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The Fire This Time: Grenfell, Racial Capitalism, and the Urbanisation of Empire

Abstract

Over the last few years an emergent body of IR scholarship has taken an interest in the rise of global cities and the challenges they bring to existing geographies of power. In this article I argue that a focus on race and empire should be central to this literature. Using the Grenfell Tower fire in London as a starting point, the article shows that global cities are part of a historical and ongoing imperial terrain. From London to New York, São Paulo to Cape Town, Singapore to Cairo, the “making” of global cities has typically gone hand in hand with racialized forms of displacement, dispossession, and police violence. Drawing on the literature on racial capitalism, and Aimé Césaire's image of the “boomerang”, I show that these strategies build on practices of urban planning, slum administration, and law-and-order policing long experimented with in the (post)colonies. By examining the colonial dimensions of what many assume to be a strictly national problem for the welfare state, the article thus reveals global cities as part of a much wider cartography of imperial and racial violence. This not only calls into question the presentism of scholarship that highlight the “newness” of neoliberal urbanism: In demonstrating how global cities and colonial borderlands are bound together through racial capitalism, it also exposes the positionality of scholars and policymakers that seek to counter the violence of neoliberalism with a nostalgic return to the post-1945 welfare state. As the Grenfell fire revealed, the global city is less a new type of international actor or governance structure than an extension and reconfiguration of the domestic space of empire.

Keywords: Grenfell, global cities, racial capitalism, neoliberal urban governance, empire

“Grenfell burned for local and global reasons.”
—Ish, North Kensington local

Introduction/Ghosts of Grenfell

When London awoke on the morning of the 14th of June, 2017, Grenfell Tower had already been burning for several hours. The fire, which began just before 1am in a fridge-freezer on the fourth floor and quickly spread to engulf the entire building, left at least 72 dead and hundreds more missing. Desperate residents trapped in the burning tower could be heard screaming for help, with some jumping from windows as high as the 15th floor. In those fateful hours, as pictures of the fire went viral and eyewitness accounts began to come in, London was caught in shock: How, in one of the wealthiest boroughs in one of the world's richest cities, could a preventable fire have ripped through a 24-storey building with such devastating results? Indeed, what had made Grenfell possible?

In the days, weeks, and months after the fire, “class” and “neoliberalism” were the answers most commonly given by the British media (Erlanger, 2017; McRobbie, 2017; Tucker, 2017; Williamson, 2017). Grenfell Tower, it turned out, was owned by the local council, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), but lacked smoke alarms, sprinkler systems, and multiple escape routes. Residents had complained about the building's “dangerous living conditions and neglect of health and safety legislation” (Grenfell Action Group, 2016) for years, but had persistently been ignored by the council. A refurbishment project carried out in 2017 addressed few of these concerns, and instead covered the building in cheap and combustible cladding materials—a cost effective way to beautify its brutalist appearance for the benefit of wealthier neighbouring residents (Griffin, 2017). The cladding, which failed to meet the manufacturer's own safety standards and is forbidden in the United States and many European countries, was later found to be the main reason the fire spread so quickly: It made the tower burn “like a fire that you pour petrol on”, remembers one resident, and pushed temperatures up to over 1000 degrees (Kirkpatrick et al., 2017). For many commentators, neoliberal ideology and decades of privatisation, cuts, gentrification, and deregulation thus formed the context in which the fire had been made possible. The neoliberalisation of the British housing market, it was argued, had created a dangerous climate in which local authorities were incentivised to neglect the needs of their less well-off residents, and chose to put costs and profits before health and safety. The fire, many concluded, was ultimately the terrible result of neoliberal urbanism and “the class violence embedded in London's rich, gentrifying neighborhoods” (Arabia, 2017).

