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chapter 4

DEVELOPMENT AS IMMANENT PROCESS: MARXIST AND FEMINIST POLITICAL ECONOMY

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Development studies is explicitly normative, as teachers and researchers who are attracted to the field tend to see current reality as sickening... They want to change the world, not only analyse it (Hettne 1995: 12)

Political economists have always been clear about the purpose of their analyses: to understand the world in order to change it (Perrons 1999: 92)

Marxist and feminist geographers offer very different readings of development processes to those provided by mainstream thinkers. Michael Watts, a key figure in radical development geography, delineates two questions as central to his work: how do the dynamic and restless processes of capitalism articulate social, political and economic relations in specific times and places? and how do people experience these processes and what are the costs, consequences and resistances to them? (paraphrased from Watts 2001b). More broadly, Marxist and feminist geographers are centrally concerned with questions of social and environmental justice. Marxian development geographers employ historical-materialist analysis to analyse the contradictions of capitalism, class struggle, uneven development and imperialism in the global South ('little d' development). Their work examines patterns of accumulation, class formation and politics in rural and urban areas, the role of the state, struggles over resources and the articulation of peasant production with agrarian capitalism across Africa, Latin America and South Asia. Marxist geographers also pioneered the field of political-ecology (see Rod Neumann's 2005 book in this series). Feminist political-economy researchers examine the ways in which these multifaceted processes

are gendered and insert a serious consideration of social reproduction in its relations with capitalist production processes (Carney 1992; Lawson 1995).

The rest of this book considers the various strands of critical thought that have shaped development geography and geographical contributions to development studies. I separate this discussion into [chapters 4](#) and [5](#), even though there are continuities in the ways that geographers have taken up Marxian political-economy and Marxist-feminist theory (discussed in this chapter), and post-structural theory (discussed in [chapter 5](#)), which builds understanding by taking difference seriously. Here we focus on geographers who have analysed little ‘d’ development: the unfolding of capitalist social, economic and political processes in particular places and moments. As you will see in this brief review, Marxist work in geography has a 30-year tradition of debate and theoretical elaboration, continuing now in its engagement with the ‘posts’ discussed in [chapter 5](#).

We begin by situating critical development geography in the context of global shifts and intellectual streams. As you will see, ‘critical development geography’ refers to scholarship, inspired by social movements emerging worldwide in the 1960s and 1970s, which engages with a Marxist critique of capitalism to examine the growing inequality, exploitation, racism and sexism embedded in Development. This critical development geography struggles for the relevance of geography as a discipline through its political commitment not only to writing the world as geographers, but also to changing injustice around the globe.

I begin by looking at the decades Michael Watt’s (2001) describes as ‘1968 and all that’ – the political, economic and cultural upheaval of the last decades of the twentieth century that set the broad context for radical thought in US geography. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the disintegration of colonial empires, the civil rights and antiwar movements, and deepening crises of poverty, inequality and environmental degradation across the globe. The turn to Marxist theory in geography emerged from this tumultuous societal context that led these theorists to critique mainstream development geography. The following section sets up our discussion for both [chapters 4](#) and [5](#). Read this to think about how radical development geographers were shaped by and engage with political struggles through their work.

4.1 Contexts I: the 1960s and beyond

I want to transport you back in time, across recent decades, to think about the political upheaval, economic change and cultural shifts that formed the context

in which radical development geography was produced and practised. Recall from [chapter 2](#) that we situate the development for each body of thought. In [chapter 3](#) we discussed how development took on particular meanings and political heft for mainstream thinkers in the context of the cold war. For radical geographers, an alternative reading of these post-war decades gave rise to a very different set of understandings about development. Theorists who were part of the struggles I describe here began to rethink the project of development, with a commitment to understand the world in order to change it.

During the 1960s, social movements organised in protest against imperialism, racism, sexism, consumerism and the larger social order. ⁱⁱ As you read on, imagine yourself living through the 1960s – a pivotal moment in modern social history. What were some of the defining events in this period? How might modernist development thinking and practice be challenged, and ultimately changed, by these events?

4.1.1 Political upheaval

Every social context poses questions for those who inhabit it, construct it, and are in turn constructed by it (Hartsock 1998: 1)

The 1960s heralded a momentous period of paradox and upheaval. This was a time of dramatic successes for modernism – exemplified by the moon landing in 1969 (whose grainy images I saw as a nine-year-old) that represented a world of technological and scientific achievement in which literally anything seemed possible. This was the period of US post-war boom; of countries across South East Asia and Africa gaining national liberation from formal colonialism; and of the cold war rebuilding of war-torn European cities. Development was represented as a realisable project that claimed to bring the benefits of modernity to every place and person around the globe – orchestrated through the United Nations and the World Bank. Despite this belief in the possibility of constructing social order through the rational application of absolute truths, post-Second World War modernism was nonetheless firmly situated in its cold war context. Against a background of rising US hegemony, American cultural icons were appropriated by political and corporate elites as symbols of individual expression and as the apparently politically neutral successes of capitalism. High art and culture of the modernist period (such as abstract expressionism) served as symbols of freedom of expression, in contrast to communist censorship. So, as Harvey (1990: 37) argues:

What was distinctively American had to be celebrated as the essence of Western culture. And so it was with abstract expressionism, along with liberalism, Coca-

Cola and Chevrolets, and suburban houses filled with consumer durables... 'values that were subsequently assimilated, utilised and co-opted by politicians, with the result that artistic rebellion was transformed into aggressive liberal ideology ...' (embedded quote from Guilbaut 1983: 200, quoted in Harvey)

It was precisely at this zenith of US power and wealth, and the seemingly unstoppable influence of consumer capitalism, that the contradictions and paradoxes of Western modernism came clearly into view. Persistent poverty, inequality, environmental injustice and multiple forms of discrimination fomented the rise of countercultural, anti-imperialist and anti-institutional social movements.

And so this was also a time of dramatic social and political uprisings that led many development scholars and activists to believe in a major historical discontinuity that reworked modernist teleology and philosophy (Best and Kellner 1997). In '1968 and all that...' Michael Watts (2001a) provides a vivid account of the 1960s as generative and pivotal in refiguring democratic thought and action around the globe. An enormous number of social movements surfaced in what Watts terms a 'global insurrection', in settings as diverse as Paris, Mexico City, San Francisco, Lima, Manila, Seoul, Delhi, Cape Town and literally hundreds of other places, involving broad segments of civil society. These movements were 'doing politics' differently – such as the student rebellions of Mexico; the millions of students and striking French workers in the streets; the stone-throwing intifada of Palestine; protests against the Vietnam war and civil rights struggles which coalesced in diverse forms and performances on the streets in the USA (Watts 2001a). People began building transnational movements, organising in protest against repressive social discrimination. These efforts continue in the global justice movement, protesting neoliberal policies of free trade and the power of the World Trade Organisation; in the World Social Forum that meets as a counterweight to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland; and indigenous movements that coalesced around the twin forces of democratisation and neo-liberalisation in Latin America in the 1990s.

It is important to appreciate that this insurrection was global, emerging from both political organising and intellectual foment across the global South as well as in the West. Activists and scholars witnessed the empirical failures of modernisation while working in South Asia, Africa and Latin America, where new and radical ideas were circulating. Myriad influences shaped these times, including the Cuban Revolution, Latin American dependency thinking, national liberation movements which gained momentum throughout the twentieth

century and struggles for the liquidation of the colonial system in Asia and Africa (see Balogh and Imam 1988 for an accessible summary of the political history of national liberation movements). These projects of mass mobilisation presaged the social movements that oppose the nationalism, cronyism, elitism and patriarchy of postcolonial states and the failures of Western developmentalism. Scholars and activists also came together across the global South, creating new centres for research and intellectual exchange that interrogate development alternatives and alternatives to development (see [Box 4.1](#)).

Box 4.1: Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi

A group of scholars founded the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in 1963 to create a space for research on social and political processes in South Asia, Afro-Asia and Latin America. Some of the key early pioneers were Ranji Kothari, Ashis Nandy, Bashiruddin Ahmed and Ramashray Roy. Members of the Centre examine critically the dynamics of democratic politics across a range of postcolonial nations and interrogate the exclusions produced in competitive, electoral politics as well as questions of dissent and cultural survival. The Centre is also a space for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary research on civil society, grass-roots movements and human rights struggles. The Centre faculty also researches postcolonial nation states and the ways in which struggles over culture, ethnicity and religion are producing tensions and exclusions in the transition to modern, mass societies. Much of the work of the Centre focuses on those who are poor and politically marginalised, critiquing mainstream notions of 'Development' and 'progress' as dominant and oppressive knowledge systems. Scholarship from the Centre is premised on the idea that dominant development discourse has muted (or indeed subverted) alternative visions of sustainable and ethical societies, and that analysis and collaboration with grass-roots communities and alternative world views is needed to construct a 'vision of the possible'. (See <http://www.csdshdelhi.org> for a fuller description of the Centre.)

More recently, in Latin America, organisations such as the FMLN (Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional – Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) in El Salvador, the MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais

Sem Terra – Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement) in Brazil and CONAIE (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador – Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) in Ecuador emerged – encompassing trade unions, indigenous organisations, guerilla groups, ecological movements and women's movements, protesting bureaucratic authoritarian military dictatorships, the neoliberal turn to free trade and the withdrawal of the state from social provisions and protections.

These diverse movements mobilised a new politics of antistatism, self-governance and freedom to organise around radically different identities and principles (rather than national identifications), and at diverse scales, from transnational to local. These politics empowered different institutional arrangements as well as a massive increase in social movements and non-governmental organisations around the globe, including new community organisations and civic institutions – such as indigenous movements, women's groups and environmental struggles. These institutional and political shifts have fundamentally challenged mainstream development, such that '...the critique of growth determinism has now become an orthodoxy itself' (Watts 2001a: 181). And of course, these intellectual and political challenges go further than just the development establishment, questioning the social and environmental impacts of globalised capitalism, attacking corporate liberalism and focusing on global justice. The 1960s stressed a politics of collective identity formation in ways that have since been challenged by activists and theorists who organise politically around diverse identities and in diverse contexts. 'Post' theorists and actors work with an ongoing tension between collectivity and difference as they struggle to understand the forces of social change and seek ways to build alliances to strengthen their movements.

In Western advanced economies, the social movements of the 1960s protested against crass consumerism, sexism, racism and a professionalised liberal democratic politics. Activists organised around civil rights and a New Left radicalism in Europe and the USA. Women activists who found themselves in a subordinate role within male-dominated radical movements (making coffee, typing and xeroxing) organised second-wave feminism. For example, Dorothy Height's account of the civil rights march on Washington in 1963 recalled the absence of women from any speaking role on that historic day (Clemetson 2003). Dorothy was the only female member of the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership that organised the march. She was also the only woman sitting on the platform, and she recounts how, the very next day, the National Council of Negro women met and '...we discussed our goals and the need going forward

to point out that women needed to speak as women, to voice the double discrimination of racism and sexism that we felt' (Clemetson 2003: 12). In the early 1960s, Rachel Carson's famous book *Silent Spring* built a feminist argument against agricultural chemicals and in favour of a holistic philosophy of ecology that connected nature–society relations. *Silent Spring* and Borlaug's very public rebuttal contributed to the mobilisation of an environmental agenda that inaugurated Earth Day in 1970 ([Box 4.2](#)).

Box 4.2 The clash of environmentalism and developmentalism

Rachel Carson was a writer and a biologist. Her fourth book, *Silent Spring*, made the best-seller lists in 1962. The book is an argument against pesticide use, a warning about the dangers of DDT and an elaboration of the holistic philosophy of ecology. Later that same year, state legislatures around the United States discussed and debated some 40 newly introduced bills to regulate pesticide use. Federal regulation to address water and air pollution, as well as pesticide use, was also influenced by the publication and ensuing debates the book engendered. The book is now viewed as a precursor to the environmental movement of the 1970s, as well as the continuing interest in ecology and rising awareness of the linkages between nature and society around the world.

Dr Norman Borlaug received the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for his work in developing hybrid wheat strains. He is known as the father of Green Revolution technology – agricultural technology that consists of irrigation infrastructure, hybrid seeds and the application of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides as a concrete manifestation of modernisation theory to underdevelopment and hunger in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Green Revolution technology was designed to increase yields of wheat, rice and corn. In a speech he delivered in 1971 at a United Nations conference, Borlaug had this to say about *Silent Spring*:

The current vicious, hysterical propaganda campaign against the use of agricultural chemicals, being promoted today by fear-provoking, irresponsible environmentalists, had its genesis in the best-selling, half-science-half-fiction novel 'Silent Spring'.... This poignant, powerful book...sowed the

seeds for the propaganda whirlwind and the press, radio, and television circuses that are being sponsored in the name of conservation today (which are to the detriment of world society) by the various organisations making up the environmentalist movement.

