

This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in David Harvey Geographer, Marxist and public intellectual on 2022, available online: <http://doi.org/10.4324/9780429028120-2>

## David Harvey

### Geographer, Marxist, and public intellectual

#### Abstract

This opening chapter justifies the book's aim: to offer a comprehensive but succinct introduction to the thought of David Harvey. It surveys his career, and major publications, under three headings and in four contexts (academic Geography, Marxist thinking across the social sciences and humanities, public understandings of the contemporary world, and Left-political activism). These four contexts help readers understand his major touchstones over a sixty-year career; and his principal audiences. The last context has a more local flavour than the other three, in that Harvey's time in Baltimore (and to a lesser degree Oxford) saw him connect to local struggles for justice. This opening chapter summarises Harvey's life's work so that readers can understand the specific themes explored in subsequent chapters. Throughout, the consistency of Harvey's thinking across six decades is emphasised.

#### Key topics:

Marxist geography; geographical Marxism; academic theory; grass-roots political practice; public criticism of capitalism.

*The early decades: the making and unmaking of a 'spatial scientist'; From a 'Marxist of sorts' to a Marxist geographer; A geographical Marxist; Back to the United States of America; Promoting Marxism beyond the university; Making sense of David Harvey's Marxism; Conclusion*

This chapter presents an overview of David Harvey's life and work. It sets the scene for all the chapters to follow. It offers insight into the why, what, when, and where of Harvey's decisions to research, write and communicate in the ways that he has. It places a particular emphasis on his books. As you will discover, during his long career Harvey has been shaped by – and sought to shape – three things above all else. The first is the discipline of university-level Geography, in which he was trained in the 1950s before going on to be an agenda-setting practitioner. Remarkably, Harvey had a formative influence on Geography not once but twice: first as a 'spatial scientist', then later (from 1973 onwards) as among the very first Marxist geographers. The second reference point for Harvey's work is academic Marxism in the wider social sciences and humanities. After 1945, Marxist thinkers in the West became concentrated in universities. They used their academic freedom to significantly develop Marxist analysis of a fast-changing world. However, with the notable exception of the writings of French Marxist Henri Lefebvre, virtually none of the leading Marxists after Marx was able to understand how pivotal 'space' is to capital accumulation. Harvey has furnished this understanding, thereby adding a key analytical and normative pillar to Marxist political economy. The third key reference point for Harvey has been the turbulent career of socialist politics in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. Socialism, with its focus on shared wealth and the collective control of human affairs, is a political programme rarely found anywhere these days. As we will see, in the later stages of his career Harvey has sought a more public (and less academic) profile for his critique of capitalism in order to keep alive the idea of a socialist (anti-capitalist) alternative.

In sum, this chapter will show that Harvey is a Marxist geographer, a geographical Marxist, and a public advocate for Marxist analysis and politics in equal measure. It's based on a set of biographical pieces by or about Harvey.<sup>1</sup> Let's begin at the beginning, nearly ninety years ago in between the two great wars of the twentieth century.

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## The early decades: the making and unmaking of a ‘spatial scientist’

David Harvey was born in late 1935 in the small town of Gillingham in Kent. He was the second child of aspirational working-class parents seeking to make ends meet in the decade of the Great Depression.<sup>2</sup> The main source of local employment was Chatham docks, a major shipbuilding and ship-maintenance facility. Harvey came of age during the Second World War (1939–1945). While Britain and its allies won that conflagration, the austerity of the 1930s continued well into the 1950s. In Harvey’s own estimation, as a child he inherited his father’s self-discipline, his mother’s commitment to education as a means to self-improvement, and his maternal grandmother’s independence of mind (as well as her socialist sensibilities). State school-educated, Harvey was offered a place at Cambridge University in the mid-1950s to read Geography. It was a subject he enjoyed. His being able to attend an elite university occurred during a period when British governments were fostering social mobility by giving working-class children more opportunities for advancement. But, as with many Oxbridge students from humble backgrounds, the experience of entering an elite arena was not entirely happy. As Harvey later recalled: “‘Call it class envy, prejudice or war, but Cambridge taught me about class in a way I had not earlier experienced”’ (Harvey, 2002; Harvey, 2002a; Ang, 2016: 162).

In the 1950s, geography at Cambridge was typical of geography departments in most other British universities. It placed great emphasis on recording regional and national difference, both biophysical and human – what geographer Derek Gregory (2006: 4) has called “‘unique or singular constellations in space and time”’. Working within this ‘exceptionalist’ (or idiographic) tradition, Harvey did his undergraduate dissertation on fruit cultivation in mid-Kent (his home county) and his PhD thesis on hop cultivation in the same area. Both involved archival work and careful empirical analysis of land-use change over time.

### Bristol

If these earnest studies in historical geography seem unlikely origins for one of today’s leading Marxist theorists, the 1960s saw him apparently move no nearer his eventual intellectual destination. Having completed his doctorate in 1962, Harvey became a Lecturer in Geography at Bristol University. There, he underwent something of a Damascene conversion. At Cambridge (and Oxford too), geography was taught as a largely descriptive and synthetic discipline distinct from the ‘nomothetic’ (or law seeking) sciences. Students would learn to understand unique combinations of factors locally and regionally. However, during the 1960s it was ambitious Oxbridge graduates like Richard Chorley, Peter Haggett, and Harvey himself who sought – very successfully – to make geography a ‘spatial science’. They were thinking outside the proverbial box because they were dissatisfied with the existing paradigm. For this trio of pioneers, and for fellow travellers elsewhere (e.g. at the University of Washington), the ontological presumption was that the world had a good deal of hitherto undiscovered, intrinsic spatial order to it; the epistemological and methodological assumption was that this order could be revealed following the protocols of ‘science’; and the disciplinary assumption was that a ‘new Geography’ could describe, explain and even predict spatial patterns at a variety of scales.

Harvey’s signal contribution to the demise of ‘idiography’ as academic geography’s central preoccupation was the landmark book *Explanation in Geography* (1969a). It was the first attempt to specify comprehensively the methodological procedures necessary for human and physical geographers to interrogate spatial order ‘objectively’. The book (a tome of over 500 pages) became something of a bible among a new generation of geographers seeking to make their discipline more respected and useful in society. As Harvey put it in an interview many years later (with the editors of *New Left Review*),

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The established doctrine was that the knowledge yielded by geographical inquiry was different from any other kind. You can't generalise about it; you can't be systematic about it. There are no geographical laws; there are no general principles to which you can appeal ... I wanted to do battle with this conception of geography.