Two months after the fire, London rapper-activist Lowkey released a song in tribute to the “ghosts of Grenfell.”¹ The music video, which features local residents and survivors mouthing the

lyrics of the song, ends with a name call for the dead and missing. As the names are read out loud and their pictures shown, it is difficult to not notice that the majority of victims were Black and Brown, Arab and Muslim, and European migrants and refugees from the global South.ⁱⁱ On the night of the fire Grenfell was predominantly occupied by London's racialized poor—by Nigerian cleaners, Somali carers, Moroccan drivers, and so on. And yet, in post-Grenfell debates about austerity, urban gentrification, and social marginalisation, race was either relatively absent or discussed in isolation from the supposedly more fundamental problem of widening class inequality under neoliberalism.ⁱⁱⁱ

In this article I argue that the neglect of race in discussions about Grenfell is indicative of a wider set of racial erasures in the scholarly literature on global cities and neoliberal urbanism. Over the last few years a growing number of IR theorists have taken an interest in the changing relationship between the urban and the global. The study of global cities has emerged as a focal point for those interested in understanding the accelerating urbanisation of world politics and the challenges it brings to existing geographies of power. As Keller Easterling (2014: 15) explains, “some of the most radical changes to the globalizing world are being written, not in the language of law and diplomacy, but rather in the spatial information of infrastructure, architecture and urbanism.” While this literature has been successful in bringing new forms of urban violence, hierarchy, and exclusion into view, it has—like most post-Grenfell commentary—largely neglected questions of race and racism. This article argues that this is problematic because, although gentrification and neoliberal urbanism operate in different ways in different cities, a broader pattern of racialized dispossession and displacement can be discerned. From London to New York, Mumbai to Cairo, Johannesburg to São Paulo, ethnographic studies tell largely reminiscent stories of racialized evictions, expropriations, and police violence (Alves, 2018; Camp, 2012; Cowen and Lewis, 2016; Ghertner, 2014; Johnson, 2014; Samara, 2011; Tilley et al., 2019). Like Grenfell, they highlight how the “making” of global cities often goes hand with racialized policies and practices designed to “clean up the streets” through revitalisation programmes and plans to displace actually existing inhabitants, which are cast as deviant, criminal, violent, and out-of-place. Alerting us to the racial structuring of life and death in the global city, they thus underscore the pressing need to engage with the vibrant and diverse scholarship produced in post/decolonial, Black, and Indigenous studies—bodies of thought which remain largely overlooked in urban studies and global cities, in IR and beyond.

This article examines the distinctively racial logics of neoliberal urban governance and in doing so makes two contributions. First, it develops a sympathetic critique of IR's theories of the global city, arguing that the violence of neoliberal urbanism cannot be understood without a racial theory of capitalism. Contrary to what the IR literature often seems to suggest, the racialized nature

of global cities exceed the existence of discriminatory employers, lenders, and landlords; indeed, rather than neutral playing fields where non-white individuals experience occasional forms of discrimination, global cities are themselves a mechanism through which capital produces raced space. In this article I draw on the literature on racial capitalism to subject the racial logics of the global city to theoretical inquiry and critique (Gilmore, 2007; Goldstein, 2017; Johnson and Lubin, 2017; Kelley, 2015a; Lowe, 2015; Melamed, 2015; Robinson, 2000). Following Black Marxists such as Cedric Robinson, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, and Robin D.G. Kelley, I argue that capitalism has always been racial capitalism, and that it is through this lens that contemporary urban regeneration programs must be analysed and understood. In the words of Lisa Lowe (2015: 150), “capitalism expands not through rendering all labor, resources, and markets across the world identical, but by precisely seizing upon colonial divisions, identifying particular regions for production and others for neglect, certain populations for exploitation and still others for disposal.” Bringing this literature into conversation with global cities scholarship, the article examines the distinctively urban dimensions of racial capitalism, arguing that the rise of global cities is underpinned by a racial and imperial political economy that produces some people and places as “surplus.” With calls to decolonise urban studies increasingly heard throughout the academy, IR theorists interested in the urban dimensions of world politics cannot afford to overlook this link between race, space, and political economy.^{iv}

Second and relatedly, the article argues that today's neoliberal urbanisation is intimately linked to yesteryear's “urbanisation of empire.”^v Global cities should be conceptualised as part of a historical as well as ongoing imperial terrain. While in IR there has been a growing interest in questions of race, colonialism, and their centrality for the study of world politics (Anievas et al., 2014; Carrozza et al., 2017; Sabaratnam, 2017; Shilliam, 2015; Vitalis, 2015), scholars have predominantly focused their analyses on North/South encounters. As Joseph Turner (2017: 2) explains, this is underwritten by “a temporal and spatial schema which often treats colonisation as something done by Northern states to the Global South.” This focus is not without its merits, but scholars have sometimes been prone to overlook how “violence and racism in the Global South is connected to the treatment of populations in the Global North” (Ibid). Responding to this lacunae, in this article I interrogate the co-constitution of Western “homelands” and colonial frontiers through a focus on the distinctively imperial political economy of neoliberal urbanism. Examining how global cities and colonial borderlands are bound together through racial capitalism, I show how practices of urban planning, slum administration, and law-and-order policing are central to the management of racialized subjects in urban metropolises as well as (post)colonial peripheries. Where the IR literature typically conceives of global cities as a new form of actor or governance structure representing “a fundamental challenge to some of the core logics of the modern international