Borlaug's remarks presaged the ongoing debate within development as to the relationship between science, society and environment as it concerned development.

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In communist societies, social movements stood against bureaucratic party politics and political closure and corruption in the Prague Spring of 1968, and were involved in efforts to build socialism with a human face in Czechoslovakia. In the wake of the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc, a crisis on the left ensued, fueled by a crisis of human rights violations in socialist countries – Tiananmen Square in China in 1989 and Castro's crack-down on dissidents in Cuba in 2003.

4.1.2 Economic changeⁱⁱⁱ

In the midst of the political and social upheavals of this period, an equally important challenge to mainstream Development emerged from the empirical record itself. Recalling the grand claims for scientific development from [chapter 2](#), that '...sustained development is no hopeless dream, but an achievable reality' (World Bank 1991: 1), the record is actually one of enormous paradoxes. To be sure, this record includes successes, such as improved life expectancy, lower infant mortality rates and increased access to education around the globe. Tschirgi (1999: 1) summarises these global gains:

...infant mortality rates have dropped to less than 60 per 1000 live births (a reduction of 60 per cent); adult literacy has been cut in half; primary-school enrollment has come to include more than three quarters of the school age population with notable increases for girls; life expectancy has increased to age 40 for 75 per cent of the world's population.

However, when you consider the immense resources – billions of dollars, millions of person hours, over more than five decades, the failures of development loom large. Many critics argue that mainstream Development is a failed project when measured in terms of the increasing numbers across the globe living

without adequate food, clean water, a sustainable livelihood or adequate shelter, in both the North and South. Consider the findings of the *UN Development Report* (1999: 1) that 800 million people across the globe are malnourished. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reported that in 1994 39 per cent of households in Latin America were below their country's poverty line (using most recent reported data at the time). In Africa, the World Bank reported that 39 per cent of people were living on less than US \$1 per day in 1993 (the most recent comparable data at the time).^{iv} On income inequality, the World Bank PovertyNet website reports diverse trends:

...Malaysia saw declines in inequality...during the 1980s, but this trend was reversed in the 1990s. Korea and Indonesia experienced rapid growth during the 1980s with little change in inequality, while China and Russia experienced large increases in inequality over the same period (www.worldbank.org/poverty/data/trends/inequal.htm)

Both poverty and inequality are fueled by economic restructuring and massive expansions in 'flexible' (unregulated, unprotected) work. For example, my research in Quito, Ecuador found that over 70 per cent of working people interviewed labour without job security, any kind of employment contract or benefits (Lawson 2002). More broadly, Gausch (1999) found that 54 per cent of the Ecuadorian labour force worked informally by 1999. These trends are widespread across the globe and have exacerbated inequalities, as Potter (1999: 8) points out:

[S]ince 1960, the start of the first UN Development Decade, disparities of global wealth distribution have doubled, so that by the mid 1990s, the wealthiest quintile of the world's population controlled 83 percent of global income, compared to less than 2 percent for the lowest quintile.

Growing inequalities over the decades of development emerge when looking at non-income measures as well. For example, a child in sub-Saharan Africa can expect to attend school for 3 years, whereas a child in Europe can reasonably expect to spend 17 years in formal education (for more information see <http://www.oxfam.org/en/programs/campaigns/education>). Looking at health issues, the Jubilee Campaign website reports that in Canada women's life expectancy is 82 years, infant mortality is 6/1000 live births and less than 1 per cent of people aged 15–49 live with AIDS. By contrast, in Zambia, women's life expectancy is 39 years, infant mortality is 112/1000 live births and 19 per cent of people aged 15–49 live with AIDS, as reported in the year 2000. Within the

global South patterns are also extremely diverse, with people in sub-Saharan Africa having a life expectancy of 47 years, compared with 70 years in Latin America (United Nations Development Program 2003: 265).

The contradictions of the urban/industrial development model emerge even within oil-rich nations such as Nigeria. In the two decades since 1985, the country has invested substantial oil revenues into infrastructure development (power grid, water systems, telecommunications), into expansions of oil and gas export capacity, and into education services, yet poverty has risen substantially, such that 70 million people (66 per cent of the population) are now classified as poor. In Ogoniland, where 60 per cent of Nigerian oil was pumped in the 1980s, the politically weak region saw only 5 per cent of its legal allocation of oil revenues. As Watts (2003: 65) details:

Few Ogoni households have electricity, there is one doctor per 100,000 people, child mortality rates are the highest in the nation, unemployment is 85 per cent, 80 per cent of the population is illiterate and over half of Ogoni youth have left the region in search of work.

The paradoxes and contradictions of mainstream Development have also emerged in agriculture. The widespread adoption of Green Revolution technologies in the 1970s substantially increased yields of rice and wheat, when coupled with intensive fertiliser use. Indeed, tens of millions of extra tons of grain per year were produced. In India and Asia, however, fertiliser use rose many times more rapidly than increases in crop yields, because over time the soil requires more and more of these inputs since chemical fertilisers do not replenish the land. Furthermore, since expensive inputs are necessary to remain competitive in farming, '...then wealthier farmers will inexorably win out over the poor, who are unlikely to find adequate employment to compensate for the loss of farming livelihoods' (Rosset, Collins and Lappe 2000), meaning that this much hailed 'revolution' has displaced many poorer farmers from the land.

Mainstream development orthodoxy also advocated the shift of formerly protected economies (from Indonesia to Bangladesh to Guatemala) to an emphasis on export-oriented assembly/manufacturing. This global expansion of capitalist industrial relations involved the deindustrialisation of Western economies and the concomitant destabilisation of Western state–capital–labour relations in ways that contributed to the social and political unrest described above (for discussions of these shifts, see Peter Dicken's (2003) *Global Shift* and David Harvey's (1990) *The Condition of Postmodernity*). Harvey (2003) argues that the 1970s witnessed the shift

from production to finance capitalism in the USA as Nixon took the dollar off the gold standard, arguing that this was pivotal to a set of changes in economic and political relations globally. This is coupled with the rise of export-processing throughout the global South that has transformed communities and prompted massive migrations of workers to export-processing zones such as the US–Mexican border. Here again, the record is contradictory since these shifts have provided large numbers of (primarily) young women with new industrial jobs, reworking households and gender relations as women become breadwinners and household heads. At the same time, the rise of this female industrial workforce has been accompanied by high rates of male unemployment, male departures from households or startling increases in alcoholism and domestic violence (Fernandez-Kelly and Nash 1983; Cravey 1997; Chant 1992). Other economic shocks and shifts arose from the punishing Latin American debt crisis and imposition of structural adjustment policies and neo-liberalisation, discussed later in this chapter.

Taken together, these economic changes form a second key element of the disenchantment with mainstream Development that forms the backdrop and momentum for radical theory and politics over the last five decades.

4.1.3 Cultural shifts

*One man had much money,
One man had not enough to eat,
One man lived just like a king,
The other man begged on the street.
Long ago, far away;
These things don't happen
No more, nowadays.*

*One man died of a knife so sharp,
One man died from the bullet of a gun,
One man died of a broken heart
To see the lynchin' of his son.
Long ago, far away;
Things like that don't happen
No more, nowadays.*

*Gladiators killed themselves,
It was during the Roman times.
People cheered with bloodshot grins*

*As eye and minds went blind.
 Long ago, far away;
 Things like that don't happen
 No more, nowadays.
 ('Long Ago, Far Away' by Bob Dylan)*

The upheavals challenging corporate capitalism, diverse forms of oppression, consumerism and bureaucratic governance were not limited to the political and economic spheres, but permeated every aspect of life. Within the arts and architecture substantial shifts set the stage for new understandings of society. Cultural forms emerged that rejected the elitism of 'high culture' (that is, the notion that art holds a stable, essential meaning produced by the artist) and the claims of grand narratives that retell modernist stories of redemption and success (Best and Kellner 1997). These popular cultural forms are playful, pluralist, democratic and eclectic. These cultural expressions included forms of performative protest, such as feminist activists tossing their bras and girdles into the 'freedom trash bucket' at the Miss America protests in 1968, to symbolise their opposition to unrealistic and commodified ideals of beauty in American society (Whelehan 1995). They also included the folk/rock movement, symbolised by the Woodstock concert that connected the realms of popular culture and politics as captured in Dylan's song, above. There were many expressions of the link between politics and cultural expression, as Michael Watts (2001a: 160) illustrates so colourfully:

[N]eed I remind anyone that the late 1960s produced Jerry Rubin, Alan Ginsberg and company attempting to levitate the Pentagon; the Yippies causing havoc on Wall Street by throwing money on to the floor of the exchange; the Strasbourg Situationists denouncing boredom; the Dutch Provos unleashing pandemonium in Amsterdam by releasing thousands of chickens in rush-hour traffic; the Diggers declaring love a commodity; and not least Ed Sanders and the Fugs setting off on their own march to Prague to masturbate on Soviet tanks?

More recently the turtles, trade unionists and anarchists marching together in Seattle in 1999 symbolised these forms of expression in protest of exclusionary, state-focused institutions such as the WTO ministerials and IMF board meetings.

Of course, these efforts are all imperfect themselves. For example, the UN Beijing Women's Conference in 1995, while on one hand was another important step forward, also operated to silence some groups of women. The UN conference was only open to official delegates of member states of the UN, and a parallel

non-governmental organisation conference was arranged to lobby official delegates. Controversy erupted when the parallel NGO conference was moved from a building close to the official conference to a location more than two hours away. In addition, NGOs had to apply for accreditation to enter China and attend their conference, and this allowed the Chinese government substantial control over which NGOs would have access to the conferences. Despite these hurdles, participation by NGOs and the success of their lobbying efforts in Beijing signalled the growing influence of alternative voices in development debates.

These street and cultural performances called attention to alternative analyses of global justice and to the voices of silenced subjects. Much of the post-structural research we will discuss in [chapter 5](#) was deeply informed by these movements and the assertion of the importance of cultural processes of meaning-making in the larger context of political-economic shifts. Returning to my question, how could development theory and action possibly look the same after all this upheaval? the answer is that it does not. The 1960s heralded the gestation of other politics and visions, some not fully cohered or expressed until later or under different epistemologies (see [chapter 5](#)). Some of these visions engage with modernist development and others might not be called development at all, but perhaps human-friendly or freedom-friendly projects. Despite seeming to be all over the 'map' – geographically, politically and in terms of substantive focus – these varied movements nonetheless cohere into a series of political and intellectual challenges to Development, the political and social status quo, the norms of the nation state and neoliberal democratic principles and practices.

The 1960s and 1970s stressed a politics of collective identity formation and a set of intellectual and political challenges that go further than just the Development establishment, to question the social and environmental impacts of globalised capitalism, attacking corporate liberalism and focusing on global justice. These grounded politics are one of the forces contributing to the rise of critical development geography. A second major set of influences comes from intellectual work around the globe that formed a theoretical basis for critique.

4.2 Contexts II: intellectual strands of Marxist-feminist development geography

4.2.1 Marxist development studies

Geographers came to the study of Marx as they grappled with these swirling issues of power and politics. Richard Peet's celebration of 30 years of radical

geography notes that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, ‘...radical geography tried to transform the scope of a conventional discipline criticised as irrelevant to the great issues of the time – civil rights, the Vietnam War, and environmental pollution...’ (Peet 2000: 951). Harvey (2000: 2) reflected on his turn to Marxist theory by saying that he ‘...arriv[ed] in Baltimore a year [1969] after much of the city had burnt down in the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King. In the States, the anti-war movement and the civil rights movements were really fired up... I realised I had to rethink a lot of things I had taken for granted in the sixties’. David Slater tells of travelling and working in Peru and Tanzania in the late 1960s and early 1970s, where his world view was influenced by the negative effects of imperial power, exploitation and oppression, as well as by the vibrant and challenging literature being produced by Latin American and African scholars working with dependency and Marxist ideas (Slater 2005, personal communication).

So, how does Marxist theory reshape development geography? The oft-told and familiar story locates the rise of Marxist geography in urban/economic research in the West, as scholars grappled with questions of declining inner cities and deindustrialisation. Indeed, scholars such as David Harvey, Doreen Massey and Neil Smith built influential arguments about capitalist crisis, urban and regional decline and the gentrification of urban and regional spaces (Harvey 1973; Smith 1984; Massey and Meegan 1982; Castells 1983). However, there is another important and overlooked story of how Marxism came into geography – through critical work on uneven development, imperialism and the ‘periphery’. Early issues of *Antipode* (the radical journal of geography founded at Clark University in the 1970s) published a series of landmark papers arguing for a radical geography of imperialism and underdevelopment in the global South (see, for example, Slater 1973, 1977; Folke 1973; Santos 1974; McGee 1974; Susman 1974; Blaut 1973, 1975). Other influential geographers began from questions about the persistence of the peasantry under agrarian capitalism and about the politics of peasant–state relations in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Blaikie 1981; Watts 1983; Hecht and Cockburn 1989; Hart 1986; Porter 1987; Wisner 1989).