(Harvey, 2000a; Harvey, 2002; Anderson, 2019: 76)

In this same interview, *New Left Review* editor Perry Anderson rightly opined that “One would never guess from [*Explanation in Geography*] ... that the author might become a committed radical” (2000a: 77). Harvey conceded the point, noting that in the 1960s he was a ‘Fabian progressivist’ much taken with the idea of rational government planning as a means to improve the lot of the least fortunate in society. This was very much in keeping with the political optimism of 1960s Britain. Led by charismatic Prime Minister Harold Wilson, at that time the Labour Party promised to modernise a de-industrialising, post-imperial Britain and its iniquitous class system.

Yet the cool rationality of *Explanation in Geography* was a far cry from the social commotions coincident with its publication. By the late 1960s, a younger generation of people were protesting against many of the values and decisions favoured by those in positions of authority. Liberty and equality were watchwords of the period. The year 1968 was an especially febrile year that witnessed everything from the Prague Spring to student revolts in Paris to the assassination of US civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. As Harvey recalled, “I was so absorbed in writing the book that I didn't notice how much was collapsing around me. I turned in my *magnum opus* to the publishers in May 1968, only to find myself acutely embarrassed by the change of political temperature at large” (Harvey, 2000a; Harvey, 2002; Anderson, 2019: 78). By that time married to an American, and juggling a trans-Atlantic life, in 1969 Harvey left England and emigrated to Baltimore in the United States. There he joined a multidisciplinary Department of Environmental Engineering at the prestigious and private Johns Hopkins University.

### Baltimore

Upon completing *Explanation in Geography* in the UK, Harvey had resolved to explore normative questions not covered in that book (concerning ethics and values). Aiming to place the evidence revealed by the use of scientific methods in some sort of meaningful context, such questions suddenly assumed a local as well as national importance upon leaving England. Like Bristol, Baltimore was a port city. It also had a significant black population, and levels of concentrated poverty rarely seen in British cities. The year before he arrived there, the killing of Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis triggered a week of often violent protests among largely black Baltimore residents (similar protests occurred all over the United States of America-USA). The National Guard was called in and mass arrests occurred.

Though he had joined an elite university, Harvey quickly became keen to connect his academic work to the very real problems that were evident both near and far. His move to Baltimore and the United States saw him not only shift his focus to cities; it also saw him encounter the writings of Karl Marx for the first time. A famous and furious critic of the ills caused by late-nineteenth-century capitalism, Marx's work (along with that of Friedrich Engels) attracted Harvey as he searched for ways to explain and evaluate what was happening in inner-city Baltimore. One outcome of this local interest was a research project about access to rented and owned accommodation among low-income Baltimoreans (conducted with Lata Chatterjee and published in 1974 in the still young radical journal of Geography called *Antipode*). It utilised the Marxian concepts of use value and exchange value to show that an emphasis on the latter among landlords and mortgage lenders meant that residents were often denied use of suitable quality accommodation. The right to decent housing was trumped by the right of owners to make a profit.<sup>3</sup>

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**Figure 2.1** The aftermath of a riot in Washington DC, April 1968 (Library of Congress via pingnews, Public Domain). Harvey moved to Baltimore a year after serious inner-city protests erupted there and in cities across the United States-US, contributing to his newfound interest in cities and social inequality.

Within four years of arriving in Baltimore, Harvey had virtually revolutionised his own thinking and switched his intellectual focus to urban geography. In 1973 he published *Social Justice and the City*. It was, in almost all respects, a very different book to Harvey's first – but it was equally profound in its impact on human geographers (and others who researched cities). As its title announced, the book focused on the causes of, and possible solutions to, urban social injustice (e.g. low-income blacks living in cramped, dark, relatively over-priced inner-city rental accommodation in Baltimore). Where *Explanation* was an austere text about scientific method, *Social Justice* ventured a theory to both explain the origins and internal geography of modern cities and to criticise this unjust spatial arrangement. This theory, largely Marxist, shone through in the second half of the book. For instance, the final chapter ventured that the capitalist mode of production creates cities in its own image across the world. Their spatial form and overall function meet the needs of capitalism, Harvey showed. The first half of the book, by contrast, Harvey labelled as 'liberal' in its approach since it focused on the spatial redistribution of income and assets while taking the capitalist character of urban life as a given. For him, these 'liberal formulations' addressed the symptoms of socio-spatial injustice but not the root causes. Read as a whole, *Social Justice* is a somewhat schizophrenic book: it records Harvey's journey from Fabian progressivism to being what he called "a "Marxist" of sorts" (1973: 17) – of sorts because he'd only engaged with Marxist thought for three years at that point.

Even so, the book was Marxist enough to capture the attention of geographers who had regarded Harvey as a positivist to that point (i.e. that is, someone committed to 'objective' analysis of a mind-independent, material world presumed to yield a single truth upon investigation utilising the 'right' methods). Suddenly, Harvey was at the forefront of a nascent Marxist geography. It was a sophisticated first venture, replete with significant analytical and normative complexity. The transition was variously thrilling and alarming for his assorted peers in academic Geography. But the major shifts to his thinking notwithstanding, there were two key elements of continuity between the 'old' and the 'new' Harvey.

One was a commitment to developing theory. Harvey had concluded *Explanation* with the injunction "By our theories you shall know us" (1969a: 486). He later defined theory as "an elaborated conceptual apparatus with which to grasp the most significant relationships at work within the intricate dynamics of social transformation" (1982a: 450–451). *Social Justice* was a first attempt to depict the relationships that govern the creation and internal patterning of capitalist cities. As we will see, thereafter theory has been central to everything Harvey has written. A second element of continuity was ontological (i.e. that is, concerned with Harvey's outlook on the building blocks of reality). As noted above, the 'spatial scientists' of the 1960s challenged the idiographic view and maintained that there was approximate geographical order in the world awaiting scientific discovery. In *Social Justice* Harvey held fast to this notion of order, only now seen as generated by ongoing processes of capital accumulation. Harvey began to advance the idea that these processes did not merely unfold across the surface of the Earth, within and between nations. More than this, he suggested that capitalism actively creates built environments of production, transportation, consumption, and social reproduction in order to sustain itself. Social systems and spatial structures were thus, in Harvey's emerging view, two sides of one coin.

## From 'a Marxist of sorts' to a Marxist geographer

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## Getting to grips with Marx and Engels

During the 1970s Harvey immersed himself in the mid-to-late nineteenth century writings of Marx, and to a lesser extent Engels. In one sense, this intense focus on just one body of thought was odd. This is because a large and growing number of twentieth-century Marxists had sought to extend, modify and adapt Marxist thinking to an ever-changing world. By the 1970s, Marxism was a large and complex body of analysis and political practice. Yet Harvey largely ignored this larger terrain, and the contributions of most of Marx's subsequent interlocutors, and returned to the source. Why the selective – seemingly narrow – focus?