system” (Curtis, 2011: 1), my analysis thus reveals global cities as part of a historical and ongoing imperial terrain. The failure to account for this link not only has theoretical implications but also serious political consequences: Indeed, in overestimating the newness of neoliberal urbanism, theorists of the global city inadvertently sanction populist projects that seek to counter the violence of neoliberalism with a nostalgic return to the post-1945 welfare state.

The Grenfell fire forms the background to the theoretical arguments developed in this article. Rather than a formal case study Grenfell is here used as a heuristic to work from the local to the global and back again. While the fire often is understood as a strictly “local” tragedy of British class inequality, the article argues that the “makings” of Grenfell were inherently global-colonial in character. This is not to suggest that the racial logics of Grenfell map onto New York, Nairobi, and Singapore in the exact same way; nowhere is exactly like Grenfell, because urban processes of racialization look different in different metropolitan contexts.^{vi} While the article highlights the racialized forms of expropriation and dispossession that often unfold alongside the “making” of global cities, my goal is therefore not to reduce urban development to a single set of logics or to deny the existence of variations and particularities in metropolitan life. Indeed, the argument is *not* that Grenfell provides a model for understanding the underbellies of *all* other cities around the world but, rather, that the global city viewed from Grenfell Tower demonstrates the value of studying the local and global logics of race, class, and place *together*. As Black, post/decolonial, and Indigenous studies have been at the forefront in developing such analyses, urban studies and global cities scholarship have much to gain from a more sustained engagement with these literatures.

The article proceeds in three parts. The first section introduces the literature on global cities and neoliberal urbanism, as well as its uptake in IR. I argue that although an IR focus on cities has been helpful for challenging the discipline's “Westphalian common sense”, these approaches often rely on an abstract and ahistorical conception of the city which obfuscates the colonial and racial structures that pattern metropolitan life. While a growing critical strand of this literature highlights the dark side of neoliberal urbanism, it is predominantly framed through the lens of class and thus cannot explain why the cost of urban regeneration so often is carried by the racial poor. In order to account for the link between racial differentiation, capital accumulation, and urban upscaling, in the second section I turn to theories of racial capitalism. Racial capitalism highlights the centrality of race-making practices to political economy and therefore helps us re-conceptualise global cities as a mechanism through which capital produces raced space. The final section argues that a focus on the racial ordering of the global city also requires an engagement with colonial and imperial histories. Building on Aimé Césaire's image of the “boomerang”, I probe the colonial logics of three processes that are central to the production of “surplus” people and places in urban settings: i)

gentrification and urban regeneration programmes, ii) racialized policing, and iii) accumulation by dispossession. When read through the lens of racial capitalism, the global city represents less a new type of international actor or governance structure than an extension and reconfiguration of the domestic space of empire. As North Kensington residents were quick to realise, raced spaces like Grenfell are rendered surplus “for local and global reasons.”^{vii}

Global Cities, Neoliberal Urbanism, and the Elision of Race

Since the early 1990s, cities such as London, Tokyo, New York, Dubai, Johannesburg, Mumbai, São Paulo, and Shanghai have been conceptualised and understood by political geographers and urban sociologists as representing a new urban form: that is, as “global cities.” Coined and introduced by Saskia Sassen (2013), global cities are nodal points in the global political economy. As Manuel Castells (2001: 225) explains, “the entire planet is being reorganised around gigantic metropolitan nodes that absorb an increasing proportion of the urban population, itself the majority of the population of the planet.” For Castells and Sassen, global cities are a by-product of the structural transformation of the world economy and the acceleration of economic globalisation. While economic activity has become more dispersed around the world, its “command and control functions” have increasingly been concentrated into a handful of locations. As local governments compete to maintain or improve their standing within the hierarchy of global cities, the result is a new form of urbanism: A neoliberal mode of urban governance characterised by redevelopment, urban expansion, and real estate speculation.