Marx’s writings, and those he inspired across the social sciences, are vast in scope and have been summarised, reviewed and debated in many pages of print. It is beyond the scope of this volume to deal directly with Marxist theory, but see [Box 4.3](#) for some guidance on key concepts relevant to development geography and a reference list of Marx’s writings.

Box 4.3 Marxist theory

Karl Marx, writing about European capitalism in the nineteenth century, produced a general theory of capitalist society. Marx revolutionised thinking about the nature of production, arguing that over the course of history there have been distinct modes of production, distinguished by the social relations through which members of society relate to the means of production and to each other (e.g. feudalism slavery, subsistence production, capitalism). Through historical processes of struggle and dispossession the capitalist system emerged as a historically specific mode of production. His work critiqued the neoclassical economics of Smith and Keynes (discussed in [chapter 3](#)) for its superficial analysis of capitalism – focused on market mechanisms and the exchange of objects. By contrast, Marx argued that the most fundamental relationship in capitalism was between people and labour, captured in his *labour theory of value*. For Marx, production is irreducibly social, defined by processes of exploitation and power (Watts 1988). He argues that labour has ‘use-value’ which is set to work by capitalists to produce more value in a working day than is returned to the worker in wages. The existence of this difference between the ‘use-value’ of labour and its ‘exchange-value’ – that which is returned to the worker as wages – is the foundation for arguments about exploitation, class struggle, commodity fetishism, alienation, the tendency for profits to decline, crisis theory and transformative class politics (for excellent summary discussions of Marxist theory see Harvey 1982; Corbridge 1986; Bottomore 1991; Peet (with Hartwick) 1999).

Marx’s work lays a foundation for understanding uneven development across the global South. However, Marx did not theorise space or uneven development per se, but rather the capitalist mode of production. In the last chapter of *Capital* Volume I, Marx discusses primitive accumulation and the ‘problem’ of the colonies. He uses examples from the colonies of North America and Australia to identify the central challenge for the expansion of the capitalist mode of production – that of ‘freeing’ labour from direct access to the means of production. He argues that as long as workers remain in possession of their own means of production and so accumulate capital for themselves, capitalism cannot develop and social progress towards the

collapse of capitalism will be deferred. In a sense, this discussion opens the door for understanding the geographical expansion of capitalism across the globe, but Marx does not go through it. Authors such as Lenin and Luxemburg extend these ideas to develop theories of imperialism that form the basis for much of the early radical development geography (see [Box 4.5](#)).

The (nearly) Complete Works of Karl Marx (in order of original publication)

(1970) *Marx's Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Ed. J. O'Mally, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(1992) *Early Writings*. New York: Penguin Books.

With Frederick Engels (1998) *German Ideology: Including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to The Critique of Political Economy*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

(1997) *Wage-Labour and Capital Value, Price and Profit*. New York: International Publishers.

With Frederick Engels (1998) *The Communist Manifesto*. Introduction by Eric Hobsbawm, New York: Verso.

(1990) *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. New York: International Publishers.

(1993) *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. New York: Penguin Books.

(1993) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1. New York: Penguin Books.

(1993) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 2. New York: Penguin Books.

(1993) *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 3. New York: Penguin Books.

(1999) *Capital: Theories of Surplus Value*, Vol. 4. New York: Prometheus Books.

(1982) *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Ed. M. Dobb, New York: International Publishers.

(1996) *Marx: Later Political Writings*. Ed. T. Carver, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

For a biography of Marx see Wheen (2000).

Marxist thought has a rich history of over 30 years of scholarship in geo graphy and I cannot do justice to the full sweep of this work. I focus on two broad questions that preoccupied Marxist development geography. First, what causes capitalism to expand and spread geographically, and to create international uneven development? As we shall see, these authors turned to Marxian theories of imperialism and dependency theory in Africa and Latin America. Second, what are the characteristics of capitalism in the global South (often referred to as the periphery) and what social forces of repression and/or progressive change will it unleash? This led geographers to engage with ideas about the articulation of modes of production and the peasant studies literature on the agrarian question. Here I trace some of the foundational work that opened up development geo - graphy to debates around imperialism, primitive accumulation, articulation of modes of production, peasant studies and agrarian change. I also talk about how feminists extended political-economy arguments in crucial ways. Having set the stage with a discussion of early strands of Marxist-feminist development geo - graphy, the following sections employ our critical geographical approach to think about the geographies of Marxist-feminist development and the ways in which the subjects of development were theorised in this work.

Radical geographers did not speak with one voice, except in their fulsome critique of the mainstream development geography we reviewed in [chapter 3](#). They critiqued mainstream theory for its ahistorical application of Western concepts of modernity and for ‘...scientific dogmatism which is more concerned with the verification of hypotheses than with the source and nature of those hypotheses’ (Santos 1974: 5). Santos, Armstrong and McGee, Connell and Logan all argued against separate, dualistic capitalist and non-capitalist sectors within the global South. Connell (1973) appeals for micro-geographic studies of rural villages to understand spatial and social interconnections and in response to the ‘...pompous irrelevance of most macro theories of development’ (Lipton 1970: 15, quoted in Connell 1973). Logan (1972) also advocates detailed empirical studies that take account of the variation within global South countries to challenge Western ideas about spatial dualism. Santos (1974) decries arrogance in Western geography and calls for more attention to be paid to Latin American geographers.

Intellectual influences from Latin America and Africa did indeed shape radical development geography. Geographers were inspired by dependency scholars, including Frank, Furtado, Cardoso and Faletto, as well as the influential work of Fanon, Rodney and Mugubane (see [Box 4.4](#); Brookfield 1973; Logan 1972; Slater

1973, 1977; Blaut 1973, 1975; Watts 1983). Brookfield's (1973) work argued for attention to processes (rather than spatial patterns) of inequality and to the structural aspects of development, and also attacked the value-free stance of mainstream research, arguing instead that this work is imbued with Eurocentric assumptions and interests, calling attention to '...the rising bitterness of some writers in the Third World, together with those Westerners who have come to share their views' (Brookfield 1973: 9).

Box 4.4 Dependency thought

Latin American dependistas, writing from the 1940s to the 1970s, critiqued both mainstream and classical Marxian theories of capitalist development. Dependency thought is rich and diverse, and yet, in the early years, Anglo scholars mostly relied on Gunder Frank, who wrote in English. Dependency's fundamental contribution to development debates is to turn mainstream logic on its head, by arguing that underdevelopment resulted directly from contact with the West. These scholars are united in their insistence that development must be theorised from their postcolonial global South context (for an excellent review of this broad literature see *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment* by Cristóbal Kay 1989).

Gunder Frank (1969), often viewed as a world systems theorist, argued that 'underdevelopment' is not a traditional state, but rather is developed directly through contact with Western capitalism. He conceptualised a world system of metropolises and satellites, in which the metropolises (which may be countries, regions or cities) are exploitive, draining resources from their peripheries. His ideas produced a storm of critique from Marxist dependistas because he argued that Latin America had been capitalist since the sixteenth century, when European merchant capital invested in and traded with the region's economies. This was controversial because it defined Latin American economies as capitalist solely because they are producing for world markets and, in the process, ignores the social relations of production and state–society relations within Latin American countries. Wallerstein's (1974) *The Modern World System* provides an extended, but related neo-Marxist argument.

Marxist dependency thinking emerged at the Center for Socioeconomic Studies at the University of Chile under the leadership

of Theotonio Dos Santos (other key authors include Marini 1969; Bambirra 1972; Quijano 1971). Marxist dependistas examine the particular forms of capitalism that have arisen within Latin America, arguing that underdevelopment results from the penetration of the region's economies by foreign capital, technology and finance. While they were influenced by classical theories of imperialism ([Box 4.5](#)), Marxist dependistas were critical of the idea that progressive political consciousness and a transition to socialism would result from Western capitalist penetration. They examined the roots of dependency in specific social relations between foreign and domestic elites and state actors that produced technological and financial dependence and allowed for the superexploitation of labour. They argued that these processes occurred to compensate Latin American capitalists for falling profit rates, as value is exported to the core through unequal exchange (identified by Prebisch in [chapter 3](#)).

Reformist dependistas Furtado (1970), Cardoso and Faletto (1979) and Evans (1979) shifted the analysis from the economy to a consideration of state–society relations as they worked out differently in various Latin American countries in the period after the Second World War. They argued that no abstract form of dependency exists and developed a historical-geographical analysis of dependency. These authors focused on how Latin American governments across the region incorporated and excluded various social sectors as Import Substitution Industrialisation, advocated by Prebisch, began to fail. They examined the relations between foreign, domestic, industrial and agrarian capitals and argued for the possibility of a reformist Latin American state through which nations could be agents of their own development if they addressed the unequal and repressive social and political relations that had emerged.

Beginning from Marx's insight that the economy is irreducibly social, Marxist geographers attacked mainstream development for its assumption of spatial separatism – the idea that spatial forms are ontologically separate from social structures and processes (Smith 1986). Geographers such as David Slater opposed claims that mainstream development would bring progress and modernity to all, arguing instead that 'Development' was concerned with resolving capitalist crises in, and for, the West. Similarly, Griffin (1969) critiques dualism

and stages of growth theories of development. His detailed empirical study of nine Latin American countries argues for historical analyses of the ways in which indigenous societies were destroyed by mercantile capital and colonial administration. He draws on Frank to argue that underdevelopment is a product of history, examining dispossession of indigenous populations by colonial administrations and postcolonial states. Folke (1973) argues for analysis of imperialism, calling for more attention to the work of Lenin and Frank. These geographers were inspired by scholars from Latin America, Asia and Africa, who were writing about histories of colonial and imperial exploitation and violence, and who explained inequality and underdevelopment in terms of economic and political domination and dependency (Brookfield 1973; Slater 1973, 1977; Santos 1974; Blaut 1973, 1975).

4.2.2 Imperialism and the geographical spread of capitalism

Marxist geographers provided an alternative reading of development as underdevelopment, rooted in histories of colonial territorial expansion and imperial expropriation and transformation of peripheral economies (reviewed thoroughly in Slater 1973, 1977). David Slater (1973, 1977), working at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania in the early 1970s, critiques mainstream development geography for three inadequacies: its confusion of regional growth with regional development; its neglect of class concepts and their contradictions; and its failure to consider any analysis of imperialism (paraphrased Slater 1973: 21). Slater draws on scholars such as Desai (1966), working on Indian society under colonialism, Laclau (1971), on peasant economies in Latin America, and Arrighi's (1970) work on African peasantry to argue that mainstream development geography has ignored the rich histories of underdeveloped societies and their relationships to Western capitals.

In short, Slater argues that colonial histories of dispossession and extraction are continued with 'Development' – sustaining the theme from Brookfield above. Slater draws on theoretical arguments about imperialism (see [Box 4.5](#)) to set a radical agenda for development geography. Specifically, he argues that uneven development in the global South must be understood (in specific places and historical moments) in terms of the relations between external and domestic capitals, by the particular ways in which distinct modes of production are co-produced, and by the relations between peripheral states and international capitals. In these respects, both Slater and Brookfield argue that capitalist penetration of the global South is exploitive and extractive, and that our work



Figure 4.1 Argentinean graffiti from 2004. Source: Bill Beyers (2005)

should examine the forms of capitalism that emerge, the forms of class relations that develop, and whether these contain the potential for a progressive transition to socialism or to peripheral stagnation. Many of these authors draw on Lenin and Luxemburg's Marxist analyses of imperialism ([Box 4.5](#)) to argue that mainstream development is but '...Old Colonialism writ large' (Brookfield 1973: 8). These radical analyses of the exploitive nature of capitalism are alive and well in Latin America as depicted in this Argentinian graffiti from 2004 ([Figure 4.1](#)).

Box 4.5 Marxian theories of imperialism

Theories of imperialism extended Marxist theory, providing explanations for the spatial spread and impacts of capitalism in the global South. Marx and Engels wrote a series of articles and letters, reporting on developments in Ireland and India, that revealed their ideas on colonialism and modernisation – but they did not develop a theoretical argument. As Blaut (1975: 2) points out, 'Marxist thought begins but does not end with

Marx', noting that Marx himself did not fully elaborate a theoretical analysis of colonialism and imperialism. It was later theorists, such as Lenin (1965) and Luxemburg and Bukharin (1972), who argued the fundamental importance of the non-European world to capitalism – thus providing the foundations for a radical geography of development and underdevelopment. Specifically, these authors argue that the export of capitalism to the global South resolves crises in Western capitalism, and therefore the benefits of imperialism accrue to the West. They also argue that capitalist social relations are profoundly disruptive of non-capitalist societies and forms of livelihood in the global South, highlighting the violence and dispossessions that inevitably follow from the penetration of capitalism from the West.