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### Figure 2.2 Karl Marx (1818–1883)

First, writing *Social Justice* had already shown Harvey that Marx's fundamental propositions about capitalism were still relevant nearly a century after his death. In other words, Harvey realised that while the forms taken by capitalism change over time and geographically, the essential relations and processes underlying these forms do not. Secondly, Marx's writings were voluminous, extending far beyond the famous and influential volume one of *Capital* (published in 1867). This meant that a serious investment of time was required to understand 'classical Marxism' properly, never mind the many post-classical modalities of Marxism. Third, it was already clear to Harvey three years into his reading of Marx (and Engels) – that is, by 1973, when *Social Justice* was published – that classical Marxism contained a largely hidden geographical element awaiting careful excavation. Disclosing this element as part of a more complete Marxist theory of capitalism became a central preoccupation for Harvey. Were there some fairly invariant geographical facets of capitalism amidst the shifting geographical details of its operation through time? This became a key question for Harvey. Having a secure university job, he was in a position to arrive at a very well-researched answer in the years after *Social Justice* was published.

Harvey's immediate intention after *Social Justice* was to fashion a more complete Marxist theory of capitalist urbanisation, with a focus on North American cities like New York and Baltimore. He began to teach volume one of *Capital* to students at Johns Hopkins, among other venues. This enriched his understanding of that text (and he's not stopped teaching *Capital* since the early 1970s). He also read Marx's other translated works carefully, such as the *Grundrisse* (1973). Between 1975 and 1976 he took a research sabbatical in Paris, the intention being to discover more about Marx's theory by learning from world-famous Marxist intellectuals concentrated in that city (e.g. Louis Althusser). While the learning largely did not occur (in part because Harvey's French was not, by his own admission, good enough), his time there inspired a deep interest in France's capital city. He began to connect his reading of Marx's theoretical works to the remarkable transformation of Paris that occurred during Marx's lifetime (roughly 1850–1870). That transformation involved conflicting visions of urban form and urban social relations. Immersion in the city archives ensued.

### A geographical theory of capitalist accumulation

However, Harvey had already realised that Marx's implicitly geographical theory of capital accumulation required further work before a proper account of capitalist urbanisation in general, and Parisian urbanisation in particular, could be written. Through the 1970s he published a set of agenda-setting papers that began to make Marxist geography a real proposition. An early example was 'The geography of capitalist accumulation: a reconstruction of the Marxian theory', published in *Antipode* (Harvey, 1975a). The culmination of this several years of work, which included but extended beyond the urban question, was the magisterial book *The Limits to Capital* (1982a). It was based on a wide and deep interpretation of Marx's writings (especially the later ones).

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The book's title had a double meaning. On the one side, Harvey sought to systematically add-in the 'missing' geographical elements of Marx's theory and thereby overcome existing conceptual limits. On the other hand, the book explored the contradictory and destructive dynamics of capitalism, pointing to the intrinsic real-world limitations of this particular mode of producing goods and services, including the necessity of crisis in capitalism. The first seven chapters reconstructed Marx's basic (largely ageographical) theory. The rest of the book then explained systematically how built environments are a fundamental component of capitalism, Harvey having first clarified its temporal aspects. Among other things, this explanation covered questions of rent (of land and property), the financing of infrastructure and buildings, and the geographical movement of different forms of capital (e.g. money and commodities). *The Limits to Capital* showed how capitalist growth – typically a punctuated story of boom periods followed by crises (like that of the 1930s) – requires an elaborate geographical landscape of nodes and networks. This landscape, Harvey demonstrated, is not an 'add on' to a fundamentally ageographical process of accumulation over time. Instead, it is *constitutive*. One way in which Harvey captured this was the concept of a 'spatial fix' (to be explained in [Chapter 5](#)).

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As Harvey has since observed of many occasions, *The Limits* is his most important book (and has been reissued by the leading Left-wing publisher Verso more than once). It presented 'an elaborated conceptual framework' that's underpinned all of his subsequent monographs, chapters and articles. But it's a very difficult book to understand. This no doubt explains why many geographers didn't read it upon publication, even as they recognised how formidable a contribution to understanding it was. Meanwhile, though the book should have caught the attention of the many Marxist academics working in other disciplines (e.g. Sociology and Philosophy), it did not. This almost certainly reflected the fact that Harvey was a geographer. Geography's reputation in Western academia was, despite the turn to 'spatial science', still somewhat questionable in the 1970s and 1980s. Many academics (rather ignorantly) regarded the discipline as about fact-gathering and cartographing, thus lacking the prestige of 'real disciplines' like economics. It's likely, then, that *The Limits* – being authored by a professor of Geography – did not 'compute' outside Harvey's home discipline. Within Geography, however, it added huge weight to Marxist geography, whose momentum was also being built by the likes of Dick Peet (at Clark University in the [United States of America, USA](#)) and Harvey's PhD students (such as Richard Walker and Neil Smith).<sup>4</sup>

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By the mid-1980s, Marxist geography was thriving. It was applying Marxist ideas to geographical issues such as uneven spatial development. Harvey added further heft to the field by publishing not one but two books simultaneously about capitalist urbanisation – and thus realising his initial intentions after *Social Justice* appeared twelve years earlier. The books were *The Urbanization of Capital* (1985a) and *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (1985b). The brace comprised a mixture of previously published articles and new material. The first book took a 'system level' perspective and explained why and how capitalism creates particular urban forms that, in turn, deeply influence the actions of governments, businesses, workers and local communities. A key message was that cities are not 'things' – that is, an assemblage of material artefacts like buildings and roads – but should be seen in processual terms. They are, as it were, more-or-less large nodes in a capital circulation process whose goal is to expand over time (since capitalism is focused on growth).

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The second book, however, took a less lofty view and homed-in on how various actors respond to capitalist urbanisation. At the heart of this book was the historical research about Paris that Harvey had begun in the mid-1970s. The brilliant, long chapter 'Paris, 1850-70' – coming in at 160 pages – in effect puts *The Limits to Capital* to work analytically to make sense of the conflict-ridden process of modernising the physical fabric of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century. Another chapter about the revolutionary Paris Commune of 1871 focused on class struggles over symbolism in the built environment and the 'control of space'. *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* showed that people – workers, local communities, business owners, government leaders and others – make

history and geography, but not under conditions that they can entirely control. This lack of control is particularly true for those who do not own the means of production and who otherwise have limited amounts of capital (e.g. money and property) at their disposal.

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## A geographical Marxist

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By the mid-1980s, Harvey was a towering presence in Anglophone academic geography, and in urban studies more widely. By then, he was enormously influential, both via his many path-breaking publications and his talented doctoral students (like Neil Smith, who went on to have a distinguished career before his untimely death in 2012). However, by his own admission things were not so good for Harvey personally as his fiftieth birthday came and went. In 1987 he decided to make two life changes. One was to move back to his native Britain. The other was to re-join a department of Geography after nearly twenty years in an interdisciplinary milieu at Johns Hopkins. Harvey became the Halford Mackinder Professor in one of the oldest UK Geography departments, at Oxford University. The move was inspired by a personal desire for new experiences, though he retained a formal link with Johns Hopkins University.