In recent years the concept of the global city has been picked up by a number of IR theorists (Acuto, 2013; Curtis, 2016; Kangas, 2017; Ljungkvist, 2015). For most of these thinkers the rise of the global city entails a challenge to existing geographies of power, yet there exists substantial disagreement as to precisely what this entails. Three main strands of thinking can be discerned. The first is represented by scholars such as Michele Acuto and Kristin Ljungkvist, for whom the emergence of global cities represent a new important actor in world politics. Global cities are *de facto* agents within diplomacy and governance but have, for too long, been the “invisible gorillas” in the room of IR. As Acuto (2010: 429) explains, the growing importance of global cities in diplomatic affairs and international relations “challenge our traditional and IR-dominated theoretical frames of reference, bypassing scalar (globe, state, region) as well as political (supranational, governmental, regional, and local) hierarchies and disrupting the Westphalian system of sovereignty.” The second strand treats global cities as units in a new type of international system. Simon Curtis (2011: 2), for example, argues that global cities are an indication of “a new development in the long-running tension between capitalism and the territorial state-system within which it developed.” The rise of global cities are in effect a sign of how the modern international

system is being rapidly transformed. In contrast, the third and last category of IR scholarship conceptualises global cities as a mechanism of power with world-making capacities. Anni Kangas, drawing on the Foucaultian notion of the *dispositif*, argues that global cities function as a governmental technique which normalises and legitimises the idea of hierarchical and competitive city relations. If to be a global city is an “authoritative image of city success”, then urban elites have no choice but to undertake the kind of urban regeneration policies necessary to improve or at least maintain the city's standing within the network of global cities.

While IR scholars variously conceive of global cities as new important political actors, indicators of a new kind of international system, or a governmental mechanism, most agree that the rise of the global city is deeply linked to the “neoliberal project” (Curtis, 2011: 15) and the structural transformation of the world economy. As Delphine Ancien (2011: 2473) explains, “these cities owe their 'global status' to their very high concentration of the world's financial and related industries, the new pillars of a late capitalism characterised by new conditions of rapidly increasing globalisation, financialisation and deregulation of the world economy.” A central area of concern for many global cities scholars has been the “dark side” of these processes. As Sassen has demonstrated, global cities cannot function without those who build its urban economy from below: the immigrants, refugees, and casual workers who provide their wealthy neighbours with drivers, cleaners, and other low-wage services. In the same way that the capitalist world-system splits the globe into core and periphery, global cities similarly shatter the urban landscape into spaces of rich and poor. In drawing attention to the poverty, marginalisations, and labour hierarchies that cut through urban life, the literature on global cities thus offers a sobering corrective to liberal approaches that typically portray urban metropolises as nodes of migration and cosmopolitanism where tolerance, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitan sensibilities are nurtured (Binnie et al., 2006; Florida, 2005; Sandercock and Lyssiotis, 2003). Indeed, as this literature makes clear, global cities are at once characterised by the emergence of new, shiny corporate citadels and financial centres, glistening high-tech enclaves, and quirky high-culture districts, as well as by the gentrification of the city centre, the displacement of original occupants, the rapid increase in slums and homelessness, and the growing polarisation of wealth.

For many commentators it is within this (domestic) context of neoliberal urbanism and the “dark side” of the global city that the Grenfell fire must be analysed and understood. As Brenna Bhandar (2018) explains, Grenfell “has come to signify the worst aspects of a neo-liberal mode of governance that took hold in Britain from the 1980s onwards.”^{viii} Four decades of deregulation, privatisation, financialisation, cuts to public services, and outsourcing have transformed the UK housing and property market and created acute problems of affordability, overcrowding, and homelessness. Consecutive Labour and Conservative governments have sold off and demolished

