They were forced to compete with producers in other locations, at first relatively close by and then with those further and further away. In recent years **declining** transport costs and reductions in barriers to trade (tariffs, etc.) have reduced if not **eliminated** the spatial and territorial aspects of monopolistic competition in many sectors (personal services being a major exception, though **even** here some service functions have been taken off-shore). Though the monopoly element due to spatial location has not entirely disappeared, capitalists have had to find different ways to construct and preserve their monopoly privileges (against the flood of products coming from China for example). The two major moves entail increasing **centralization** of capital and protection of technological advantages through patent laws and intellectual property rights. In both instances, the effect is to collect powerful forces of capital accumulation at key sites, such as so-called "global" cities. Activities in other spaces may then become subservient to these **centralized** powers. The visible hand (as Chandler calls it) of multinational corporations has consequently been of considerable if not greater importance in the uneven geographical development of capitalism relative to the hidden hand of the market.

Speed-up and the annihilation of space through time

There are strong incentives, both individually and collectively, to minimize the turnover time of capital and, as a consequence, we see many innovations designed to speed up production, marketing and consumption. Since distance is measured in terms of time and cost of movement, there is also intense pressure to reduce the frictions of distance by innovations in transportation and communications. The reduction in the cost and time of movement of commodities, people (labor power), money and information through what Marx called "the annihilation of space through time" is a basic law of capital accumulation. It has a notable presence within the historical geography of capitalism and underpins the production of uneven geographical development in many ways. One effect has already been noted: the

systematic reduction over time of the element of monopolistic competition in space fixed by transport and communications costs. Any spatial arrangement achieved under one set of transport and communications relations (e.g. railroads and telegraph) will have to be changed to meet the conditions of any new set (e.g. air transport and the internet). Also, we must take account of the differential geographical mobilities of capital (as money, as commodities, as production activities) and of labor. The easier movement of money capital, for example, may create difficulties particularly for types of production that find it hard to move.

The general diminution in transport costs in no way disrupts the significance of territorial divisions and specializations of labor. Indeed, it makes for more fine-grained territorial divisions since small differences in production costs (due to raw materials, labor conditions, intermediate inputs, consumer markets, **infrastructural** or taxation arrangements) are more easily exploitable by highly mobile capital. Reducing the friction of distance, in **short**, makes capital more rather than less sensitive to local geographical variations. The combined effect of freer trade and reduced transport costs is not greater equality of power through the evolving territorial division of labor, but growing geographical inequalities.

*Physical infrastructures (**fixed** capital embedded in the land) for production and consumption*

Spatially fixed and immobile physical infrastructures of transport and communications systems (ports, airports, transport systems) are required in order to liberate other forms of capital and labor for easy spatial movement. Transport investments get drawn towards major centers of production, finance and commerce because that is where they are likely to be most profitable. A powerful centripetal force is felt as uneven geographical investments in transport systems feed further uneven geographical developments. Behind this lies a fundamental contradiction between fixity and movement within the theory of capital accumulation in space and time. Physical investments embedded in the land form necessary preconditions for **Processes** of exchange, production and consumption. Very specific conditions regulate the circulation of capital in built environments (usually involving heavy reliance upon credit and debt-financing if not state expenditures on projects that capital would find it difficult or impossible to **undertake**). The path of such investments can easily run against the grain of standard circulation processes precisely because it works on a different **spatiotemporal** horizon compared to the standard form of capital circulation. Investments of this sort must cohere so that transport relations, working class housing, factories and offices, shopping malls and leisure places, institutions (hospitals, schools, etc.) hang together in physical space in reasonably coordinate and mutually accessible **ways**. The effect is to concentrate these investments geographically. This concentration entails the production of

urbanization as a spatially-ordered physical framework within which capital accumulation can proceed.

Competition between different land uses, the power of land owners to extract rent from favored locations as well as the tendency for physical landscapes to become more sclerotic and less flexible with time, all tend to freeze patterns of uneven geographical development. Landed capital often requires heavy support from finance capital and/or the state in order to elaborate and build projects that require adequate and continuous use over a considerable period of time if they are not to be devalued. Building a port facility to which no ships come entails devaluation of the capital sunk into that facility. Geographical fixity tends to increase, therefore, in the midst of the struggle to acquire greater geographical mobility for all the other factions of capital. Clearly, there is abundant opportunity here for tensions between factions of capital as well as for crises of devaluation in the built environment.