Lenin argued that imperialism is the highest (presumably inevitable) stage of capitalism, wherein the concentration of production in Western capitalist economies leads to the formation of monopolies and to the merging of finance and industrial capitals. These monopolies require new sites of investment to resolve capital over-accumulation in the West, and they struggle for control over areas of the world as new sites of investment and accumulation (reviewed in Slater 1977; Corbridge 1986). Lenin viewed the 'backward nations' and geographical inequalities in development as functional for metropolitan capitals. Luxemburg emphasised contradictions within Western capitalism as the low wages of workers led to a realisation crisis (inability to sell all the commodities produced within Western capitalist societies) and a need for new markets in the global South. Luxemburg argued that capitalism faced barriers to its spread into the global South that had to be overcome. These included: the continuation of non-capitalist means of production and a shortage of wage-labour, which is overcome through violent means; competition with local commodity economies and, finally, international competition among Western capitals for the remaining conditions of accumulation and the industrialisation of the global South. Luxemburg stressed the close relations between postcolonial states and international capital, and the importance of the expansion of transportation infrastructure for the appropriation of non-capitalist forms of production (reviewed in Slater 1977; Corbridge 1986).

There were lively debates among the pioneers of Marxist development geography. Jim Blaut (1973, 1975) also argued that Marxian theories of imperialism

provide critical tools for understanding geographies of development in the global South. He drew from authors such as Fanon (1965), Furtado (1970) and Cardoso and Faletto (1979) to argue that in the global South capitalism assumes a different, dependent form to Western capitalism. While many Marxists assumed that socialism would follow from mature capitalism in the core, Blaut argued that proletarianisation and oppression had been exported to the global South in the guise of Anglo-American superiority and civilisation since 1492. He further argued that the shift from feudalism to capitalism in Europe was itself possible because of the appropriation of surplus value by merchants from Asia and Africa. Blaut's argument echoes Gunder Frank's focus on merchant capital and exchange relationships, viewing medieval extraction of surplus from the global South as a prior condition for the full emergence of capitalism, and subsequently colonialism, from Europe to the globe. In other words, rather than seeing imperialism as emerging from European capitalism, he sees surplus value extraction from the global South as making core capitalism possible. Slater argues that Blaut misreads Marxian theory, confusing the production of surplus under merchant capital with the capitalist mode of production. This conflation leads Blaut to broadly attribute proletarian status to the geographic space of the global South, rather than to people experiencing specific class relations within capitalism.

However, Blaut's work (along with much dependency writing) is very influential because he decentres Eurocentric arguments within Marxism: that capitalist development emanates initially from Europe and then radiates out across the globe. He focuses on violence, extraction and exploitation since early exploration and trade relations between Europe and the global South. Blaut's work identifies these histories of linkage and foretells more recent arguments about the ways in which development discourse echoes and continues colonial narratives of civilisation, progress and development (for more on the latter, see [chapter 5](#); Mathewson and Wisner 2005).

4.2.3 Peripheral capitalist societies and peasant studies

Taking the geographical spread of capitalism as a starting point, peasant studies in the 1980s posed questions about the nature of peripheral capitalism. This was a resolutely interdisciplinary affair through which Marxist development geography became increasingly concerned with the political-economy of agrarian transformation and the relations between peasantries and capitalist development within the global South. Geographers began to produce grounded studies in Africa and Asia as they sought to understand social and political differ-

entiation in the context of ecological change (Watts 1983; Blaikie 1981; Hecht 1986; Porter 1987; Carney 1988; Wisner 1989; Jarosz 1990; Watts and Bassett 1986). These geographers were concerned to inject theoretical analysis into studies of agrarian change in response to an early disciplinary emphasis on detailed historical descriptions of peasant landscapes that characterised the Sauerian tradition at Berkeley. Michael Watts, a pioneer of this work, tells of being inspired by Marxists such as Chris Hill and E. P. Thompson, who wrote a people's history of how British people experienced being a peasant or a landless worker and of struggles over the privatisation and defense of common lands (paraphrased from Watts 2001b). Just as early work on imperialism was inspired by scholars from the global South, here too influential texts, such as Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1965) and Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), inspired a move beyond Anglo-Marxist theory towards a less Eurocentric reading of these complex processes.

This Marxian peasant studies research also gave rise to the field of political ecology which firmly situates analyses of hazards such as famines, soil erosion, tsunamis, and so on, in a Marxian analysis of social relations of production and consumption (Watts 1983; Blaikie 1981; Blaikie and Brookfield 1986; Wisner 1989). See Rod Neumann's (2005) *Making Political Ecology* volume, which addresses the rise of this field in detail. Let me just note here that radical geographers unpack the 'natural' in natural hazards and examine how the political-economy of agrarian change is intimately related to ecological changes and to the production of hazards such as famine (see case studies in Peet and Watts' (2004) *Liberation Ecologies*; Bassett 1988). For example, Watt's *Silent Violence* (1983) was a broad examination of the political-economy of underdevelopment which examined food crisis and the changing character of food systems in northern Nigeria. Watts analyses the articulation of capitalist and peasant modes of production across northern Nigeria in order to understand how peasant societies' ability to withstand drought and famine shifted over time. He reveals how peasants lose their adaptive capacities, as pre-capitalist cultural and productive practices are eroded by the penetration of first colonial and then globalised forms of capitalism. Watts simultaneously chronicles the relationships between household marginalisation and ecological instability as land managers are forced to exploit their own environment due to unequal access to land, labour and capital.

Exemplified by Watts' work above, geographers also pose questions about the persistence and transformation of the peasantry in the face of diverse

national capitalisms (Watts and Bassett 1986; Bassett 1988; Wisner 1989). A crucial element of this work questions the articulation of capitalist and peasant modes of production, drawing on theorists such as Ernesto Laclau (1979) and Eric Wolf (1969). For example, Lucy Jarosz (1991, 1993) looks at how a land reform initiative, designed to address class inequalities among the peasantry, actually exacerbated those very inequalities in Madagascar. Her research demonstrates how land reform aimed at incorporating peasant producers into capitalist agriculture actually increased share-cropping rather than eradicating it.

A few geographers also raise questions about the dynamics, contradictions and struggles over control of agrarian resources between peasantries and the state. This work raises questions about the role of the state in creating and stabilising specific regimes of accumulation (Bassett 1988; Watts 1983; Samatar 1989, 1999; Samatar and Samatar 2002; Crush 1987). Linking with themes discussed by dependistas (Box 4.4), some geographers examine how state actors ally with various factions of domestic and international capital in ways that shift and shape interventions and trajectories of capitalist development (Cardoso and Faletto 1979; Samatar 1989; Hecht and Cockburn 1989). Arguably, this remains an underdeveloped area within Marxian development studies in geography (see Glassman and Samatar 1997 for an extended discussion) that has now been prematurely overshadowed by concerns with Foucauldian governmentality, in the wake of debates about the changing role of the state in the context of globalisation (see a discussion in Lawson 2002).

4.2.4 Feminist political-economies of development

Feminist work in development studies was inspired by the same political foment as the Marxist work reviewed above; however, the feminist critiques push further in important ways. The early WID pioneers, discussed in chapter 3, had already established the neglect of women in mainstream development and so created space for this more radical feminist critique. ^v Despite the groundbreaking importance of WID, it did not critique the unequal power relations of gender or race/ethnicity, nor the systematic marginalisation of women by globalised capitalism. Early Marxist development work was also silent on issues of gender, assuming that the primary identity for analysing economic and political change was through one's class position and that men's class adequately reflected that of other household members, most notably women. Marxist work was nonetheless very important for critical feminist work, most particularly in the Marxist analysis of the systematic relationships between the spread of

capitalism and the marginalisation of women. Ironically, the Marxist analysis of women's oppression resonates somewhat with the WID position! To the extent that Marxist theorists considered the position of women, they understood their oppression in women's relegation to social reproduction and the household, and assumed that women would be empowered through participation in work, building solidarity with other capitalist workers (Kabeer 1994; [chapter 3](#)).

As feminist researchers looked closely at women's experiences across the globe, this Marxist assumption of women's empowerment through work was roundly challenged. A range of empirical studies found that women have dramatically differing access to paid work in different places and that women's entry into wage work is profoundly gendered (Sokoloff 1980; Hartmann 1981; Bandarage 1984). Feminist research reveals how discourses of gender difference construct divergent valuations, remunerations and opportunities in paid work for women and men (Raju 1982; Ong 1987; Beneria and Roldan 1987; Moser 1987; Wolf 1992). These sorts of findings: that women are systematically disadvantaged even within paid work, called for an explanation of women's subordination to men rather than only to capitalism. Here researchers examined the ways in which the expansion of patriarchal capitalist systems across the global South disrupted prior gender divisions of labour and led to the differential valuation of reproductive and non-capitalist work. Inspired by Marxian concepts of social relations of production, feminists introduced the concept of social relations of gender, which focuses on men's role in the continuing subordination of women at all scales and in all realms of life (Whitehead 1979; Young et al. 1981; Kabeer 1994). These researchers see capital accumulation and gender as closely related, but not in predetermined ways, and so they take context seriously. This work is an advance over prior abstract arguments about women's subordination by capitalism, arguing that social relations of gender take on specific forms in specific times and places.

Kabeer (1994: 54) nicely frames the challenge for feminist development studies:

...to steer a path somewhere between the liberal individualism of WID scholarship and the structural determinism of certain Marxist accounts, so that analysis could move beyond demonstrating the adverse/marginalising impact of development/capitalism on women to a deeper understanding of the ways in which unequal relations between women and men may have contributed to the extent and forms of exclusion that women faced in the development process

This work does not focus (necessarily) on the behaviour of individual men, but rather pushes beyond the formal economy to examine how families, communities, informal and unpaid work, and the institutions of nation states and development are shot through with gender relations and gendered discourses that construct different access to life chances, resources, programmes and so on.

Feminist geographers are ideally positioned to develop this context-specific research. Janet Townsend, Janet Momsen, Sylvia Chant, Lynn Brydon and Saraswati Ragu were early contributors to feminist development work, providing broad surveys of the position and experiences of women across the global South (Momsen and Townsend 1987; Brydon and Chant 1989; Raju 1982). Joni Seager's (1997, 2003, 2005) feminist atlases contribute to understanding the geographies of gender difference around the globe, posing a research agenda on environmental change and gender differences. Feminist work such as the International Geographical Union Working Commission on Gender and Geography brings together researchers from around the globe, as in the *Different Places, Different Voices* (1993) volume (Momsen and Kinnaird). This collection foregrounded regional differences in development concerns across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In early Africanist research there was more focus on gender and environment, agrarian change and basic needs. In Asia, feminist researchers were concerned with demographic changes, such as fertility and migration. In Latin America, more research focuses on feminism and revolutionary struggles for justice for groups differentiated by class and ethnicity. While certainly not all the authors mentioned above would claim Marxist influences in their work, they clearly laid crucial groundwork for those of us who came later to explore how capitalist and gender processes worked together to shape development.

Geographers blended Marxist and feminist analysis in their context-specific analyses of the social relations of gender in development. Their work took seriously the cultural construction of gender difference in its relation to substantial reworkings of power relations in work, social reproduction and politics. For example, early geographical work analysed ideologies of women's domesticity, gender divisions of labour and the gendering of paid, unpaid and informal work (Hays-Mitchell 1993; Raghuram 1993; Townsend 1995; Faulkner and Lawson 1990; Radcliffe 1986; see also England and Lawson 2005 for an overview). Feminist scholars also examined social reproduction, gendered household relations and complex contestations of power in households and communities around divisions of labour and access to resources (Lawson and Klak 1990; Carney 1992; Townsend 1993;

Sage 1993; Lawson 1992, 1995). Geographers examined the varied responses of peasant households to the encroachments of agrarian capitalism, looking at gender, environment and sustainability (Hart 1986; Watts 1989; Jarosz 1991; Rocheleau 1991; Ardayfio-Schandorf 1993). All these processes are profoundly political, of course, and researchers are building a feminist political geography of the global South (Radcliffe and Westwood 1993; Peake and Trotz 1999; Nelson 2003; Van Eyck 2002; see Kofman 2005 for an overview).