old, worn-down council estates and replaced them with new developments. While regeneration schemes and urban upscaling programmes have been justified as a way to improve housing conditions, the result has been a rapid decline in social housing and displacement of poor and working class communities from their own neighbourhoods: At its height in 1979, social housing accounted for 29% of all housing in England; in 2016, it had fallen to 6.8%. While London has become a global capital for financial and real estate speculation, and the home of 86 billionaires, 338,000 homes rented by people under 35 are now in such poor condition that they put the health and safety of tenants at risk (Booth, 2018). As Nathan Brooker (2017) summarises, “[i]f the price of food had risen at the same rate as London house prices over the past 40 years, then a chicken would now cost £100... Houses were once places where people lived; today, first and foremost, they are financial assets.” Importantly, this situation is not unique to London but closely mirrors that in other global cities. From Paris to Mumbai, Johannesburg to New York, São Paulo to Sydney, urban space is quickly becoming more unequal as gentrification and regeneration projects push low-income residents out of the city centre (Atkinson and Bridge, 2004; Loretta et al., 2015). The wave of riots that in recent years have shook global cities—London in 2011, the banlieues of Paris 2005, and Husby in Stockholm in 2013—are, at least in part, a response to this trend.^{ix}

Discussions following the Grenfell fire have successfully shone a light on this “dark side” of the global city. While these debates have helped bring problems of urban class inequality into mainstream focus, they have however often worked to de-race the violence of neoliberal urbanism. While some commentators have insisted that race is absolutely central for understanding the processes that rendered the Grenfell Tower structurally unsafe, mainstream commentary has often framed the fire as an exclusive question of inadequate fire safety protective measures, combustible cladding, the Fire Brigade's “stay-put” policy and, more broadly, of poverty and marginalisation (MacLeod, 2018; Madden, 2017; McRobbie, 2017; Shildrick, 2018). The Public Inquiry, set up to “examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the fire” (“Grenfell Tower Inquiry,” 2017), has largely replicated this focus. While Imran Khan QC, representing the Grenfell survivors, bereaved, and relatives, emphasised the need to address “institutional racism”,^x it has been altogether missing from the Inquiry. This is problematic as most indicators confirm that the British urban landscape is highly racialized: In England the majority of children who live above the fourth floor of tower blocks in England are Black or Asian—in a country where 82% of the population is white (Dorling, 2011). Throughout the UK, children from Brown and Black families are more likely to live in dilapidated and overcrowded housing than whites, and are 75% more likely to experience housing deprivation. Out of the 307,000 homeless that live on the streets in London, one in three are non-white (Gulliver, 2016).^{xi} Important work on other global cities suggest that this racialized urban political economy might not be unique to the UK (even though it, of course, does not look exactly

the same in *all* global cities). In the San Francisco Bay Area, gentrification has overwhelmingly led to the displacement of poor people of colour and resulted in new concentrations of poverty and a new wave of racial segregation (Urban Displacement Project, 2015). In Southeast Asian cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Bangkok, Hanoi, and Singapore, the disciplining and exclusion of mobile, “irrational” urban subjects (predominantly migrant and racialized) has been central to the construction of “clean” and “orderly” streets (Poon, 2009; Tilley et al., 2019). In Paris, the physical transformation of the urban centre has expelled many poor Arab and African communities to the outskirts of the city (Hazan, 2010). In São Paulo, the bid to overtake Rio de Janeiro has created an urban landscape where “black bodies are exploited in the job market, segregated in favelas, incarcerated, beaten” and killed by the police (Alves, 2014: 324). Evidence from other global cities, such as Cape Town, Dubai, and New York, tell roughly similar stories of raced forms of exclusion, appropriation, and displacement (Alawadi, 2014; Cowen and Lewis, 2016; Davis, 2007; Franck, 2019; Kelley, 2012; Samara, 2011). While the specificities of urban renewal of course look different in all these cities, a broader pattern of racialized inclusion and exclusion nonetheless stands out.

In spite of this, scholarship on global cities has relatively neglected the role of race in neoliberal urban governance. Indeed, while this scholarship has been successful in shedding light on new forms of inequality, violence, and hierarchy, it has often been resistant to bring race into the debate. As Tom Slater (2009: 576) explains, global cities tend to focus on class-driven fragmentation: “a rare point of agreement among analysts of gentrification is that *class* should be the central focus.” While there is some recognition that gentrification typically involves the displacement of Black and Brown communities, and although scholars such as Sassen have examined how global cities depend on a service class of workers typically racialized as non-white,^{xii} these analyses tend to turn on class-based power relations and issues such as poverty, social marginalisation, and stigmatisation. As Laura Pulido (2000: 12) correctly points out, racism is here “understood as a discrete act that may be spatially expressed”—in residential segregation, employment patterns, and so on—but “it is not seen as a sociospatial relation” which is “both constitutive of the city and produced by it.” In essence, race is treated as an individual mentality or as an exception from normality, rather than as a form of structural coercion that is built into capitalist structures and institutions. Ultimately, by reducing racism to a question of discriminatory employers, lenders, and landlords, what is forsaken is an analysis of the ways in which the global city might function as a mechanism through which capital produces race as a socio-political category of distinction and discrimination in the first place. In what follows I argue that the violence of neoliberal urbanism cannot be understood without a racial theory of capitalism. Drawing on Cedric Robinson and Aimé Césaire, I show that global cities are more than merely “local” or “regional” landscapes. Neoliberal modes of urban governance often build on practices of urban