The production of regionality

Investments in the built environment effectively define regional spaces for the circulation of capital. Within these spaces, production, distribution, exchange and consumption, supply and demand (particularly for labor power), class struggle, culture and lifestyles hang together within an open system that nevertheless exhibits some kind of "structured coherence." Modes of consumption here become geographically differentiated according to concentrations of wealth and power (e.g. the immense concentration of wealth in Manhattan turns this into a very special market) and cultural differentiations can either be transformed or actively produced that generate niche markets. The differentiated world of consumer power and consumption preferences here enters in as a major determinant of uneven geographical development. Regional consciousness and identities, even affective loyalties, may build within this region and, when it is overlain by some apparatus of governance and state power, the regional space can evolve into a territorial unit that operates as some kind of defined space of collective consumption and production as well as political action. The collectivity can consolidate itself by assuming responsibility for embedding all manner of infrastructures in the land (highway systems, port facilities, water and sewage systems, etc.) and setting up multiple institutional supports (education and healthcare) that define a particular way of relating to capital accumulation as well as to the rest of the world.

A regional class alliance then typically emerges to establish a pattern of governance in which the stakes are fundamentally the economic health and well-being of the region rather than that of class. Landed capital (and developer capital) often takes the lead in "growth machine" politics" but frequently finance capital is also heavily involved because of the heavy dependence of landed capital on the credit system.

Here enters "growth machine politics" "urban **entrepreneurialism**" and "regional growth **coalitions**" and other structures of governance dedicated to improving the competitive strength of the region/territory vis-a-vis other regions/territories. Local bourgeoisies (small commercial enterprises, landowners, landlords) may offer popular support and frequently elements of the working class can be persuaded to **join** a local class alliance on the grounds that the welfare of the region will **provide** spillover benefits for them. The structure of local **alliances** is highly variable depending upon who takes the leadership role, what the **project** is and how it is articulated. Alliances can **easily** become exclusionary (e.g. anti-immigrant) as well as developmental and they can be fractured and conflict-ridden or comfortably hegemonic depending upon conditions. One of the great variables in uneven geographical development, therefore, is the nature and form of regional class alliance formation.

There are of course always forces at work that undermine **regionality** as structured coherence. Class alliances can dissolve or shift. Boundaries are porous and both capital and labor can migrate in and out (particularly in response to place-specific crises and devaluations). Revolutions in transport relations can shift patterns of integration and change the scale at which structured coherence might best be achieved. Resources can be exhausted or become **diminished** in significance because cheaper resources are opened up elsewhere. Past **infrastructural** arrangements and investments can be rendered obsolete by powerful currents of technological change. Class struggles can spill outwards and inwards and fragmentations wrought by conflicts within the governance structure can undermine political coherence (think of the long-standing problems of Northern Ireland as a site for capital accumulation). International pressures can likewise so affect the regional structure as to render its earlier coherence obsolete (as happened in many older industrial regions with deindustrialization in the 1980s and 1990s). Nevertheless there is abundant evidence that **regionality** is always "under production" as well as "in the course of modification" through capital accumulation. Further capital accumulation always has to negotiate, confront and if necessary revolutionize the regional structures it had earlier produced. Capitalism cannot exist without engagements of this sort. The theory of uneven geographical development therefore has to acknowledge the power of these processes, independent of any pre-existing **proclivity** to construct territorial structures for other reasons.

The production of scale

The annihilation of space through time entails scalar transformations in the **spatiotemporal structuration** of capital accumulation. It extends the typical spatial range of goods, of financial flows as well as the **availability** of information. It transforms the geography of labor markets. **Tensions** between **centralization** and

decentralization of capital (e.g. of corporate **organization**), between geographical concentration and dispersal of activities are much in evidence. Territorial divisions of labor, technologies and organizational forms and economies of likewise have impacts. How we understand the production of scale under capitalism is a crucial question. It has been the focus of study in recent years. One thing is clear: the dominant geographical scale at which accumulation occurs has been changing over time. A hierarchy of scales (often depicted as local, regional, national and global, though these are arbitrary designations in themselves) exists through which the circulation of capital works at the same time as it produces its own distinctive scales of organization.