To be clear, I am referring here to feminist political-economy research, which does not break with its Marxist roots within geography, but rather builds from Marxist work on imperialism and peasant studies. A major contribution of this feminist work is to explicitly consider households, communities and women as centrally important sites and subjects for development studies. Feminist research on global economic restructuring, gender relations and development policy (especially structural adjustment programmes) owes a huge debt to Marxism (Massey 1984, 1994; Lawson 1992, 1995; Cravey 1997, 1998; Mullings 1999; Wright 1997, 2004; Nagar et al. 2002). Much work on gender and mobility also begins from Marxian roots to think about mobility in relation to work, households and the nation (Radcliffe 1990; Chant 1992; Tyner 1994; Lawson 1998; Silvey and Lawson 1999; Silvey 2000a, 2000b). These researchers foreground the systematic marginalisation of women through the geographic spread and intensification of capitalist accumulation in the global South, and, at the same time, they take seriously the ways gender inflects every aspect of those processes. [Chapter 5](#) discusses research which largely has its roots in these feminist and Marxist literatures, but which goes further in raising questions of difference, postcoloniality and gendered discourse.

4.3 Geographies of Marxist-feminist development

4.3.1 Political economies of space and place

Despite the substantial insights into little 'd' development that emerged from early Marxist-feminist political-economy work across the social sciences, the 1980s witnessed an impasse within Marxist development studies (Corbridge 1986, 1990; Schuurman 1993; Perrons 1999). Classical Marxism (of Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg) was seen as determinist: reading off similar economic and political outcomes from capital accumulation across the globe. Marxist theory was also criticised as economistic: reducing a complex mix of economic circuits and flows to a dominant and determining capitalist mode of production, focused on the

logic of capital accumulation and on workers and capitalist classes. Feminist researchers in particular argued that the Marxist emphasis on exchange detracts from thinking about the fullness of human life, including its spirituality, connection with nature, dynamics of social reproduction and care-work. As we shall see in [chapter 5](#), the early Marxist-feminist work also downplayed (ignored) other crucial aspects of identity and politics, such as race/ethnicity and postcoloniality, invoking global class and gender solidarities that did not exist. Impasse critics argue that Marxist development theory constructs an imagined space of a coherent 'third world' at odds with the fragmentation of the last decades of the twentieth century – including the uneven emergence of newly industrialising countries (the NICs), the rising power of OPEC countries, the breakdown of the Bretton Woods financial system and the growing internationalisation of capital, the persistence of peasant production across much of Africa, and so on (Corbridge 1990). Critics also argue that early Marxist development work placed too much focus on the shift to urban/industrial economies as part and parcel of progressive change, neglecting the persistence of peasantries, agrarian economies and the complex articulations of diverse modes of production in many places around the globe.

Geographic contributions to development studies push beyond the limitations of this impasse to construct 'post-Marxism', not ex-Marxism (Slater 2005, personal communication). Geographers articulate how capitalist processes restlessly reconfigure space, place and scale, and so take Marxist analysis beyond determinism and economism. Much radical development geography retains its roots in Marxist thinking, with a continuing commitment to causality and analysis of the relations of production, while paying serious attention to the diverse ways in which these combine with other forms of power (relations of gender, religion, ethnicity, nationalism, and so on) to constitute specific social and political formations. Marxist-feminist development geographers have refused to build any predictable or universal narrative of change and focus their work on understanding the diversities and commonalities in D/development processes to inform progressive political possibilities. This work in geography theorises concrete instances in order to understand the ways in which struggles over resources and labour are inseparably bound up with struggles over meanings, identities and the exercise of power (Hart 2001: 27). Pred and Watts' book *Reworking Modernity* (1992: 11) foregrounds the multiple ways in which locally situated actors rework the forces of modernity. Their argument captures our geographical sensitivity to place and space:

...there are both national and local capitalisms... [T]he global reach of capitalism has transplanted capitalist relations onto foreign soils whose different social structures produce different class configurations and different institutional forms of capital and labor

Early Marxist geographers gave great weight to local culture, tradition and history, paying attention to the articulation of processes in places in irreducibly local ways (Watts 2001). For example, Susman's (1974) work on Cuba linked urban primacy and inequality to American domination and virtual colonisation through control of land and the sugar industry. His work assesses post-revolutionary Cuba, arguing that Castro's policies of land reform, nationalisation of key industries and social redistribution have been successful in reducing inequality. Terry McGee's (1974) work on hawkers in Hong Kong draws on Marxian thinking to underscore the crucial importance of neocolonial relations in shaping uneven development in the global South. McGee's detailed empirical work critiques modernisation assumptions of a smooth transition to modernity in the global South and argues for a more ecological and historical approach to understanding traditions (such as street hawking). He also draws on Santos' (1974) work to argue that hawkers play an integral part in the economic growth of Hong Kong as the lower circuit that subsidises the expansion of the upper circuit, or modern retailing sector.

Geographers have been at the forefront of moving beyond the impasse, while retaining the analytical power of Marxist development theory. Geographical contributions take place and space seriously by acknowledging the indeterminacy, the openness of D/development processes and the politics they set in motion. Stuart Corbridge argues that development can only be understood in terms of the diverse conditions of existence of national and international regimes of accumulation, regulation and alliances among and between diverse nation states and social classes (see also Corbridge 1990). Michael Watts' detailed historical and empirical body of work on Nigeria examines the ways in which global forces articulate with local forces through multi-scalar and grounded analysis. He looks at how petro-capitalism has unleashed a particular version of modernity, producing new social classes and state-society relations. Watts examines how these shifts were experienced by landless workers in the North; how they produced a certain sense of ethnic identity; why local political movements in northern Nigeria had such power; and how oil exploitation has led to a series of exclusions and to political resistance by those excluded.

Through this body of work, Watts employs Marxian theory to analyse local, grounded situations and simultaneously asks how these empirics inflect theory itself (Watts 1983, 1989, 2001b, 2003).

In addition to geographers' detailed empirical engagements with Marxist-feminist development theory, David Harvey stands out for his theoretical extensions of Marxian thinking through which he theorises the differential production of place, space and political activism under capitalism. While Harvey has not worked explicitly in development studies, his theoretical insights have substantial relevance for our argument here. Harvey's work stresses the restless spatiality of capitalist processes and pushes beyond the essentialism of stagnationist and underdevelopment theses of early dependency and imperialist arguments. He draws on Marx's theory of crisis to argue that capitalism must have its fixes, but that we cannot predict in advance what fixes will be implemented, nor what forms they will take (this idea of a fix is evocative: fix as in stabilise, fix as in heal or solve, fix as in a junky needing a fix – to prevent feeling worse, in order to feel better^{vi}). Harvey's foundational work in 1973 and 1982 argued that one palliative for the political crises engendered by exploitation of workers is the devaluation of capitalist production in one place, coupled with the spatial relocation of capitalist investments and the remaking of labour relations in places more advantageous to capital. His *Limits to Capital* (1982) is a key text that delineates an overdetermined, spatially restless capitalism, coupled with the spatiality of crisis formation and its resolution. Harvey's work has been invaluable for understanding the contradictions of capital accumulation and international movements of capitalist modes of production and money flows (Corbridge 1990).

Harvey's more recent work examines contemporary global capitalism and *The New Imperialism* (2003): the connections between capitalist crises in the USA and the remaking of places around the globe through the penetration of investments, international debt and military intervention. This has enormous relevance for radical development geography, as Harvey extends early arguments about imperialism (Box 4.5) to argue that crises in Western capitalism (and particularly the USA) are sufficiently deep, and the conditions for accumulation sufficiently altered, that new strategies are required to maintain capital accumulation, including new rounds of 'accumulation by dispossession'. This term refers to the opening up of profitable investments (in the USA and around the globe) through privatisation of common rights and resources, such as water, education, health care and housing; displacement of peasant populations; privatisation of national industries and utilities; expansion of intellectual property rights to

include medicinal plants and food crops; corporate fraud and dispossession of retirement assets; asset destruction through inflation; rolling back of regulatory frameworks for workers' rights; and elimination of benefits such as pension plans and social security (see also [Box 3.4](#)).

As Sparke et al. (2005: 376) argue, Harvey's formulation of primitive accumulation can potentially serve as a 'hinge concept' that opens the door to thinking about the multiple extra-economic power relations in specific places through which domination is being exercised in the early twenty-first century. This is important because it helps us to understand why diverse social movements have come together to create a politics of opposition to neoliberal policies. This is because these policies (redefining indigenous claims to communal property rights, eliminating state supports for care-work, which serves to reinscribe oppressive gender roles, and so on) bring together diverse groups around a common goal of anti-neoliberalism. In sharp contrast to mainstream arguments about maximising growth through free trade for the good of all societies, Harvey reads the turn to neoliberalism through the interrelations between places, the unfolding of neoliberal capitalist relations and the multiple axes of domination and politics that are emerging in response.

The shift to neoliberal orthodoxy in development policy emerges, Harvey argues, from the push to resolve crises of stagflation and deindustrialisation in US and UK capitalism in the 1970s. As we discussed in [chapter 3](#), a series of economic shocks rocked Western countries, leading to a political shift towards neo-liberalisation, including privatisation and free trade to open up new territories and new spheres (such as services, utilities, and the like) for investments by Western capitals. Harvey's theoretical analysis complements a variety of research by development geographers on the '*... different variants of neoliberalism, the hybrid nature of contemporary policies and programmes, or [to] the multiple and contradictory aspects of neoliberal spaces, techniques and subjects*' (Larner 2003: 509, emphasis in original). Development geographers have responded to Larner's appeal for research on the context-specific variations in neoliberal processes, producing a range of empirically rich research across the global South (see for example Ould-May 1996 on Mauritania; Kelly 1999 on the Philippines; Gwynne and Kay 2000, 2004; Klak 1998; Konadu-Agyemang 2000; Chase 2002a; Harris 2000; Perrault and Martin 2005, all on Latin America). Geographers are also bringing together Marxist-feminist and post-structural arguments about the forms of governance and governmentality at work in these new economic and political forms (see for example Bridge and Jonas 2002;

Nagar et al. 2002; Sparke and Lawson 2003; Sparke 2005). In addition to clearly situating the shift to neoliberal policies in the relations between Western and Latin American capitalisms, these researchers are raising crucial questions about social and environmental justice under these regimes of accumulation (more in [section 4.3.2](#) on scale, below).

Box 4.6 Latin American debt crisis

As we discussed in [chapter 3](#), the implementation of neoliberal reforms in Chile in the 1970s and 1980s inaugurated neoliberal legitimacy, and this was followed swiftly by structural adjustment programmes throughout Latin America, implemented in the wake of the debt crisis of the 1980s.

A Marxist reading situates the roots of the debt crisis in capitalist crises in the West ([Figure 4.2](#) depicts this view). Profit declines in the core prompted a growing internationalisation of production and banking just as a vast influx of petrodollars came into the international banking system. The concomitant search for new investments landed bankers in Latin America, where the costs and inefficiencies of Import Substitution Industrialisation led to a high demand for capital imports (Stallings and Kauffman 1989; Harvey 2003; Perrault and Martin 2005).

Latin American countries took on large loans at low interest rates in the early 1970s, but as economic crisis hit the Western economies, interest rates skyrocketed by the early 1980s, such that the interest payments on loans rapidly became unmanageable. In the wake of Mexico's 1982 announcement that they could not sustain debt service payments, several Latin American countries followed suit and requested emergency loans from the IMF to stay afloat. As a condition of receiving those loans, the IMF required structural adjustment programmes (summarised in [Box 3.4](#)) in order to qualify for continuing bank loans. From a Marxist perspective, these policies created the conditions for accumulation by dispossession, and were intimately related to resolving economic crises for globalising capital and for Western and other cash-rich economies, such as the OPEC investor nations. Indeed, the managing director of the IMF, Michel Camdessus, made clear that the success of structural adjustment programmes was based on their ability to strengthen the economic recovery of the advanced economies:

I referred last year to the impressive performance of the thirty five successfully adjusting countries: their performance has been maintained, with an annual growth in per capita incomes averaging 4.5 per cent over the past five years. U.S. exports to China, the Middle East and Latin America grew in 1991 and 1992 at ten times the increase in U.S. exports to Western Europe. Ten times! And Japanese exports to the same markets grew ten times faster than Japanese exports to the U.S... The successful developing countries not only show the way forward for other developing countries. They have also shown to the industrial countries that there is no action more effective in...strengthening their own recovery...than the full integration of the developing and transforming countries into the global economic system. .. (Camdessus 1993)

Marxist analyses of debt crisis present a significant rereading of development. In contrast to mainstream World Bank and IMF arguments, wherein these SAPs were required to fix national problems of economic mismanagement *within the global South*, Marxist scholars interpret debt crisis in terms of the intimate relations between capitalist economies across the globe. The *National Catholic Reporter* goes further and asks for whom is this a debt crisis, pointing out that indebted countries are exporting capital and enriching the West and global institutions.