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## Oxford

It may seem ironic for a self-styled radical to become, by choice, part of such an elite institution (at least half of Oxford's undergraduates at that time had attended private schools such as Eton and Harrow). However, as Harvey opined in an interview conducted upon his arrival in the UK, "I've never felt particularly that Marxists shouldn't work in institutions like that. I mean if you view academia as a place where you're engaging in the production and reproduction of ideology of some sort, then it seems to me that to try to occupy some of the more powerful positions within academia is a very important thing to do" (in Peake and Jackson, 1988: 7).

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At Oxford, he continued to teach Marx's *Capital* every year, as he'd done at Hopkins (attracting students from several disciplines). He was also instrumental in adding Marxist Erik Swyngedouw to the Geography staff – Swyngedouw had been one of Harvey's Johns Hopkins doctoral students (and would go on to have a major influence on the United Kingdom and international Human Geography). Oxford was (is) obviously very different to Baltimore. But it was not just a university town. It also had a history of big industry, notably car manufacture in nearby Cowley. As he had done in Baltimore, Harvey sought to connect his academic life to local issues. There was a trade-union-led campaign to protect jobs at the Rover car factory (under threat of partial closure from 1988 onwards). Harvey became involved as the campaign unfolded over several years.

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The British car industry had undergone profound changes in the previous thirty years. What was happening in Cowley in the late 1980s was in some sense reflective of larger changes to the British economy during a period of Conservative political dominance (with Margaret Thatcher at the helm). After Jim Callaghan's Labour government had lost power in 1979, Britain's big industries (coal mining, metals production, ship building and other heavy manufacturing) faced intense overseas competition. Linked to this, Thatcher's governments sought to privatise many previously publicly-owned goods, services, assets, and industries. The 1980s were, in hindsight, the start of what we now recognise as 'neoliberalism', as well as 'globalisation' (one of the buzzwords of the 1990s), with similar things happening in both the United Kingdom and the United States of America (under Ronald Reagan's political leadership). Harvey had, it seems, moved from one society undergoing significant change to another. But the worst effects of change were geographically concentrated: the former centres of primary and secondary production, like Manchester and Detroit, bore the brunt. Though Oxford was generally wealthy, Cowley was one of the many casualties in central and south England after prior decades of prosperity before the likes of Japan and South Korea

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began to make excellent, affordable cars, vans, and trucks using 'leaner' production techniques and forms of organisation.

At the time, many analysts in disciplines like geography and sociology understood the economic sea-change of the 1970s and 1980s in the following terms. A relatively stable post-1945 'regime of capital accumulation' centred on Western Europe and North America was being eclipsed. This regime was Fordist-Keynesian: it was built on a set of big industries employing millions of relatively well-paid workers, and with 'interventionist' governments determined to protect their citizens' well-being. The regime began dissolving in the context of a worldwide economic recession in the mid-1970s and was gradually replaced by a regime of so-called 'flexible accumulation'. This emerging regime, it was said at the time, favoured smaller industries, innovation in process and product, far more differentiation among producers (with new sectors emerging like mobile phones), and more choice for consumers via intensified product differentiation within sectors. The big Fordist industries were forced to compete with new overseas rivals, while new firms were springing-up in 'clean' and creative manufacturing, in a growing services sector, in the growing 'knowledge industry', and so on. New kinds, and new geographies, of production and consumption were emerging (facilitated by sub-national and national government policies). The ongoing evolution of globalising capitalism was eroding the post-war social contract between workers, big capitalists, and governments within somewhat closed national economies.

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Figures 2.3 and 2.4 The end of the Fordist-Keynesian era. Harvey returned to the United Kingdom UK just after highly turbulent years that included the 1978 'winter of discontent' and the protracted national miners' strike of the early 1980s.

### Making an impression outside Geography

It was in the context of this regime shift that Harvey wrote a book that had a major impact on thinking across the social sciences and humanities. It was called *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989a). Within months of publication, it garnered wide attention in fields like architecture, sociology, and cultural studies. It also served to elevate his profile in the wider community of Marxist academics – a community that had largely ignored his previous work. We will say more about this important text in Chapter 6. The book sought to explain a notable shift away from 'modern' ways of thinking in everything from novels to painting to philosophy to the interior design and exterior appearance of commercial and public buildings. 'Post-modernism' broadly marked a celebration of variety, difference, and multi-perspectivalism. This shift was generally welcomed, with some in Harvey's own discipline (notably Michael Dear) advocating for it. While not entirely dismissing so-called 'post-modernism', Harvey questioned its perceived playful and putatively liberating qualities. More than this, he suggested that the sudden appearance of post-modernism across a seemingly disparate range of artistic, creative, and intellectual arenas was symptomatic of the regime shift in capitalism summarised above. Post-modernism, for Harvey, was a reflex of the capitalist restructuring and internationalisation after 1973. Whatever its positive facets, he argued forcefully that postmodernism in the broad realm of 'culture' was part of a new historical condition – what he called 'postmodernity' – that was created by the crisis of Fordism-Keynesianism. It was thus, despite appearances, implicated in ongoing harms inflicted by the capitalist way of life.

*The Condition* was partly a polemic, partly a piece of serious analysis that show-cased Harvey's breadth of learning. It was written with verve and enjoyed wide appeal across many academic disciplines.<sup>7</sup> The book discussed the changing dynamics of capitalism between around 1850 and

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1985, building on his previous books; but it also discussed urban planning, architecture and design, cinema, literature, fashion, painting and much more besides. Though it had its detractors, the book was a *tour de force*. It offered a coherent and plausible account of coincident shifts in ostensibly different domains of contemporary life. It was the first wide-ranging critique of postmodern thought and practice. It popularised the concept of ‘time-space compression’ as a useful shorthand to capture the logics and tendencies of fast-globalising capitalism. It sold many more copies than all of Harvey’s previous books combined. Insofar as any academic can claim to be ‘famous’, the book made him a thinker to be reckoned with well beyond his chosen discipline.

The year 1989 would also be a significant year for Harvey for other reasons. Reflecting his established reputation in Geography and urban studies, his first ‘greatest hits’ book was published (*The Urban Experience*, 1989b), coming on the heels of a reissue of *Social Justice* (in 1988). That same year, he also published an academic paper that would, in time, be his most highly cited by some margin. ‘From managerialism to entrepreneurialism’ (Harvey, 1989c), which appeared in the journal *Geografiska Annaler*, identified a new more competitive approach to governing cities across the globe, once again linking it to the emerging ‘flexible’ regime of accumulation. To cap the year, Harvey received the Anders Retzius Gold Medal from the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography. This was one of several prestigious academic honours to be conferred on him in the years to come.