The scale of **regionality** that made sense at one time does not, therefore, necessarily do so at another. Regional structures have to be understood as inherently unstable at the same time as volatility of capital and labor flows between them become endemic to the uneven geographical development of capitalism. But this in turn requires that we confront the whole issue of territorial administration (and particularly the state and its powers) as overlain upon the inherent **tendency** towards the production of regionality through the circulation and accumulation of capital.

Territorial systems of political administration (the interventionist state)

Capitalism did not invent territorial administration. It seized hold of political-administrative structures and adapted, transformed and in some instances totally revolutionized them as it came to dominate as a political-economic system. If states had not existed, in short, capitalism would have had to invent them. In practice, the world has been **reterritorialized** by bourgeois power. In many instances this was achieved by **carving out territorial administrative structures** for colonial rule. While it is certainly true that the conveniences of colonial administration or the competing fantasies of colonial powers were by no means automatically consistent with commercial and capitalistic requirements, the resulting patchwork quilt of colonial territories, evolving with decolonization into independent states, served capital accumulation in a rough and ready fashion. The rise of the nation state in Europe and elsewhere, on the other hand, was a much more complicated affair in which the struggle of the bourgeoisie for political domination against non-capitalistic powers was partially fought out in terms of the territorial structure of administration. The control of the monetary, legal, military and ideological apparatus was crucial for capitalist economic activity to flourish. The unification of Italy and Germany contrasts, for example, with the break up of the older **Austro-Hungarian** and Ottoman Empires that were not organized along capitalistic lines.

Capitalist hegemonic power has steadily shifted scales over time from the Italian City States (like Venice and Genoa), through the intermediate organizational forms of

Holland to Britain and, finally, to the United States. The most recent bout of capitalist globalization has been accompanied by strong currents of reterritorialization reflecting changing transportation and scale pressures. Organizations like the European Union, NAFTA, Mercosur, have become more salient at the same time as urban regions (like Catalonia) and in some instances even quasi-city states (Singapore and Hong Kong) have become vigorous centers of capitalist endeavor. While it would be erroneous to insist, as some now do, that traditional nation states have become irrelevant and powerless in relation to global capital, they have certainly become much more porous (particularly with respect to capital flow) and they have in some important respects changed their functions (mainly towards the neo-liberal goal of establishing a "good business climate" for investment as we saw in Chapter 1). In its neo-liberal configuration, the state functions more clearly now as an "executive committee of capitalist class interests" than at any other time in history.

Adequate territorial structures of administration and power are a necessary condition for the survival of capitalism. The difficulty is that territorial powers, once formed, become relatively fixed attributes of capitalism's geography and resist pressures for change. The tension between fixity and motion in the landscape of capitalism is re-emphasized because the state is about fixity rather than motion. But the state, as the lynch-pin of regionality, is the primary vehicle to assure the production of the collective preconditions for production, exchange and consumption. State administration is always therefore an active agent in capital circulation and accumulation. The "interventionist" state necessarily supercedes the "facilitative" state of liberal and neo-liberal theory. It also assumes a role in attempting to mediate or even resolve the chronic crisis tendencies of capitalism through fiscal and monetary policies.

The state as a political entity exists as a terrain of class struggle and class alliance formation. It must, if it is to function at all, be open to some form of democratic governance (however biased and limited). Capitalist class factions as well as other classes and social groups fight for their distinctive interests within a state political realm that is always unpredictable and prone to political/ideological instability. The result is uneven geographical development in everything from welfare arrangements to state economic policies and investment decisions. States and other political entities (such as cities and metropolitan governments) are also forced willy-nilly into competitive struggles with other entities for economic as well as political advantage. Since war and other forms of military pressure are useful tools ("diplomacy by other means" as the famous adage goes) then it follows that the military balance of power plays almost as important a role as economic power in preserving advantageous positions within the global economy. This leads us to consider, however, the inherent geopolitics of capitalism.