The overall global debt of all developing countries, according to U.N. statistics, was \$567 billion in 1980 and \$1.4 trillion in 1992. In that same twelve year period, total foreign debt payments from third world countries amounted to \$1.6 trillion. This means that, having already paid back three times over the \$567 billion they had borrowed, far from being less in debt, in 1992 they owed two hundred and fifty per cent more than they owed in 1980. .. (Ambrogi 1999)

Doreen Massey's work also pioneered radical Marxist-feminist development geographies of place and space, which moved beyond the impasse and contributed substantially to development geography. Her book *Spatial Divisions of Labour* (1984) sets forth influential arguments about both spatialised and gendered divisions of labour under capitalist accumulation. She focuses on uneven regional development within Britain and makes links to the offshoring (often to the global South) of production in the restless search for profitability. Her insights about



Figure 4.2 It's not that Third World countries are getting poorer, it's that we're getting richer.
Source: Carlos Bernales, North American Commission on Latin America Report on the Americas XXXIII(1): 23, July/August 1999

the power differentials that accompany these spatial divisions of labour laid the groundwork for critical analyses of global economic restructuring and the relocation of production to the global South in subordinate relation to Western spaces of control and domination.

...if these divisions of labour which are stretched out over space...consist, as we have said they do, of mutually defining elements, then the functional (and social) characteristics of some areas define the functional (and social) characteristics of other areas. If one region has all the control functions...then other regions must have all the functions that are controlled, the subordinated functions. This has clear political and policy implications. (Massey 1994: 89)

Massey's contributions are important both in mapping out these spatial processes and relations in contemporary capitalist restructuring, and in her attention to place specificity and the constant remaking of space. Massey takes place and space seriously and argues that spatial and gender divisions of labour, and struggles over class power, are tendencies that take on particular forms in specific places and times (Massey 2004, 2005). For Massey, exemplified in her book *For Space* (2005), spaces are in constant motion, being restlessly remade

by shifting relations between places and through multiple trajectories of power and heterogeneity. As Matt Sparke (2006a: 4) so aptly summarises her project, 'Massey's account...enables us to reimagine place as a venue in which space-relating and space-making processes come together in conjunctural events'. This insight is important because it opens up places and spaces to politics so that the kinds of places being made in struggles over D/development are in contestation rather than being produced from on high. Her work is deeply informed by Marxism and feminism, and her geographical theorising moves us away from determinism and economism, through serious attention to the cultural construction of gender, race/ethnicity and class difference in their complex relations to the economic processes at the heart of Marxist theory.

Inspired by this theoretical work, many Marxist-feminist development geographers take a relational and critical analysis of place seriously. They draw from the theoretical abstractions of Marxist-feminist thought to examine how these processes, contestations, accommodations and politics constitute places across the globe today. For example, Cindi Katz (2001, 2004) analyses the interconnectedness of places undergoing D/development in two ways. She begins from thick, historical descriptions of processes of production and social reproduction in particular places, and then identifies connections between apparently disparate processes in distant places. Katz explores how an agricultural modernisation project, civil war, IMF-imposed structural adjustment and international investments in commercial food production combine in Howa, a village in Sudan. She traces dramatic shifts in land use and access to communal wood and grazing resources and the resultant food insecurity, male outmigration, dramatic reductions in health and education investment, the changing lives of children and deskilling of community members. Katz then maps out the parallels in social disinvestments and economic restructuring between Howa and Harlem in New York. Looking at job flight from New York to cheaper labour pools elsewhere, she identifies similar rollbacks in social services for working-class people in Harlem. Katz argues for structural comparisons of Howa and Harlem to call attention to the topographies of capitalism in order to be able to imagine a spatial politics of connections. This resonates with Sheppard's (2002) arguments for positionality and Spivak's (1998) call for 'transnational literacy' (discussed in [chapter 2](#)), which posit the analysis of spatial interrelationships as a technique for revealing the sorts of power differentials produced through systematic connections between places that actively produce uneven development.

Gillian Hart's (2002) book *Disabling Globalization* also builds relational analyses

of D/development. She argues against what she terms 'impact studies' of globalisation or development, which assume that their effects are unidirectional, radiating outwards from a dominant core and having predictable effects 'on local places'. Hart argues, by contrast, that globalisation is produced *in the relations between processes operating across multiple and intersecting scales, and through 'history, place, practice and power in multiple, interconnected arenas'* (Jarosz 2003: 506). Drawing on detailed research in South African townships, she challenges the notion that development 'models from elsewhere' (Hart 2002: 5) – in this case, neoliberal industrialisation models from East Asia – can be uniformly and unproblematically applied in very diverse places with predictably positive outcomes. She argues that

...critical human geography has a major role to play in developing politically enabling and non-reductionist understandings of political-economy, culture and power in an increasingly interdependent world. .. (Hart 2003: 813)

Hart first charts dramatic differences in the conditions for, and performance of, industrial development in East Asia and South Africa, and then goes on to demonstrate profound differences in the trajectories of industrial development within two South African townships. Through in-depth field research, Hart traces histories of Taiwanese industrial investments and demonstrates how land dispossession in South Africa predicated very different forms of industrial development and labour politics to those which had occurred in East Asia, where redistributive land reforms were pivotal in creating the social conditions for rapid rural industrialisation. Hart also examines 'multiple trajectories of socio-spatial change' (Hart 2002: 13) within post-apartheid South Africa, examining the diverse political identities and alliances that form in relation to the local state and industrial development in each township. Her comparative histories of the two townships examine how political identities and alliances are formed through racial, gendered and ethnic differences in particular places that produce dramatic differences in connections to national and local liberation struggles, to the labour movement and to struggles to secure the conditions for social reproduction. Her work deconstructs the very possibility of a universally applicable neoliberal development trajectory, recovering the ways in which different histories of dispossession, political identity formation, access to the state, and ethnic and gender struggles articulate with forces of capital accumulation and postcolonial state-building in particular places.

A host of processes come together in the production of the places/spaces of development. Geographers' attention to the political-economic production of

places has been critical to moving development studies beyond the impasse in Marxist thinking. In so doing, radical development geography moves our discussion away from a mainstream preoccupation with the inherent limits of global South places that must be fixed by external intervention, and towards an analysis of the ways in which political and economic relations with other places contribute to precisely the ‘problems’ that mainstream Development identifies.

Marxist scholars in geography are analysing commonalities across places as well as diversity and specificity (Perrons 1999). Their work integrates theoretical analyses of capitalist processes with the gendered production of difference, processes of identity formation and of state–society relations to understand the myriad forms that D/development assumes. I have not provided an exhaustive review of geographical work taking up a critical engagement with place/space. In previous chapters we have considered many examples of critical empirical analyses of D/development, such as Rachel Silvey’s (2003) *‘The Spaces of Protest’* on different gendered labour activism in two export-processing zones in Indonesia; Rick Schroeder’s work on agrarian change and gender in the Gambia ([chapter 1](#)); Melissa Wright’s analysis of gender, maquiladora work and the devaluation of women in Ciudad Juárez ([chapter 1](#)); Sarah Wright’s analysis of struggles over representations of rice and farmers’ livelihoods in the Philippines ([chapter 1](#)); and Tad Mutersbaugh’s research on the differential effects of international organic crop certification across villages in Oaxaca ([chapter 2](#)). These same themes continue and are further extended in the ‘post’ research we discuss in [chapter 5](#).

4.3.2 The social production of scales

As we discussed in [chapter 2](#), Marxist-feminist geographers have also been at the forefront of theorising the social and political construction of geographical scales. This theoretical work pushes beyond earlier dependency arguments that rested on unexamined regional divisions into core and periphery. Dependency formulations of the scales of development and underdevelopment are crude and undifferentiated, and do not allow for the possibility that specific patterns of investment and circulation take on very different forms at various spatial scales. Smith (1986) argues for a nuanced reading of the ways in which uneven development plays out across geographical scales, noting that

...the discovery that geographical space is ‘the product of socio-economic processes’ should lead not to the dismissal of space but to a recognition of its

importance. Space is not a 'dead factor', but comes alive neither as a separate thing, field or container but as an integral creation of the material relations of society... (Smith 1986: 94)

Smith goes on to argue that scalar differences in the operation of capitalist processes should be a central concern of development studies. From this vantage point, the rise of the East Asian Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) of the 1980s cannot be read off as a triumph of industrialisation over the development of underdevelopment because many parts of the global South slipped further behind as the NICs were forging ahead. Rather than claiming a coherent 'periphery' as a container for the uniform operation of capitalist relations, Smith theorises uneven development as integral to the working out of the contradictions of capital. The failures of dependency theory lie in its inability to theorise the differentiated production of spaces and scales at particular moments of capital accumulation.

Marxist-feminist development geographers are building a more rigorous theorisation of space and scale, as produced through capitalist social relations. As Ron Johnston (2000: 726) puts it:

...the construction of geographical scale is a process of profound political importance. 'Scaling places' – the establishment of geographical differences according to a metric of scales – etches a certain order of empowerment and containment into the geographical landscape.

Marxist geographers analyse the social construction of scales as the '... geographical resolution of the contradictory processes of a capitalist economic system' (Marston 2000: 232). More specifically, they examine the ways in which geographical scales are produced and transformed by capitalist processes of accumulation, regulation and de(re)valorisation of capital and labour (Brenner 1999; Smith 1984, 1993). Further, Marxist and feminist geographers have examined the scalar dynamics at work in creating particular identities to consolidate political legitimacy for a nation state or a social movement. As we discussed in [chapter 2](#), Neil Smith argues that social groups can act strategically to create their own politics of scale, and we see this as they work to resist D/development processes (more below). Marston (2000) has further insisted on theoretical attention to the household and body as crucial scales for understanding the ways in which gender systems and patriarchy operate in relation to economic, political, consumption and social reproduction processes. How, then, does this Marxist-feminist work on the social and political construction of scale advance critical development studies?

Attention to the dynamic production of scales shifts our analytical lens to new questions and new scales of analysis, leading geographers to rethink development in a range of ways. First, globalisation – a term implying a radical rescaling of almost everything (from Watts 1993) – threatens to overshadow development studies (Schuurman 2000a).^{vii} Marxist-feminist geographers have refocused discussion away from the fuzzy and overdetermined globalisation debate and towards analysis of the ideological political-economy and policy shifts of neo-liberalisation (Peck 2001; Peck and Tickell 2002; Lerner 2003). In doing so, our analytical focus shifts away from a supposedly unidirectional ‘globalisation’ and towards a complex set of rescalings of capitalist uneven development (or little ‘d’ development). As we discussed in the previous section, geographical work links neo-liberalisation to particular shifts in regimes of accumulation from Keynesian protectionism towards liberalised and de(re)regulated economies, which facilitate global flows of capital, trade and resources (Harvey 2003; see also [chapter 3](#) , [Box 3.4](#)). This critical Marxist-feminist work contributes to development studies by way of its critique of celebratory renditions of growth through market efficiency in mainstream development. By contrast, this critical work reveals how deep changes in development orthodoxy and policy are systematically linked to the resolution of capitalist crises in Western economies.

Second, and building from these insights, Marxist-feminist geographers are interrogating the changing scalar geographies of governance and state power over economic, social and environmental life accompanying processes of neoliberal development (Brenner 1999; Peck 2001; Peck and Tickell 2002; Bridge and Jonas 2002; Perrault 2006; Sparke 2005). In Latin America, the rush to privatise seemingly everything has transformed historically social goods such as water, communal lands, health care and forests, into economic commodities, and these processes are fomenting new politics of scale. For example, Perrault’s (2006) work on the privatisation of water rights in Bolivia traces a series of political rescalings. The Bolivian government centralised control over water rights in national-level superintendencies, taking them away from local-scale municipalities and campesino groups. Under neoliberal reforms and the search for new sources of national revenue, the superintendencies have the power to negotiate the export of water into world markets (in this case to Chile). In this process, governance over a key social and environmental good is rescaled to facilitate new rounds of capital accumulation at the national scale in Bolivia and Chile. This rescaling process prompted massive mobilisations by peasant

farmers, who themselves jumped political scales from local groups to the formation of a national-level peasant network, organised to reassert their rights to control water. Perrault (2006: 279) points out that farmers resist state centralisation of water rights by

...engaging in a complex politics of scale, reasserting the importance of local autonomy and authority through their emphasis on *usos y costumbres*, while forming translocal networks with campesino and indigenous organisations, leftist political parties, and national and international NGOs.

The social construction of scale raises crucial questions for development studies by calling attention to these transformations of governance and the formation of new political identities and organisations that accommodate and/or challenge neoliberal reforms (see also Swyngedouw 1997; Bebbington 2001; Nagar et al. 2002; Sparke and Lawson 2003; Bridge and Jonas 2002; Lawson 2002).