planning, slum administration, and law-and-order policing experimented with in the (post)colonies. Studying these historical and evolving North-South connections should be of key concern to IR scholars as it sheds new light, not only on the racial ordering of global cities, but also on the many afterlives of empire.

Urban (Dis)Orders: Global Cities and the Production of Raced Space

When Grenfell Tower was built in 1974, the surrounding area in Ladbroke Grove was known as one of the most degraded places in London. The harsh conditions of the piggeries in the 19th centuries, the slums of the 1930s, and the race riots of 1958 had earned the area a notorious reputation (Whetlor, 1998). Populated by the poorest of the English working class and people of Irish, Jewish, and Spanish descent, after 1948 and *Empire Windrush* Ladbroke Grove also became home to the Afro-Caribbean immigrants excluded from living elsewhere, alongside a sizeable Moroccan community. While Grenfell quickly became known as the “Moroccan Tower”—a result of its large number of Moroccan immigrant residents—it was, like the street that runs south of the building, originally named after Field Marshal Lord Grenfell, a senior British Army officer who served in various colonial campaigns in Africa, including the Zulu and Kaffir wars. A strange coincidence it might seem, but as we shall see deeply revealing of how racial and colonial logics continue to structure global cities like London.

To better understand how race, urban space, and capital accumulation interlink, it is helpful to turn to the literature on racial capitalism. In *Black Marxism* from 1983, Cedric Robinson examines the centrality of race, enslavement, and colonialism to capitalist formations. Stepping into what Walter Dignolo has described as Marxism's “colonial fracture” (Dignolo, 2007), the book argues that racial violence constitutes a permanent, rather than anterior, condition of capital accumulation.^{xiii} What we typically describe as “capitalism” has historically always been “racial capitalism.” As Robinson (2000: 2) explains, since its inception “the development, organization and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions.” Capitalism emerged—and continues to operate—through racial projects that assign differential value to human life and labour, such as chattel slavery, settler colonial dispossession, racialized indentured servitude, and exploitation of immigrant labour. There was never such a thing as capitalism without slavery, and “the history of Manchester never happened without the history of Mississippi” (Johnson, 2016). In contrast to conventional Marxist thinking, racism thus forms a constituent logic of capitalism. The concepts of “race” and “class” are insufficient to capture this dynamic because the very categorisation assumes that capitalism is not already racialized. As Lisa Lowe (2015: 149–50) explains, “Racial capitalism captures the sense that actually existing capitalism exploits through culturally and socially constructed differences such as race, gender, region and nationality and is

lived through those uneven formations.” Capitalism relies upon the elaboration, reproduction, and exploitation of racial difference: on the production of populations that are surplus, expandable, and disposable. Capitalism is thus racial not merely because people racialized as non-white are disproportionately impacted and disadvantaged by the “free” market, although this is true as well (Bassel and Emejulu, 2017). More fundamentally, race-making practices are intrinsic to processes of capital accumulation because racism supplies the precarious and exploitable lives capitalism needs to extract land and labour. In Jodi Melamed's (2015: 77) formulation,

“Capital can only be capital when it is accumulating, and it can only accumulate by producing and moving through relations of severe inequality among human groups—capitalists with the means of production/workers without the means of subsistence, creditors/debtors, conquerors of land made property/the dispossessed and removed. These antinomies of accumulation require loss, disposability, and the unequal differentiation of human value, and racism enshrines the inequalities that capitalism requires.”

In other words, there can be no capitalism without racializations: hence *racial* capitalism.