The geopolitics of capitalism

A **central** contradiction exists within capitalism between *territorial* and *capitalistic* logics of power. This contradiction is **internalized** within capital accumulation given the tension between regionality and territorial class alliance formation on the one hand and the free geographical circulation of capital on the other. By territorial logic, I mean the political, diplomatic and **military** strategies invoked and used by a **territorially** defined entity such as a state as it struggles to assert its interests and accumulate power in its own right. The **capitalistic** logic focuses on the ways in which economic power flows across and through continuous space, towards or away from territorial entities (such as states or regional power blocs) through the daily practices of production, trade, commerce, capital flows, money transfers, labor migration, technology transfer, currency speculation, flows of information, cultural impulses, and the like. The two logics are rather different. While they are not reducible to each other they are closely **intertwined**. To begin with, the motivations and interests of agents differ. The capitalist holding money capital will wish to put it wherever profits can be had and typically seeks to accumulate more capital. Politicians and statesmen typically seek outcomes that sustain or augment the power of their territory vis-a-vis other territories. The capitalist seeks individual advantage and (though usually constrained by law) is responsible to no one other than his or her immediate social circle while the statesman seeks a collective advantage and is constrained by the political and **military** situation of the state. The capitalist operates more in continuous (relative and relational) space and time whereas the politician is more grounded in an absolute territorial space. On the other hand, capitalist firms come and go, shift locations, merge or go out of business, but states are **long-lived** entities confined within fixed territorial boundaries. The dialectic of the territorial and capitalist logics of power has far reaching effects, particularly with respect to **imperialism** and **geopolitics**.

Two distinctive but interrelated forms of **geopolitical** struggle (merging into imperialist practices) arise out of the capitalist **spatiotemporal** logic. Imagine first a particular territory (such as an isolated state that has achieved a certain structured coherence of accumulation backed by a regional class alliance of governance). The contradictions of capital accumulation build into a crisis of **overaccumulation** of both capital and labor threatening massive devaluations of capital and devastating levels of unemployment. **Faced** with such difficulties capital seeks a "spatial fix." Capital and perhaps labor surpluses are exported elsewhere (e.g. from Britain to its colonies or to the United States in the nineteenth century). This **requires**, of course, **that some territory** be open for the penetration of capital and labor. Territories may be prized open by military force, colonization or commercial pressure, or they may voluntarily open themselves up to take advantage of surplus capitals from elsewhere (as China

has done in recent years by absorbing vast amounts of foreign direct investment). The **role of territorial power** here is to ensure **open** spaces within which surplus capitals in particular can move. The effect is for capital accumulation to diffuse outwards and proliferate on the world stage. But ultimately all the territories "occupied" by capitalism will produce capital surpluses looking for a spatial fix. Geopolitical rivalries for influence or control over other territories inevitably result. This rivalry helped produce two world wars **between** capitalist powers in the twentieth century.

This first scenario merges into a second. Assume a more open regionality in which a variety of different interlinked territorial configurations of capital accumulation exist in different states of development. Labor and capital flows and commodity exchanges between the territories can help sustain aggregate rates of accumulation in a relatively crisis free mode provided that (a) gains from increasing territorial specialization in the division of labor are possible, (b) capital and labor surpluses in one place are matched by capital and labor shortages elsewhere, (c) barriers to movement because of high transport costs or institutional constraints (like tariffs) are systematically reduced, and (d) place specific stresses of overaccumulation do not generate a defensive posture within the regional class alliance (such as demands for protectionism). This scenario resembles, of course, several versions of interregional development proposed in bourgeois economics in which gains from trade, comparative advantages and the like can be integrated into dynamic patterns of mutually supportive economic growth. The spatial fix appears to work to the long-term stabilization of capitalism, confining crisis formation and devaluation to localized events (the closure of plants here and rising unemployment there).