The rescaling governance is also jumping to the international scale (Glassman 1999; Lawson 2002). Lawson traces the shift of economic governance away from the Ecuadorian state and towards supranational institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund) and treaties (NAFTA, GATT (now WTO,) Andean Community; see [Figure 1.8](#)). The Ecuadorian economy fell into crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, labouring under a steadily increasing international debt and massive capital flight. In the context of this crisis, state elites worked ever more closely with international financial institutions and private, globalised capital to keep the economy afloat. These institutions frame economic crisis as resulting from *domestic* failures of macroeconomic management and so justify their role as the new arbiters of economic policy within vulnerable and debt-ridden countries like Ecuador. Elite actors in states like Ecuador have implemented a suite of policy reforms that align their economies with the needs of globalised financial and productive capitals, dismantling protectionism, slashing state spending on social provision and curtailing unionism. These actions internationalise the Ecuadorian state, reflecting the class backgrounds and interests of those in power that are closer to global elites than to the mass of working Ecuadorians. As macroeconomic governance has jumped to the global scale, Ecuadorians have massed in multiple protests, recognising their diminished control over their own economic, social and environmental futures (see Lawson 2002 for more detail). By examining these shifts in policy regimes, processes of governance and development ideology through the social construction of scale, we see the ways in which power over the Ecuadorian economy has shifted away from the territo-

rially defined state (the scale at which national politics are enacted) and towards the unbundled spaces of international financial institutions and private capitals (see also Newstead 2002, 2005), discussed in [chapter 2](#)). Glassman (1999: 673) examines similar processes of internationalisation of the state in Thailand, explaining it as '...a process in which the state apparatus becomes increasingly oriented towards facilitating capital accumulation for the most internationalised investors, regardless of their nationality'.

Third, geographers are researching ways in which these new scalar geographies of capitalism, state power and D/development are contested by social movements who organise across a range of scales, from transnational networks to local community groups. Research by geographers reveals the ways in which women's movements, labour unions, indigenous organisations, farmer's groups, and so on, are reframing scales of identity formation, action and cooperation (see selected chapters in Klak 1998; Chase 2002a; Swyngedouw 1997; Wright 2004; Perrault 2003b, 2006). For example, Tom Perrault's (2003) work in Ecuador examines the ability of indigenous groups to push their claims on the state by jumping scale and allying with other groups at national and transnational scales. In the case of the Mondacayu community Perrault studies, the community has forged alliances with national indigenous federations, international NGOs, financial institutions and the state. More specifically, the community organised to secure formal legal title to community lands that were threatened by an influx of colonists from the highlands. In order to legitimate their ownership, Perrault traces how the Mondacayu shifted from historic practices of hunting, fishing and small-scale horticulture to make their presence in the landscape more visible by clearing forest lands for cattle pasture, which fitted with Ecuador's rural development programme and land reform agency criteria. This act of producing a visible space of production allowed the Mondacayu to build political alliances that defended their control over community lands. As this example illustrates, scale-jumping has contradictory effects. On one hand, the Mondacayu defended their ancestral land claims, while at the same time they became integrated into globally subsidised commodity chains and circuits of capital accumulation which lead to deforestation.

Our earlier discussion of Sarah Wright's (2004) work on Filipino farmers' efforts to resist the privatisation of rice seed illustrates how social movements contest the scale-jump embodied in contemporary intellectual property rights, policies and laws (see [chapters 1](#) and [2](#)). Wright traces the ways in which corporate, scientific and policy actors took one culturally specific knowledge about

rice seed (rice in Western property law and scientific vernacular as private property) and jumped scale to this as the globally legitimate (and legally protected) view of rice. This scale-jump creates new spaces for capital accumulation on the part of corporations and governments, as these patents on rice seed become valuable assets that secure markets, profits and new investment opportunities. Wright traces how farmer social movements have jumped scale by creating alternative spaces of knowledge and property rights, as well as working to change existing national and global laws and regulations about the privatisation of rice seed. MASIPAG, the social movement with which she worked, articulates a concept of Farmers' Rights which

...encompass[es] a broad array of rights and responsibilities including rights pertaining to land, to seeds and genetic resources, production, biodiversity, politics and decision-making, culture and knowledge, information and research... this definition is based on the idea that farmers have a responsibility to feed their families, community and society... [this] creates a moral economy in which the right to subsistence needs, in particular the right to collect seed, trumps the right of investors to control the dissemination of products. .. (Wright 2004: 20)

This Filipino social movement is contesting and actively working to disassemble the claim to power embedded in the global scale-jump of intellectual property rights laws. Wright identifies their political strategy as constructing different conceptions of scale and space, specifically 'woven space', in response to this hegemonic global regime of property rights over rice. This woven space is made up of both opposition and alternatives, springing from specific local knowledge, struggles and strategies.

It is this space that the farmers of MASIPAG work to construct as they create spaces free of individualised intellectual property; spaces based on communal ownership, sustainable agriculture and farmer empowerment. In creating these spaces, defying norms and technoscientific knowledge spaces on offer from elites, they draw upon, nourish and create anew the networked spaces of multiscalar resistance... (Wright 2004: 22)

Recreations of space and scale by subaltern groups can be overtly political, as in the above examples, or can enable economic and social practices that sustain livelihoods (Bebbington 2003). For example, Nevins (2001) and Newstead, Reid and Sparke (2003) examine the ways in which Mexican migrants construct a transnational scale encompassing both sides of the US-Mexican border.



Figure 4.3 Filipino farmers' and organisers' rally. Source: Sarah Wright (2003)

Notwithstanding the militarised border zone, many migrants engage in repeated recrossings and produce cultural imaginaries, representing this transnational space to their communities, as one of economic possibility.

Fourth, scholars are rethinking development by pointing to the rescaling of social reproduction from the state to households and to individual women under structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) (Moser 1987; Dalla Costa and Dalla Costa 1993; Elson 1990; Emeagwali 1995; Nagar et al. 2002; Lawson 1995, 1999). Feminists are demonstrating how neoliberal discourses and policies rely on women's unpaid labour to take up the burdens of social reproduction (raising children, maintaining affordable homes, schooling, health care, food provision; Elson 1990; Scarpaci 1988; Lawson 1995). Geographic research has focused on how neoliberal policies redefine the positions/roles of individuals within the national and the global contexts (Katz 2001; Lawson 1995; Lawson and Klak 1990; Hays-Mitchell 1993; Kelly 1999), and structural adjustment programmes represent an example of this neoliberal rescaling of state functions under arguments about fiscal austerity. Vulnerable households and women take on increased work and expenses for previously state-provided or state-subsidised services, and this has contributed to the feminisation of poverty across the

global South. For example, Jacquelyn Chase's (2002b) work in the Brazilian town of Itabira traces the impacts of the privatisation of a state-run mining company. She examines the downsizing of the company, the loss of family wage jobs and the rise of women working in home-based crafts, childcare provision and food preparation. As economic pressures on households increase in this town, Chase demonstrates how deeply neoliberal restructuring reaches into homes and private lives as women have reduced their fertility to very low levels in response to sharp drops in standards of living and their desperate need for additional incomes.

These rescalings of social reproduction both empower and disempower women as they are increasingly integrated into globalised processes of production, reproduction and consumption. Safa's (2002) work in the Dominican Republic examines how neoliberal restructuring of both work and social reproduction has contradictory effects on women's lives. On one hand, as more women enter the workforce they are gaining greater control over financial and other household decisions. At the same time, as men are laid off from family wage jobs, families face increasing stress, which is leading to the formation of more female-headed households. In response to these shifts in work and home lives, women are engaging in new forms of political activism, both at work and within labour unions (Van Eyck 2002; Safa 2002; Cravey 1998), and organising for social services (Nagar et al. 2002; Lind 2005; Radcliffe and Westwood 1993; Pearson 2000), thus challenging the idea of women as mere victims of structural adjustment programmes. Starting from the rescaling of social reproduction and its reverberations in households informs a trenchant critique of the social effects of neoliberal adjustments.

Marxist-feminist work on the social construction of scale makes important contributions to development studies. First, their work foregrounds the material bases for a politics of scale, rooted in the contradictory processes of capitalist economic systems. This research reveals both how states and international institutions have sought to retain power over development dollars and policies, and how political, economic and cultural processes are rescaling around them. Second, attention to the social construction of scales reveals the ways in which development processes occurring at specific scales (national, local, international) often exclude key social groups whose practices do not correspond with development priorities articulated by those in power. Third, by looking critically through the lens of scale, this Marxist-feminist work reveals not only how scale is constructed by elites, but also the counter-productions of scale produced by

various subaltern groups in creative responses to capitalist and patriarchal restructuring. This research provides the materialist ground on which much of the post-structural analysis (discussed in [chapter 5](#)) builds to examine how discourses and cultural productions of scale also shape development processes and the political influence of various social groups.

4.4 Classed and gendered subjects

For Marxist and Marxist-feminist scholars, people experience D/development as subjects situated within social relations of production and gender that define and condition their agency. Nonetheless, they are theorised as active agents who shape the geo-historical specificities of development. The early Marxist work and the feminist-inflected Marxian work we have discussed in this chapter differ in their approach to the subjects of development and I discuss each briefly below. As you read this, compare Marxian conceptualisations of people in development – their differential power and their relations to economic, political and cultural systems – with the universal modern subject who acts with ‘free will’ constructed in mainstream theory in [chapter 3](#). Marxist-feminist geographers understand the subjects of development in terms of their differential relations to economic resources and political power in the spaces of globalised capitalism; the ways in which economic restructuring reconfigures the economic and political power of various social groups; and the gendering of production and reproduction.

As I noted at the outset of this chapter, the divisions between Marxian and post-structural development geography are blurry. In many important respects, the work reviewed in this chapter provides the groundwork for the post-structural research we discuss in [chapter 5](#). Indeed, many of the authors who began arguing for Marxist analyses of development now note the limits of these conceptualisations and have extended their thinking by drawing on post-structural theory (Slater 1993, 2004; Pred and Watts 1992). I want you to note this continuity, and then think here about the distinctions between mainstream and early radical thinking about the subjects of development.

Marxist theory constructs a class subject, rooted in European class politics of the nineteenth century. This collective subject is constituted through social relations of production and was initially conceived in terms of a division between capitalists and workers, who are differentiated in terms of their access to economic resources and their politics. As Marxist theory was initially brought to bear on development geography, analysis was largely framed in terms of

abstract, structural processes of imperialism and colonial exploitation. People in the global South were ignored or implicitly understood in terms of these broad class divisions, and '...as objects of capitalist exploitation and restructuring' (Silvey and Lawson 1999: 126).

As Marxian development geography matured, scholars differentiated global South societies in terms of a range of social classes who have unequal power and who struggle over access to resources. Much Marxian development geography has focused on understanding poverty and marginalisation as systematic processes, situating classes in relation to capitalist processes of exploitation and uneven development. Agency in this work is conceptualised through class collectivities and diverse relations of production. For example, Ben Wisner's (1989) work on 'strong basic needs' starts from Marxian concepts of exploitation, inequality and collective political struggle to think about effective responses to poverty and disempowerment in Africa. He argues that poverty must be addressed through the reorganisation of social relations of power, including those of class, gender and sexuality. He argues that participatory politics are critical: a politics which identifies exploitation and concrete actions to challenge injustice in access to land and productive resources. Wisner argues that change comes from the formation of collective identities through which social subjects produce a shared vision of their goals and the actions they will take to achieve them.

Much early radical development geography viewed people in the global South as objects of theorisation rather than as interpretive and informative subjects. Marxist migration work, for example, often viewed migrants as the victims of capitalist transformation as they became disenfranchised in terms of land and labour (Gregory and Piche 1978; Shrestha 1988). Early radical migration research posed important questions about how capitalist resource extraction prompted migration (Taylor 1980; Omvedt 1980), about the ways in which the colonial state displaced peasants into migration streams (Jarosz 1990), and examined how the penetration of commercial agriculture displaced peasant producers (Breman 1979; Murray 1981). In the majority of this work, however, emphasis remains on broader shifts in capitalist political and economic relations, rather than on the migrants themselves (Silvey and Lawson 1999). Marxist work on informal production adopted a similar analytical stance. Much of this work focused on the exploitive connections between formal economy and 'self-employed' or subcontracted producers (Portes, Castells and Benton 1989; Lawson 1995; Bromley and Gerry 1979; Teltscher 1993). Bromley and Gerry's influential volume *Casual Work and Poverty in Third World Cities* (1979) frames

poverty in terms of how people are situated within relations of production and employment, and in terms of structural transformations of capitalism. This edited collection provides rich case studies of the urban poor, including the autobiography of a bottle buyer. However, the overall tenor of this collection is about situating the poor in broader political-economic relations and transformations, focusing on poverty-in-employment and workers' structural position in relation to the capitalist economy.