Viewed from the perspective of racial capitalism, the global city is not a race-neutral space. As Sherene Razack (2002; see also da Silva, 2001) has argued, space is never an empty, natural, or innocent category, but is always saturated with hierarchies and privileges. To focus on the urban dimensions of racial capitalism is therefore to examine how global cities produce some places and people as disposable and expendable. Consider, for example, how urban regeneration projects often come to be seen as just and necessary through a colonial mentality which conceives of some spaces as “wastelands”, as places of crime, drugs, and disease, teenage pregnancy and broken families, prostitution, and pimps—that is, as raced spaces that are “empty” and lacking in civilised inhabitants, and that therefore need to be “regenerated, cleansed, and reinfused with [white] middle-class sensibility” (Smith, 2014: 316).^{xiv} In the context of contemporary Britain, it is the high-rise tower block which best captures this image of “blighted” urban space in need of regeneration and development by urban elites—in Los Angeles, it is the ghetto; in São Paulo, the favela; in Mumbai, the slum; in Paris, the banlieue; in Jakarta, the kampung; and in Cape Town, the township (Alves, 2018; Camp, 2012; Davis, 2007; Samara, 2011; Tilley et al., 2019). As Sarah Keenan (2017) explains, raced spaces such as these come to mean

“poor, over-crowded, migrant, socially immobile, working class, racialised, ghetto; and its consequences are government and corporate containment and malicious neglect, particularly as these spaces of poverty become blights on a rapidly gentrifying landscape, bringing down property prices and getting in the way of 'regeneration.' [To belong to such abandoned spaces] means having a materially lower than average standard of living and an identity that will not be listened to or taken seriously by those in power, even when—as the Grenfell Action Group blog

shows us—it is a matter of life and death.”

Such forms of organised abandonment often unfold alongside organised violence (Gilmore, 2015). Indeed, while neoliberalism often is associated with the withdrawal of the state through privatisation and deregulation, it also—and as Stuart Hall and his co-authors argued in their classic *Policing the Crisis* (2013)—entails a roll-out of new forms of interventionism and social control. Aggressive policing in urban areas has been one of the main ways in which global cities foster urban regeneration. As Manissa Maharawal (2017: 349) explains, “gentrification signifies not just the reinvestment of capital into urban spaces, but also the concomitant security forces which exert violence and spatial control upon poor racialized urban populations.” In New York, the gentrification of Harlem was partly made possible through the introduction of “broken windows” policing, an escalation of the local war on drugs, and the clearing out of 125th street by 400 police dressed in riot gear (Kelley, 2012; see also Cowen and Lewis, 2016; Smith, 2005). This intimate link between gentrification and police violence is not just a New York phenomenon but can, as Neil Smith (2002: 442) documents, also be seen “in the antisquatter campaigns in Amsterdam in the 1980s, attacks by Parisian police on homeless (largely immigrant) encampments, and the importation of New York’s zero-tolerance techniques by police forces around the world.” In São Paulo, anti-Black police terror has become a constant feature of urban regeneration; as Jamie Alves (2018: 1) shows in his ethnography of the Brazilian global city, “spatial segregation, mass incarceration, and killings by the police are all constitutive dimensions of the reproduction of the urban order.”^{xv} In Cape Town, Tony Samara (2011) similarly documents how the police and criminal justice system operate to enforce development by “pacifying” the Black urban poor. Throughout the UK and US, “broken windows” policing disproportionately targets the urban working class, in general, and the racialized urban poor, in particular: In the UK, stop-and-search policies are 8 times more likely to target Black people (Dodd, 2017); in New York, 80 percent of those stopped are Black or Hispanic (New York Civil Liberties Union, 2019). In all these cases, urban policing not only operates to enhance the desirability of gentrifying areas by “cleaning up the streets” and creating “safe” spaces for capital investment, urban redevelopment projects, and middle class consumer habits. Racialized policing also helps to justify revitalisation programmes and plans to displace actually existing inhabitants, as it directly casts them as deviant, criminal, and violent. The broken windows metaphor is thus particularly revealing, because as Jordan Camp (2012: 667) explains, “broken windows are not repaired—they are replaced”, in the same way that Black, Brown, Muslim, and poor people are literally removed from gentrifying neighbourhoods. The extra-legal killing of Eric Garner in 2014 is, like the death of so many other Black and Brown people at the hands of the police around the world, symptomatic of this development. Slain on a Staten Island pavement by the NYPD, Garner had been stopped and harassed for small-scale infractions (such as

the sale of “loosies”, untaxed cigarettes) for several years. While it is his last words—“I can't breathe”—that have become a rallying cry for protestors, his preceding words are perhaps more telling: “Every time you see me, you want to mess with me. I'm tired of it” (Capelouto, 2014).