## Back to the United States of America

Connecting his interest in the ‘big picture’ back to local concerns, in 1993 an analysis of the fight for jobs at the Cowley car factory was published by Harvey and another Oxford researcher, Teresa Hayter. An edited book, it was called *The Factory and the City* (Hayter and Harvey, 1993). But that year Harvey returned to Johns Hopkins and Baltimore for personal and professional reasons. The forty-eight months since *The Condition* was published had been eventful in the United Kingdom, UK and beyond. Though Margaret Thatcher lost power, the Conservative Party did not, and her political agenda lived on. In the United States, US, George Bush Snr. likewise continued the Reaganite pro-business programme; dramatically, the ‘iron curtain’ fell in 1989–1990 meaning that the Marx-inspired experiment in communist living largely ended; the first Gulf War began, with the United States, US and its allies seeking to topple Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein; the European Union officially came into being; and, after years of negotiation, the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (the world’s first comprehensive ‘free trade’ framework) was signed by dozens of countries.

These were challenging times to be identified as a Marxist. The unexpected and rapid end of communism in the USSR and adjoining states was widely perceived as a sign that Marxism was dead as a political force. It was, as Eagleton (2003: 43) later noted, “a solution to a set of questions that were no longer even on the agenda”. Meanwhile, in the Anglophone and West European social sciences and humanities, academic Marxism – such a magnet for bright minds in the 1960s and 1970s – was waning. A new generation of radical thinkers was ~~asere~~ drawn not to Marx but the likes of Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Betty Friedan, and Julia Kristeva. The environmental movement had also sprung into life from the late 1960s, but Marxists didn’t seem to have much to say to it (despite the now obvious links between environmental destruction and the capitalist devaluing of the non-human world). To Harvey, and many other committed Marxists, it seemed as if Marxism was being abandoned at precisely the wrong time. To add to the stresses and strains of the time, Harvey found Johns Hopkins distinctly less hospitable than during his first period there. Serious heart problems made things worse and required major surgery.

It was in this context that Harvey wrote his least cohesive, most ambitious, most interesting, and in some ways most abstract book: *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (1996a). It’s a text of many parts and has several aims. Among those aims was a desire to defend Marxism from its

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detractors on the 'new Left' who had steadily gained strength since the 1970s. In essence, the book provided philosophical and theoretical arguments, leavened with evidence, about how to make sense of a 'more than capitalist world'. It highlighted the central role of capitalism and the ongoing need for Marxist analysis; but it fully acknowledged the many important and legitimate issues that are irreducible to the critique of capitalism and which classic Marxist ideas about socialism and communism could not address without serious and careful modification. Where *The Condition* was a confident critique and demonstration of Marxism's relevance, *Justice* was rather more defensive yet also generous in both analytical and political terms. It explored the many points of connection and tension between various forms of analysis across the 'social' (e.g. Marxist, feminist and post-colonial) and 'green' (e.g. deep ecological) branches of Left-wing thinking. It considered the intersections between class politics, identity politics, and environmental politics, with an eye on how geography affects all of them. It was not so much post-Marxist as 'Marxism-plus' and reflected Harvey's adaptiveness to the influence of new currents of Left thinking. A key point of connectivity was the concept of justice. Harvey, returning to this theme for the first time since his second book, explored how Left politics can productively focus on the critique of multiple, but connected, forms of injustice existing in a more-than-capitalist world that's highly integrated but also very differentiated.

For all its focus on elemental things like ontology and epistemology, *Justice* was very much a book about how to comprehend the real world. By the late 1990s, the globalisation of investment, trade, consumption, and travel was well advanced. On Harvey's doorstep, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect in 1994. The year after, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was launched and oversaw notionally 'free' commodity flows across the full range of economic sectors. For some years, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank had favoured policies that encouraged foreign direct investment, secure investor rights (e.g. through strict property laws), balanced public budgets, and the removal of government subsidies to producers (the 'Washington Consensus'). So-called 'developing countries' became more numerous and prosperous as capitalism extended its tentacles. Even China, ostensibly communist not capitalist, began to open up to the world economically. The global working class expanded enormously, though levels of trade union membership did not. But there were losers, crises, and plenty of dissent about what critics began to call 'neoliberal globalisation'. Most notably, a peasant revolt by the Zapatistas occurred in southern Mexico when NAFTA took hold in 1994; and then, five years later, thousands of protestors assembled in Seattle to protest the WTO. In between, a serious financial crisis gripped east and southeast Asia. The late 1990s saw the rise of international, grass-roots opposition to the new economic order, encapsulated in the terms 'anti-capitalism' and 'alter-globalisation' (which circulated far and wide). Meanwhile, in the United States – whose elites had promoted neoliberalism for years – socio-spatial inequality deepened. Baltimore exemplified the trend, as later depicted in the remarkable real-life drama series *The Wire* (2002–2008).

Harvey wrote a series of articles and chapters during this period. The year 1998 was the 150th anniversary of the publication of Marx and Engel's famous call to arms, *The Communist Manifesto*. Harvey marked the occasion by noting that 'The material conditions that sparked the moral outrage in the *Manifesto* have not gone away' (1998a: 384).<sup>8</sup> In 1999 Verso reissued *The Limits to Capital*. The timing was auspicious: while a work of abstract theory, it seemed very relevant to a world experiencing uneven capitalist neoliberalisation. Then, in 2000, Harvey published a collection of recent writings as a book. It was entitled *Spaces of Hope* (Harvey, 2000b). Comprising twelve chapters and a short work of imaginative fiction (called 'Edilia'), the book did two things. First, half of the text reaffirmed the value of Marx's critique of political economy to working people worldwide seeking to make sense of their own lives. Second, the remainder of the book focused on political alternatives to capitalist globalisation, paying especial attention to the right to geographical difference. *Spaces of Hope* contains a long chapter about Baltimore, and also a story about an imagined post-capitalist world. The book was, to use Harvey words (borrowed from Antonio

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Gramsci), an exercise in “‘optimism of the intellect’” (2000a: 17) written in the belief that ‘another world is possible’ (the slogan promoted from 2001 onwards by the World Social Forum).

In 2001 Harvey published a second ‘greatest hits’ collection, *Spaces of Capital* (Harvey, 2001a). It assembled essays written across his thirty years as a Marxist; it was broader in focus than the earlier collection *The Urban Experience*. This same year he left Johns Hopkins for a second time. He moved north to join the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY) as a Distinguished Professor. There he reunited with long-term friends and intellectual soul mates Neil Smith and Cindi Katz. As Harvey arrived in New York, one of those rare events occurred that change the course of world history. The World Trade Center was attacked by radical Islamicists on 11th September (so too the Pentagon in Washington). The US-led ‘war on terror’ ensued, with major implications for Iraq and Afghanistan in particular. The twin towers attack – a globally significant local event – would soon shape Harvey’s next major writing venture. That venture, as we will now see, initiated an enduring shift in his *modus operandi*.