Peasant studies research in geography moved early to problematise Western class categories and to theorise the different social structures in the global South. In contrast to the urban/industrial or national economy focus of Eurocentric Marxist theory, this work differentiates global South societies in terms of distinct economies, particularly within the rural sector. Researchers examine how peasant households respond to processes of agricultural intensification and the penetration of mechanised and commercialised farming practices. They pose questions about how these shifts rework peasant labour systems, gendered power within household divisions of labour and the sustainability of peasant livelihoods. Similar to the migration and informal economy research above, much peasant studies work analyses the relations between capitalist and peasant economies. Peasants are conceptualised in terms of their contested relations to, and differences from, capitalist social relations. For example, Watts (1989) reviews the range of work examining the agrarian question in Africa, focusing on the flexibility of households in adjusting to new conditions of accumulation; the ways in which ecological regulation is conditioned by property rights and social relations of production; how peasants resist the mobilisation of their labour as new production conditions arise; and the dynamics of famine in relation to the changing character of rural production and market systems.

While much of this work continues to emphasise the relations between capitalist and peasant economies, this research engaged early with feminist critiques and opened up the black box of the peasant household to think about the subjects within it, rather than assuming that male heads adequately represented the class position of all members. Geographers began to interrogate the power struggles, tensions, renegotiations of divisions of labour and access to resources taking place within households as they dealt with the structural forces noted above (Carney 1988; Carney and Watts 1990; Jarosz 1993; Hart 1986). The authors unpack the worker/capitalist class subject of Marxist thought and take seriously the ways in which gender and ethnicity inflect people's experiences of, and responses to, D/development processes.

For example, Judy Carney and Michael Watts' (1990) work on the Gambia examines domestic conflicts and struggles over the divisions of productive and reproductive labour that arise with a new irrigated rice project. In order to understand the consequences, costs and negotiations set in motion by this development project, they situate Mandinka households in relation to capitalist production, without reducing these peasant producers to Eurocentric class categories. They argue instead that '...as direct producers they hold direct access to their means of production, yet they may also buy and sell labour – but neither as workers (by virtue of their connections to property) nor as capitalist (since they labour)' (Carney and Watts 1990: 217). Through a detailed historical account of gendered landownership and divisions of paid and unpaid labour within production and the conjugal contract, the authors trace peasant resistance to agricultural modernisation. Their work demonstrates that women's resistance to reorganisations of production cannot be understood merely in class terms, but must also be understood in terms of household struggles over gendered access to land and women's ability to negotiate for remuneration for their labour in rice production. Carney and Watts also demonstrate that differences in ethnicity and cultural practices mediated the success with which women were able to negotiate for property rights, remuneration and a shift in the conjugal contract. Here the subjects of development are understood as people with agency, situated within the constraints and possibilities afforded by economic, cultural and ethnic relations (recall Schroeder's work discussed in [chapter 1](#) as another example, and see also Hapke 2001; Elias and Carney 2005).

This Marxist-feminist work situates subjects within social relations of gender, as well as political-economic relations of power, and then examines the ways in which these positions differentiate experiences of D/development (this is extended to think of difference in terms of race/ethnicity, postcoloniality, sexuality and nationality; [chapter 5](#)). Feminist development geographers examine how gender subjectivities, ideologies and identities are employed and contested in capitalist economic restructuring, and how the construction of '... "work-production-public" and "home-reproduction-private" obscures and devalues activities defined as "women's work" wherever it is performed' (England and Lawson 2005: 86). A large literature within feminist development geography examines how these discourses of gender shape experiences, exclusions and possibilities within D/development processes.

For example, geographers have interrogated experiences and contestations around global economic restructuring and export-led manufacturing on the

global assembly line. Beverly Mullings' (1999) work with Jamaican data-entry operators examines their strategies of survival and resistance against oppressive working conditions. The data-entry industry in Jamaica demands a docile, disciplined and hard-working labour force of low-paid women workers who are engaged in repetitive and boring work. Despite these difficult conditions, Mullings moves beyond the narrative of the exploited, victimised woman worker to explore how Jamaican women engage in everyday acts of resistance, such as refusal to work overtime, reporting irregularly for work and finger dragging (keying in data at a slower rate). Ironically, despite the ways in which household roles have devalued women's work, these resistance practices are made possible by households in Jamaica wherein practices of reciprocity and obligation, such as income pooling and exchange of unpaid services, provide support for women workers. Households are expansive (often including overseas members who send remittances) and supportive, and so provide a cushion that enables resistance to the harsh discipline of the workplace. Mullings' work reminds us of the complex interactions between social, economic and political dynamics in the different sites of women's lives. See also Altha Cravey's work on Mexican maquiladora workers' daily lives (1997, 1998, 2005) and Melissa Wright's (1997) work on how one woman resisted a representation of her as a 'typical Mexican woman' and was promoted into management in an export-processing factory on the US-Mexican border.

Marxist-feminist work also interrogates the ways in which gender inflects struggles for political voice within workplaces. Feminists have analysed how subjectivity is drawn upon and contested in the relations between 'globalised' capital and 'localised' labour (Nagar et al. 2002: 271). Globalised processes of capitalism tap into local gender identities and ideologies about the nature of work and workers. For example, Lawson's (1995, 1999) research on Ecuadorian garment workers reveals how struggles over narratives of women as 'unskilled seamstresses' rather than 'skilled tailors' contributed to their exclusion from male-dominated tailoring guilds and from political representation for better work conditions. This discourse of skill is deeply gendered in Ecuador. Despite the fact that both tailors and seamstresses are engaged in exactly the same activity (sewing), one business owner explained to me:

Look, I hire men because, you see, tailoring has always been done by men... because tailoring work is a hard job...making a suit is hard work, you have to make the lapels, you have to have many skills, you see, it isn't like with a

seamstress who makes blouses or a dress, that is simple, that is light work. By contrast, a suit, making and finishing a suit, is extremely hard, it is a lot of work to press the suit properly, with a heavy iron, you have to use a lot of water and to press it very well, this is very hard. .. (personal interview)

While the speaker emphasises the specific tasks involved in making suits and blouses, he is working hard to construct a skill distinction between the work of male tailors and that of women garment producers, in order to valorise and protect historical privileges given to tailors by the Ecuadorian state. Kim Van Eyck (2002) builds a multi-scaled analysis of how global and national neoliberal restructuring transformed the political and economic security of bank workers in Colombia. She examined labour market restructuring within the banking sector to show how workplace reforms such as downsizing and outsourcing relied explicitly on the marginalisation and sexualisation of women workers. Van Eyck then traced the emergence of new political identities forged in the struggles of women unionists to get male-dominated unions to recognise the specific concerns facing women workers.

Despite many important theoretical advances over mainstream development, early Marxist-feminist work was silent on forms of subjectivity and agency that are constituted through relations of race/ethnicity, sexuality, nationality and the postcolonial status of development subjects. Through their very silence on these issues, these literatures construct a subject, conceptualised in Western class and, subsequently, gendered terms, that was normalised as a white citizen-subject, engaged in politics revolving around production and reproduction issues. We explore these limitations and build on these Marxist-feminist advances in radical development geography in [chapter 5](#).

4.5 Continuities and breaks with post-structural theory

Marxist and Marxist-feminist work is a central intellectual and political strand within critical development geography. As we move to [chapter 5](#), compare how geographers differ in their emphasis on material and cultural/discursive analyses of development and on their ideas about the subjects and terrains of action (for a range of positions see Peet (with Hartwick) 1999; Blaikie 2000; Schuurman 2000a; Bebbington 2000; Corbridge 1990, 1993; Watts 1993; Hart 2001, 2002).^{viii} Many geographers are deeply inspired by Marxist theory and primarily motivated by grotesque inequalities across the globe; Peet and Hartwick (1999: 11) find ‘...still unrealised potentials in progress and modernity’, and argue for what they

term the fine principles of modernity: emancipation, development and progress, while critiquing their contemporary social form in neoliberalism. Arguments in this vein include Schuurman (2000a), Bebbington (2000) and Corbridge (1993), who emphasise the material experiences of inequality over a concern with the discursive power of development, and stress the ethical and moral imperative for those in development studies to act. For Schuurman (2000a: 9; emphasis in original):

The very essence of development studies is a normative preoccupation with the poor, marginalised and exploited people in the South. In this sense, there should be in the first place *inequality* rather than *diversity* or *difference* that is the main focus for development studies: inequality of access to power, to resources, to a human existence – in short, inequality in emancipation.

These theorists stress inequality and embrace the potentials of economic growth, arguing that we must critically address the organisation of society and the distribution of the benefits of growth. In short, critical modernists argue that issues of poverty and inequality compel actions and policies that ‘... rescue modernity’s beneficial aspects in new sociopolitical forms’ (Peet with Hartwick 1999: 196). Beneficial aspects of modernity, for these theorists, include the social use of economic growth to benefit all people (Peet with Hartwick 1999: 208), or, more concretely, efforts towards universal human rights or technologies, such as those bringing gains in life expectancy (Corbridge 1998). For example, Corbridge (1990: 635) articulates a post-Marxism, not an ex-Marxism, which engages post-structural theory, but retains a

...materialist ontology and a commitment to causal analysis and a concept of dermination; it also accepts that people make history, but not under circumstances of their own choosing, and that the ‘economy’ is structured by a systematically uneven distribution of assets and powers that leads to contradictions in the process of accumulation. ...

In contrast, other geographers (previewing [chapter 5](#)) draw on post-structural feminist, post-development and postcolonial theories to critique the truth-claims of modernism and to argue for attention to the vocabularies and narrations of development, as well as the imagery and particular uses of history, employed to construct the world as a terrain in need of intervention (Crush 1995; Watts 1993; Slater 2004). This work attends to the cultural construction of difference, subjectivity and identity, analysing the ways in which the

reworking of meanings is central to capitalist and postcolonial restructuring and political transformations (Pred and Watts 1992; Gibson-Graham 1996; Nagar et al. 2002). Paraphrasing Peet (with Hartwick 1999: 124), the distinction between these bodies of thought is that structuralism employs economic language to criticise capitalism, whereas post-structuralism uses cultural language to criticise modernity.

As we see in [chapter 5](#), many post-development and postcolonial scholars do not prioritise social relations of capitalism, but rather emphasise the dominating and homogenising impacts of Western developmentalism, refusing its potentials and analysing instead the ways in which it establishes its authority. These scholars argue that mainstream, Marxist and Western feminist analyses of development have homogenised and simplified histories of development, objectified Third World subjects and silenced other voices and alternative possibilities. Geographers have taken up these ideas to argue that we need historical geographies of development that reveal ‘...the relations of power that order the world and the words and images that represent those worlds’ (Crush 1995: 6).

Notes

ⁱ I am very grateful to Lucy Jarosz, Neil Smith, Richard Peet, Stuart Corbridge, David Harvey and David Slater for their willingness to share their personal insights on the story of Marxist development geography.

ⁱⁱ For insightful, personal accounts of this period and its political potential, see Nancy Hartsock’s introductory essay in *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited* (1998) and Todd Gitlin’s *The Sixties: years of hope, days of rage* (1987).

ⁱⁱⁱ This section is heavily indebted to research by Jennifer Devine.

^{iv} I use this reluctantly as an available descriptive and comparative measure of poverty reported by the World Bank for Sub-Saharan Africa. This measure is extremely heavy-handed because it frames poverty as a singular problem that can be adequately captured by universalizing the US \$ as a measure of well-being and development. This universal measure serves to obscure vast differences in access to basic needs by place, gender, ethnicity/race, as well as obscuring enormous issues of social justice and inequality. Diverse people have enormously divergent relationships to Western standards of wealth and consumption and this measure can be deployed to depoliticize and limit the scope of development debate.

^v To flesh out my brief discussion, see Naila Kabeer’s (1994) book *Reversed Realities* for a thorough overview of feminist development thought.

^{vi} Students in my seminar (Caroline Faria, Melissa Poe, Dawn Couch, Heather Rule

Day and Steve Hide) are responsible for this creative discussion about the multiple meanings of the term 'fix' and how these various meanings illuminate our analysis of Marxian crisis.

^{vii} Globalisation is a poorly specified, chaotic term that has been imprecisely (and voluminously) applied across the social sciences on the right and the left (Martin 2004). While there has been much hype about globalisation in the last two decades (at the time of writing), the processes it refers to are in no sense new – recall the nineteenth-century global expansion of capitalism and imperialism, global flows of trade and finance, and so on. Nonetheless, there are the contemporary globalisation boosters (Toffler and Toffler 1995; Ohmae 1995; Fukuyama 2001), who argue across political and corporate settings that globalisation is the inevitable rise of a borderless world and of reductions in state power as an integral part of the unfolding of capitalism and late modernity. Even critical analyses of globalisation have often served to reinforce a top-down focus on global corporate strategies, a 'global economy' and geopolitical discourses of globality, precisely through their willingness to engage the term and the ideological and political work it is doing to frame globalisation as inevitable (Gibson-Graham 1996; Nagar et al. 2002).

^{viii} Despite their differences, the various 'post-arguments' and critical modernist perspectives both start from a critique of neoliberal development, as represented by the Washington Consensus (discussed in [chapter 3](#)).