This "happy and virtuous circle" of events is disrupted by two major factors. On the one hand competition between regional class alliances exercises a coercive power. Internal political structures are forced to adjust to unwelcome **external** pressures (the structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund are of this sort). Regions are forced into some hierarchy of powers and interests such that the richer regions grow richer and the poor languish in indebtedness. Internal unrest, disruptions in the class alliance of governance and belligerence towards external powers may result. But even more important is the problem of global crises, as overaccumulation emerges everywhere as a chronic problem (the great depression of the 1930s is the classic case). The symbiotic and mutually supportive relations **between** territories is registered as competition over who is to bear the costs of devaluation. Geopolitical struggles then ensue at the global scale, with unpredictable outcomes and potentially violent consequences.

The politics of social struggles

Lurking within the argument of the last section is the idea that struggles between classes and class factions, though deeply embedded in the dynamics of capital accumulation, do no more than disturb or redirect the micro-dynamics of an overall system fully capable of reproducing itself albeit through the uncertain geopolitics of crisis formation and resolution. This is merely a convenient fiction and immediately poses the question as to what happens when class and factional as well as other forms of political and social struggle emerge as active determinants of uneven geographical developments. Struggles for national liberation, for the right of nations to exist as coherent state forms reflective of ethnic identities or religious affiliations, cannot be brushed aside as minor irritations in capitalism's historical geography. But by the same token I think it wrong to view such struggles as if they are entirely independent of processes of accumulation by dispossession or disconnected from the general dynamics of capital accumulation in space and time. Since capital accumulation entails territorial class balance formation, the production of some sort of regional and geopolitical confrontations, for example, it is highly likely that any struggles over ethnic or religious identity and autonomy will interweave and combine with all of these forces. The same connectivity will likely exist with accumulation by dispossession. This sort of interweaving is crucial for understanding something as complicated and dramatic as the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for example. While a conflict of this sort cannot be reduced to some mix of accumulation by dispossession and expanded reproduction of capital, it cannot be viewed as having an entirely independent and autonomous existence either. It is the inner connections that are most intriguing to unravel. It is useful, therefore, to examine the varying character of social struggles in relation to the other three elements within the theoretical structure.

Social movements and accumulation by dispossession

Struggles over primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession are legion both in the past as well as in today's world. We should therefore pay careful attention to their provenance, their structures and their meanings. Political ethnographies and social movement studies provide abundant evidence of a vast canvas of such struggles from all around the world. These struggles are of an almost infinite variety. The most obvious tangible struggles are over access to land and living space, and to fundamental resources such as water, biomass (forests), energy and the like. The struggles over dignity, recognition, self-expression, acknowledgement of certain rights (traditional, cultural and customary) are no less salient although, by their very nature, they are much harder to pin down except by way of their effects. Movements

around such issues also exhibit an almost infinite variety of objectives - some backward looking and desirous of return to some **pre-existing** (real or imagined) **socio-ecological** order, others seeking to realize more **Utopian** and futuristic aims while still others seek pragmatic solutions to immediate problems of social or political exclusions or particular environmental degradations and injustices.

The point here is not to try to synthesize or homogenize such struggles into some general set of laws, but to unravel how **so** many of **these** on-going struggles internalize the general problematics of accumulation by dispossession. For example, the Palestinian struggle for restoration of rights to land and water is foundational for understanding the Middle East conflict and it connects with broader geopolitical struggles over the dynamics of capital accumulation within the region. The argument here is not reductionist but dialectical: while a conflict of this sort is obviously expressive of long-standing hatreds and resentments, the conditions of its amelioration inevitably entail addressing the problems that have arisen out of the dispossession of access to land and to water. Confronting these tangible questions is at the very least a necessary condition for understanding the nature of the problem and the uneven geographical developments that inform the broader regional conflict.

One cannot, I conclude, probe very far into conflicts of this kind without encountering the theme of dispossession or exclusion. Increasingly this dispossession goes far beyond the amassing of raw power of one social group versus another and has more and more to do with amassing power in relation to and through the accumulation of capital. The latter, after all, is now the prime means by which power is amassed and circulated. The pervasiveness of this general theme of accumulation by dispossession is only matched by the astonishing variety of circumstances and situations in which it is manifest. The seemingly **infinite** variety of struggles over what is being dispossessed, by whom, and what to do about it adds an unpredictable allure to the dynamics of capital accumulation in **space** and **time**. But the sheer unpredictability of it all in no way denies the necessity of making this aspect of political struggle a major component in any general theory of uneven geographical development.