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Figure 2.5 a-e Leading Anglophone academic Marxists in post-Marxist times. In the 1990s, Harvey joined the likes of Terry Eagleton (2.5a), Frederic Jameson (2.5b); and Erik Olin Wright (2.5c) as an internationally recognised advocate of Marxist thought.

## Promoting Marxism beyond the university

### Two transitional texts

In early 2003, Harvey returned to the University of Oxford (by invitation) to give a set of talks open to staff and students from all disciplines. He chose to focus these Clarendon Lectures on the global developments that eventually triggered the so-called ‘second Gulf War’, led by the United States and its allies. The lectures were rapidly published as a book called *The New Imperialism* (2003a). Its pointed title made clear Harvey’s intention that the monograph be a major statement about the current direction of travel in world affairs. The text was written in narrative form and was highly readable. Though it used abstract Marxian concepts like ‘the spatial fix’, it was chock full of detail about *fin de millennium* geoeconomic and geopolitical shifts. Analytically, Harvey supplemented Marx’s ideas with concepts drawn from the influential work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) and German-American political theorist Hannah Arendt (1906–1975). Empirically, Harvey synthesised material drawn from current affairs publications (e.g. *The New York Times*) and academic research (e.g. by his former Johns Hopkins colleague, the Marxist Giovanni Arrighi).

Harvey painted – seemingly effortlessly – on a very grand canvas. The book adopted a very didactic tone. Harvey cut through the confusing detail of the post-1970 era. America’s early twenty-first century venture in the Middle East was shown not to be about the defence of freedom against radical Islamic ‘terror’ (the rhetoric used by President George Bush Jnr). Instead, it was shown to be part of a ‘new imperialism’ wherein the ‘hard power’ of the US military was used to bolster America’s waning economic dominance. The book deployed the concepts of ‘territorial power’ (spatially delimited), ‘economic power’ (geographically expansive), hegemony (consent-based rule); and ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (legally sanctioned asset appropriation) to great effect. In just over 200 pages, Harvey offered a plausible explanation of the great forces remaking people’s collective history and geography. His new book quickly garnered wide academic attention and also achieved visibility beyond the university world.

As noted above, around this time a few activists and Left-wing academics began to use the term ‘neoliberalism’ – instead of the rather bland term ‘globalization’ – to depict the new economic and

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political era. Broadly, this word describes a worldview that prioritises individual liberty, especially in the economic realm. Encouraged by the success of *The New Imperialism*, Harvey quickly wrote another book in an identical style. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005a) reframed what in *The Condition* he'd depicted as the emergence of a regime of 'flexible accumulation'. The book tracked the rise and global spread of neoliberal ideas first advanced in the 1930s during the Great Depression (when Harvey was born). Using a mix of theory and abundant secondary evidence, the uneven process of 'neoliberalisation' from the mid-1970s was shown to be an attempted solution to capitalism's inevitable crisis tendencies. As with *The New Imperialism*, the book punctured the rhetoric of those benefitting from the new world order. Far from advancing people's liberty, Harvey insisted that neoliberalism involved a restoration of class power by the owners and financiers of the means of economic production.<sup>9</sup>

*The New Imperialism* and *A Brief History* were published at a time when there was a large appetite among non-academic readers for analysis of a febrile period in human history (that appetite, of course, remains undiminished in our own troubling times). Economists like Jeffrey Sachs and Joseph E. Stiglitz were writing popular books about current world affairs, as were journalist-commentators such as Thomas L. Friedman and Christopher Hitchens, and also activists like Naomi Klein, George Monbiot, and Jeremy Rifkin. But few, if any, were overtly Marxist. In this context, Harvey deliberately transitioned to writing accessible works that ordinary people could read as easily as the university students he taught at CUNY. At the same time, Harvey also made a move into the online world in order to broadcast Marxist thinking more easily, more regularly, and more widely. Both things were a gamble, but Harvey had a secure university position and a formidable academic reputation. This allowed certain risks to be taken.

### *A new modus operandi*

Since 2005, Harvey has been extraordinarily productive as a writer. Aside from a stream of articles, he's published the following books: *The Enigma of Capital* (2010a), *A Companion to Marx's Capital*, volume I (2010b), *A Companion to Marx's Capital*, volume II (2013), *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (2012a), *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* (2014a), *The Ways of the World* (2016a), *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason* (2017a), *A Companion to Marx's Capital, The Complete Edition* (2018a), and a whopping 760 pages), and *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles* (2020a). He has also prepared a companion to Marx's *Grundrisse* (Harvey, forthcoming). In rather different ways, all are intended to demonstrate the enduring value of Marx's critique of capitalist political economy. All are written in plain English and the usual academic conventions (e.g. citations in brackets) are largely avoided.

In brief, *The Enigma* sought to explain the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008–2009 by situating it in the long-run problem of capital over-accumulation. This was a crisis of the neoliberalism instituted after the unravelling of Fordism-Keynesianism forty years earlier. We're still living with the consequences after elites doubled down on 'free market' capitalism rather than push for a new regime of accumulation. *Rebel Cities* built on Harvey's urban expertise and analysed the largely urban location of early twenty-first century anti-capitalist protest (e.g. the Occupy Wall Street movement that began in Manhattan's Zuccotti Park in 2011). The book asked how and why urban struggles are central to reforming and, ideally, moving beyond the rule of capital. *Seventeen Contradictions* is, in a sense, a lay person's representation of *The Limits to Capital* (which was reissued again by Verso in 2016). It anatomised the totality of capitalism through the lens of systemic contradictions, identifying the whole ensemble of elemental tensions that define capitalism past and present. *The Ways of the World* is yet another collection of Harvey's 'best' articles and chapters, but with present-day commentaries about their context, content, and relevance. *The Madness of Economic Reason* applied Marx's *Capital* to reveal, brilliantly, the multiple irrationalities that are normalised in mainstream economics and everyday life. Most recently, *The*

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*Anti-Capitalist Chronicles* examines how neoliberalism has survived in the post-GFC period and what the forces of the Left need to do to overthrow it.