Conflicts around the expanded reproduction of capital

If we go back over the whole dynamics of how the accumulation process works in **space** and **time**, then we immediately identify a variety of points around which social struggles of various sorts are likely to occur. The most obvious, and for Marxists the most salient locus of conflict, arises out of the class antagonism between capital and labor in surplus value production. Conflicts over **wage** rates, conditions of **contract**, living standards, conditions of the labor process, length of working **day/year/life**, and the like, are omnipresent and they spill over into the political arena to become a vital

ingredient of what the capitalist state inevitably engages with. Struggles over skill **formation** and definition, divisions and fragmentations of labor (around issues of race, ethnicity and gender, for example) also enter into the picture in sometimes disruptive and violent ways. The balance of class forces and powers within any regional class balance and its state apparatus obviously varies **greatly** from place to place depending upon forms of organization, levels of class consciousness, collective memories and traditions, and the like. **Equally** important, however, are the struggles that arise around regionally **directly**: the geography of **infrastructural** investments, **territorialization** of administration and collective action, class balance formation, and struggles for **geopolitical** advantage. While these are omnipresent, the Marxist tradition tends to pay far more attention to the first group of direct struggles between capital and labor over surplus value production. This is unfortunate since the latter forms of struggle focus directly on uneven geographical developments, not merely as an outcome but also as an active agent powering the **overall** dynamics of capital accumulation. If competition between territorial units (such as states or cities) drives the capitalist dynamic ever onwards, for example, then the rise of particular regions as successful and highly competitive centers of capital accumulation affects the global situation. If the Pearl River Delta, for example, becomes one of the most dynamic and successful centers of capital accumulation through manufacturing in the whole world then this sets base-line standards everywhere with respect to labor costs, acceptable conditions of work, technological mixes, union organizing, and the like. The **deindustrialization** of the rest of the world (even in low wage countries like Mexico and Brazil) occurs as the China powerhouse takes over.

The outcomes of such processes, which are so central to any theory of uneven geographical development are contingent on the nature of balances struck within territories and the restless, shifting flows of capital, labor, information, etc. across the global space. While this is all fairly obvious in principle, it is by no means easy to track down the inner connections between struggles over the expanded reproduction of capitalism and the intricate role played by uneven geographical developments in the overall dynamics of capital accumulation. This is the issue that has, however, to be firmly and **explicitly** explored in any general theory of uneven geographical development.

Conflicts over the material embedding of social processes in 'the web of life'

Capitalism treats as commodities many of the fundamental elements within the web of life that are not produced as commodities. This applies to labor, to all of what we often refer to as **'nature'** as well as specific forms of our social existence (most obviously money but also such features as culture, tradition, **intelligence**, memory, as well as the physical reproduction of the species). Once the body becomes a blatant

"accumulation strategy," then alienation follows (though whether this is greeted by revolt or passive resignation is an open question). The "commodification of everything" infects every aspect of daily life. Polanyi portrayed the consequences this way:

To allow the market mechanism to be sole director of the fate of human beings and their natural environment ... would result in the demolition of society. For the alleged commodity 'labour power' cannot be shoved about, used indiscriminately, or even left unused, without affecting also the human individual who happens to be the bearer of this peculiar commodity. In disposing of man's labor power the system would, incidentally, dispose of the physical, psychological, and moral entity 'man' attached to that tag. Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime and starvation. Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighborhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed. Finally, the market administration of purchasing power would periodically liquidate business enterprise, for shortages and surfeits of money would prove as disastrous to business as floods and droughts in primitive society.¹⁹