All these books grapple with present-day global capitalism in its ‘zombie neoliberal’ form (discredited and half-dead, yet somehow staggering on), set in a longer historical context. All are based on the foundational thinking Harvey did in the 1970s that led him to publish *The Limits*. In an effort to share this thinking, Harvey has also made Marx’s three volumes of *Capital* (only one of which was published during his lifetime) accessible to general readers (with the support of the publisher Verso). A guide to *The Grundrisse* – Marx’s extensive notes of ‘self-clarification’ from 1857–1858 – is being prepared for release by Harvey at the time of writing. In particular, these ‘companion’ books are targeted at a younger generation of readers which, because of the tenor of our neoliberal times, “has grown up bereft of familiarity with ... Marxian political economy” (2010b: viii). Without doubt, all these works evidence a ‘public turn’ Harvey first took around twenty years ago.<sup>10</sup> Several books have been translated into other languages. Since *The New Imperialism*, he’s only published two substantial ‘scholarly’ works. They are *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, an extended presentation of his earlier research into the remaking of France’s largest city (Harvey, 2003b), and *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* – a meaty exploration of freedom in the context of both neoliberalism and a diverse post-socialist Left in a multi-cultural world (Harvey, 2009a).<sup>11</sup>

The other clear evidence of Harvey’s public turn is his now substantial website (<https://davidharvey.org>). The site was launched in 2007–2008 courtesy of a (then) graduate student called Chris Caruso. Initially, it was intended to make Harvey’s annual seminar about Marx’s *Capital*, volume one, available to people beyond CUNY. But it’s evolved to become much, much more than this. The site has three principal components. There are video courses given by Harvey that lead viewers through virtually all of Marx’s late works. Then there’s a large and growing set of podcasts and videos by Harvey about various key events and issues of our time (edited transcripts were published in *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles* in 2020). Finally, there’s a full listing of all his books.<sup>12</sup> Harvey is also a regular user of Twitter (with over 148,000 followers). It’s worth noting too that, until the COVID-19 virus restricted physical movement, Harvey had for many years engaged in face-to-face discussions with political activists and other Leftists beyond academia. One especially interesting aspect of his recent career was him accepting an invitation from the government of Ecuador to co-direct the National Strategy Center for the Right to the Territory (CENEDET, 2013–2017).<sup>13</sup>

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Figure 2.6 David Harvey in 2011.

## Making sense of David Harvey’s Marxism

In retrospect, we can see that that Harvey’s career has had three stages, two of which were resolutely academic. He’s been very effective throughout. There was a pre-Marxist stage (ending around 1970), then a stage focused on understanding and adding to Marx’s theory of capital accumulation (1970–2000), and a recent phase of putting the theory to work to understand current world affairs (and doing so as much outside academia as within it). Today, Harvey is one of the world’s chief advocates for (classical) Marxism. His energy is undiminished well into his eighties. Though in some senses they are a thing of the past, Harvey can legitimately claim to be a public intellectual – at least among Left-leaning sections of the public in the United States<sup>US</sup> and beyond. His stature now transcends academic Geography and academic Marxism. This said, the institutional foundation for all his work has been academic tenure: continuing professorial positions, with the accompanying right of intellectual freedom, have been hugely enabling. As Harvey noted in interview over thirty years ago, “I’m a privileged academic, writing in privileged circumstances. I have the possibility to take-on

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very long term projects if I so wish in ways that probably other people couldn't" (in Peake and Jackson, 1988: 14). In this, he's hardly alone: other influential Marxists have likewise used this privilege to great analytical advantage (for instance, Hans-Georg Backhaus, John Bellamy Foster, Nancy Fraser, Werner Bonefeld, Robert Brenner, Michael Burawoy, Terry Eagleton, the late Stuart Hall, Michael Lebowitz, Fredric Jameson, Richard Wolff, the late Ellen Meiksens Wood, and Göran Therborn).

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Looking back on his long career, it's possible to identify some signal characteristics of Harvey, his writing and his many spoken presentations (over and above his obvious capacity for hard work). One is his intellectual consistency. Where many notable thinkers change course over time, Harvey has been unwavering since his first embrace of classical Marxism in the 1970s. While he's evolved his historical-geographical materialism in some respects (to be explored later in this book), fundamentally it remains unchanged since *The Limits*. Harvey returns again and again to Marx's original works and has paid little attention even to significant new Marxist works appearing since *Social Justice* (such as Moishe Postone's *Time, Labor and Social Domination* [1993] or several key works by Bob Jessop). It's an open question as to whether this is admirable or reflective of an insufficiently open mind (on which see Gregory, 2006; Gregory, 2006; Henderson, 2013, among others). Secondly, Harvey is clearly possessed of great tenacity. He's kept the flame of Marxist thought alive through many difficult years, including the present ones when opposition to the capitalist order is manifesting in distinctly morbid ways (e.g. as right-wing populism in the United States, US, Hungary, Brazil, and elsewhere).

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In the third place, Harvey is completely committed to theory – not for theory's sake, but as a 'cognitive map' that can illuminate the key processes driving the dizzying changes we have seen in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Theory is what gives all of Harvey's work a panoramic quality, both analytically and empirically (see Chapter 3). Indeed, after Marx, he has talked of its 'luminous summit'. If this makes his theory 'totalising' then, as Harvey would have it, this merely reflects the promiscuous and colonising behaviour of capitalism rather than over-reach on his part. Fourth, Harvey has always insisted that geography matters. The relative location, and connectivity between and material character of phenomena on the Earth's surface are very important for Harvey, but in more than the banal sense that everything must exist or occur somewhere. Instead, his work as a Marxist shows us how geography is both effect and cause in the grand story of capitalism. It is, that's to say, *constitutive* not epiphenomenal. This deep interest in 'social process and spatial form' carries over from his 1960s conversion to spatial science.

Fifth, since *The Condition* Harvey has paid more attention to how capitalism intersects with the many non- or proto-capitalist elements of contemporary life. This has enriched his Marxism, without diluting its analytical coherence. In the 1990s and early 2000s, in particular, he sought ways to build bridges between the cognitive and normative agenda of Marxism and the agendas of the many anti-capitalist movements for whom Marx is not a reference point. We might then say that his early interest in capitalism per se gave way to a concerted interest in capitalism within a 'more-than-capitalist world'.

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Sixth, Harvey's work is animated by a critical sensibility, as one would expect from a card-carrying Marxist. In *Social Justice and the City*, he wrote the following lines, which stirred a generation of geographers and urban analysts: "There is an ecological problem, an urban problem, an international trade problem, and yet we seem incapable of saying anything of depth or profundity about any of them" (1973: 129). Since then, Harvey has sought to make plain the destructiveness, injustice, and waste caused by the capitalist pursuit of growth. It's not that he claims everything about capitalism is bad (hardly possible since Harvey himself has benefitted considerably from living in a capitalist world). It's more that he deems the price of capitalist 'progress' too high to bear for many people and for the planet.