Polanyi is here elaborating on Marx's fundamental proposition that an unregulated free market capitalism could only survive by destroying the two main sources of its own wealth: the land and the laborer. Struggles consequently arise around the ways in which commodification affects the web of life. Individuals and collectivities inevitably seek to protect themselves and others from the destructions that Polanyi identifies. The active defense of environments, of social relations, of processes of social reproduction, of collective memories and cultural traditions then follows. A lot of struggles arise in this domain and many of them are at the very minimum weakly anti-capitalistic as they seek to re-establish those "protective coverings" that Polanyi invokes. Movements against the destructive consequences of commodification — such as **environmentalism** — are not necessarily concordant with other forms of social movement yet they are just as firmly pitted against the dynamics of free-market capital accumulation. Everyday, material life struggles in the socio-ecological realm are infused with meanings that derive from commodification and its associated **fetishisms**. The quest for alternatives - socialism, environmentalism, anarchism, feminism, and the like — most conspicuously fail when they are unable to address daily life issues in a satisfactory way.

The variety of anti-capitalist struggles we see around us, I conclude, vary in part because of the different conditions that give rise to them. Political struggles have a rather different character depending upon which element is dominant in their definition. The unities within these diverse political struggles can, however, be identified without submerging their differences. This should make it easier to think

through their **interlinkages** within a broad-based and global **anti-capitalist** movement. Plainly, not all of these struggles are "class struggles" in the classic Marxist sense. Ignoring the multi-faceted nature of such struggles under contemporary conditions is tantamount to foregoing the creation of anti-capitalist **alliances** that can actually do something to check if not transform what a predatory capitalism is about.

Commentary

If capitalism survives through uneven geographical development, if capitalism *is* uneven geographical development, then, surely, we need to search out an adequate theoretical framework to encompass this fact. These notes do not exhaust the field of **possibilities**. Theory can never provide a complete or definitive account of the world. Theory is, in any case, always something that is (or should be) in the course of formation. The elements I have here assembled are disparate, but this is precisely what makes their inclusion in the search for a pertinent theoretical framework both interesting and rich in possibilities.

I also argued that case study work should **internalize** theorizing practices. It remains to say something about that process. The study recently re-published as *Paris, Capital of Modernity* was for me a critical experience in this regard. I carried it out in parallel with the theoretical work on capital accumulation in space and time that was published as *The Limits to Capital*. While I had **always** seen the two works as moving on parallel tracks, the initial intent was to see how far the theory of capital accumulation that Marx proposed could, when properly extended to encompass spatio-temporal dynamics, explain the transformations that occurred in Paris during the Second Empire and provide a deeper understanding of the Paris Commune of 1871. The elaboration of the theory of capital accumulation in space and time was **accomplished** independently of the materialist enquiry. This was done by extending Marx's dialectical mode of argumentation to arenas such as fixed capital formation, investments in the built environment, finance capital, rent, spatial structures and the state. The results of that theorizing are broadly reflected in the third section of this essay. This process of **theorization** through abstraction generated all manner of useful insights and helped frame and re-frame many of the fundamental questions that arose in the Paris study.

But that theory, while revealing and rich in certain respects, could nowhere near exhaust the complex **intertwinings** of processes and forces at work in the re-shaping of Second Empire Paris. It became evident that a much broader theoretical framework was required, in which the theoretical insights already available from elaborating on Marx's theory of capital accumulation could be embedded and transformed rather than abandoned. Marx, in a way, posed that question himself by leaving dangling the question of the relation between *Capital* and his work on *Class*

Struggles in France and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.²⁰ What I have presented in these notes is, in effect, the theorizing that arose out of the Paris study as I sought to bridge the gulf between what some have erroneously dubbed "the two Marxisms" of *Capital* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. All of the elements I here spell out for separate scrutiny, as grist for theoretical reflection, are co-present within the Paris study. What I offer here is a set of reflections and proposals for the reformulation of theory in the light of that experience. While *The Limits to Capital* describes my theoretical framework going into the Paris study, these notes describe the framework of theorizing that came out of it.

These notes towards a unified field theory of uneven geographical development constitute, therefore, one small step, based upon a particular case study, within the on-going and endless search for a proper theoretical framing of one of the most intriguing and politically salient features of our contemporary world - its chronic and ever-fluctuating state of uneven geographical development.

K. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963 edition); *Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850* (New York: International Publishers, 1964); D. Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Harvey, *Limits to Capital op. cit.*