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This said, and in the seventh place, it's nonetheless true that Harvey's work has leaned more towards explanation and diagnosis than towards political analysis and prognosis. As we will discover in the next chapter, his critical theory of capitalism is adept at finding fault. But Harvey has devoted less attention to questions of political goals, political strategy, or political programmes – this despite the many interesting and important things he has said about justice, rights, and other key normative ideas (see [Chapter 8](#)). Finally, it's obvious that Harvey believes in the motivational power of systematic thinking and evidence-based analysis. As Derek Gregory long ago noted, "Harvey may not be an activist, but he is keenly aware of the active power of ideas to shape the world in which we live and die" (2006: 24). In an era of misinformation, misrepresentation and multiple framings of reality, Harvey has been very determined to get the Marxist take on things noticed far and wide. This is especially evident since around 2007 when his website was launched. The communist dictator Josef Stalin is reputed to have once said, "Ideas are far more dangerous than guns. We don't allow our enemies to have guns, so why should we allow them to have ideas?". While no enemy of free thinking, Harvey recognises that ideas can be extremely potent in the hands of both the powerful and those who oppose them (see [Chapter 3](#)).

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These various characteristics of Harvey's life and work will, we hope, shine through in the rest of this book. As noted, he's now in his twilight years, but still going strong. He's received virtually every academic accolade a social scientist can receive (except a Nobel Prize for Economics, for obvious reasons).<sup>14</sup> He has a global readership and profile, supported by his website, translations of his recent books, and his deliberate move to 'pitch' to general audiences since around 2007. He also, we hope, has many more years ahead of him.

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## Conclusion

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Having surveyed David Harvey's life and major works in this chapter, it's readily apparent why we've written this book. His *oeuvre* is now so large that only a few people could willingly commit the time and energy to understanding it. This said, Harvey's intellectual consistency does mean that reading one of his books or major essays offers certain insights into almost all of the others. Even so, no part of Harvey's huge body of work can fully illuminate the whole. In the chapters to follow, we do not exhaustively delve into all of Harvey's major writings (there are far too many). But, based on a close acquaintance with fifty-plus years of his writing, we're able to highlight the principal themes, innovations over time, and reactions to his brand of geographic Marxism. Throughout, we seek to 'read him on his own terms' as Harvey himself has sought to read Marx (2010b: 7). Our hope is that we're as sure a guide to Harvey's work as Harvey is to Marx's. His writing is hardly the last word on capitalism, past and present. But it does offer important tools to understand it critically in an age when the underbelly of capitalist 'progress' is so very clearly malignant.

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## Notes

### Further reading

Barnes, T. (2006). [Between deduction and dialectics: David Harvey on knowledge](#). In N. Castree & D. Gregory (Eds.), [David Harvey: A Critical Reader](#) (pp. 26–46). Blackwell.

Barnes, T. & Sheppard, E. (2019). [Baltimore as truth spot: David Harvey, Johns Hopkins, and urban activism](#). In T. Barnes & E. Sheppard (Eds.), [Spatial Histories of Radical Geography: North America and Beyond](#) (pp. 183–209). Blackwell.

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Harvey, D. (2021a). Reflections on an academic life. *Human Geography*. OnlineFirst. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19427786211046291>

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Toscano, A. (2007). Reflections: David Harvey interviewed by Alberto Toscano. *Development and Change*, 38(6), 1127–1135.

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Williams, L. J. (2007). The geography of accumulation: an interview with David Harvey. *Minnesota Review*, 69, 115–138. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00265667-2007-69-115>

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<sup>1</sup> Notably, an interview with the editors of *New Left Review* (Harvey, 2000a), along with two autobiographical pieces

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(Harvey, 2002a; 2021a).

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<sup>2</sup> George Orwell famously and vividly captured the depredations of the era in the first half of his 1937 book *The Road to Wigan Pier*, which focussed on the life conditions of the northern English working class. In the United States, where Harvey would later relocate to, the iconic literary record of the Great Depression was John Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

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<sup>3</sup> With Chatterjee, Harvey also examined the local government enforcement of building codes in Baltimore, showing how they inadvertently made things worse for inner-city renters (see Harvey; et al., 1972a).

<sup>4</sup> Only in the early 2000s was *The Limits* accorded wider recognition as what Bob Jessop (2004: 480) called "a classic post-disciplinary text with a message that goes well beyond geography".

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<sup>5</sup> It's worth noting that in his time in Baltimore Harvey developed a real affection for that troubled city, involving himself in various local political initiatives since his arrival there in 1969. For instance, he was a founding member of Research Associates in Baltimore in 1982 (<https://rafbaltimore.org/about/>), which set up the Progressive Action Center by converting Enoch Pratt Library in the Waverly Community into a Left library and political action space staging public events and educational activities. The building was sold in 2014 and Harvey resigned from the executive board at that time.

<sup>6</sup> Two outstanding analyses of the period are Andrew Gamble's *The Free Economy and the Strong State* (1988) and Robert Pollin's *Contours of Descent* (2005).

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<sup>7</sup> Harvey's Marxist critique had been foreshadowed by a long essay written by literary critic Fredric Jameson in *New Left Review* (1984). Jameson went on to publish his own book, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991/1992), although this lacked the political-economic heft of *The Condition*.

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<sup>8</sup> A decade later Harvey wrote an introduction to a reissue of the *Manifesto* (Harvey, 2008a).

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<sup>9</sup> This book was informed by the 2004 Hettner Lectures that Harvey was invited to deliver at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. The written versions of the lectures appeared with a more general essay about 'space' in the short book *Spaces of Neoliberalization* (2005b). Published by Franz Steiner Verlag, it was reissued in 2006 by Verso under the title *Spaces of Global Capitalism*.

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<sup>10</sup> In a small way, this turn was presaged during his time at Oxford University. A few years after his return to the UK, he was invited to make three programmes for BBC Radio 4 about modern cities. The details are BBC News and Current Affairs (Radio Four): 'City Lights/City Shadows', three radio broadcasts, 10th October, 17th October, and 24th October 1993, produced by Sallie Davies, scripted and narrated by David Harvey.

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<sup>11</sup> There's also a somewhat hard to get short book about the rise of China and its epic investments in infrastructure since around 2000, titled *Abstract from the Concrete* (Harvey, 2016a), which contains an interview with Harvey.

<sup>12</sup> Since the website went live in June 2008, it has received more than four and a half million page views according to Google Analytics. The website's geographical reach extends to over 120 countries. Since the materials on the website are published under a creative commons license, the content can be and is widely replicated on many other sites.

<sup>13</sup> The Center was part of El Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales (IEAN) in Quito, Ecuador. It was conceived as an action research and training centre for civil servants and activists. Harvey was very involved in its establishment and expansion in the 2013–2015 period, making extended annual visits there. The Center was disbanded in 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Aside from the earlier mentioned Anders Retzius Medal, Harvey has received the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society and the Vautrin Lud International Prize in Geography (France). He was also made a fellow of the British Academy in 1998, and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2007. In 2018 he received the Leverhulme Gold Medal of the British Academy for creative contributions to the social sciences. Harvey has also had several visiting positions, for example, he was a Miliband Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics, 1998–2002. In addition, he's received several honorary doctorates.