To summarise, how can a focus on racial capitalism help us better understand the Grenfell fire and, more generally, what does it bring to the literature on global cities, in IR and beyond? As we saw in the previous section, the global cities literature has largely overlooked the racial dynamics of neoliberal urban governance. While scholars such as Sassen have taken an interest in urban core-periphery relations, race is often treated as an effect of discriminatory landlords, lenders, and employers rather than a constituent logic of capital. In contrast, I have argued that race-making practices are central to the governance and ordering of global cities. While gentrification of course looks different in different cities, it is typically underpinned by a set of racialized assumptions about who belongs in certain spaces and who does not. This racial logic ultimately helps explain why Grenfell residents' years of complaints about safety were ignored and why, more than 2 years after the fire, many residents have still to be properly rehoused (Mills, 2019).^{xvi} In the eyes of urban elites, Grenfell was disposable and expendable, “a racially devalued, surplus place” (Pulido, 2016: 2) standing in the way of gentrification and urban regeneration schemes. To insist that race does not explain what made the fire possible, because white people also lived there, is thus to miss the point: As Laura Pulido (2016: 8) has argued, places such as Grenfell come to be considered disposable “by virtue of being *predominantly* poor and Black.” In what follows I build on this analysis to argue the racial ordering of the global city demands an engagement with colonial and imperial histories, because the production of raced urban space builds on technologies and techniques that have long been experimented with in the (post)colonies. Such a focus not only questions the “newness” of neoliberal urbanism and the accompanying nostalgia for a return to the post-1945 welfare state. As we shall see, it also calls into question IR's standard language of Western “homelands” and colonial frontiers, and thus challenges dominant narratives of what the global city is and represents.

Global Cities, Imperial Terrains

As smoke covered the London sky on the morning of the 14th of June, 2017, the first Grenfell victim was identified: Mohammed al-Haj Ali, a 23-years-old Syrian refugee who had come to Britain with his brother in search of a better life. He survived the Syrian revolution, the bombing campaign by ISIS, and the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean—only to die three years later in a burning tower block in central London. He was, as it later turned out, far from the only migrant from the global South who lived and died in Grenfell; on the night of the fire, the building was home to a large North African community. While the official death toll stands at 72, locals have continued to claim that it could be more than twice as high as some residents were undocumented

migrants. Like Mohammed, they might have come from Syria—or, like so many other of the 1.1 million undocumented in the UK, from Eritrea, Somalia, the Philippines, Sudan, and Afghanistan.

Can Grenfell and this “dark side” of the global city be understood through the same lens as the (post)colonial borderland from which Mohammed and his brother had fled? In his analysis of racial capitalism Cedric Robinson insisted that such a combined perspective is both possible and necessary. Pointing to the coeval and dialectical relationship between local and global geographies, Robinson noted how the plantations of Mississippi and the factories of Manchester, rather than being separate systems, were differentiated and complementary parts of the *same* global economy. In *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aimé Césaire (2001) developed a similar argument. Offering the haunting metaphor of the “boomerang”, he noted how colonial violence—far from only happening “out there”, in the periphery, beyond the pale—sooner or later will make its way back to the “veins of Europe” where it sets in like an “infection” or “poison.” The colonial project, Césaire reminds us, was never a “constitutive outside” but a set of political technologies, rationales, and institutions that sooner or later will return home like a “terrific boomerang”: One day the bourgeoisie will wake up to find “the gestapos are busy, the prisons fill up, the torturers standing around the racks invent, refine, discuss” (2001: 36). In what follows I build on these insights to argue that the global city operates through a racial *as well as* imperial political economy. In particular, by reading imperial metropolises and colonial peripheries as different but fundamentally interlinked spatializations of racial capitalism, I argue that the global city's gentrifying and ghettoized areas are more than simply “local” geographies: They constitute domestic spaces of empire that are intimately linked to the production of (post)colonial borderlands. Such a focus on co-constitution and entanglement stands in direct contrast to IR's static categories of borders, inside/outside, and sovereignty, which typically treats the “West” and the “Rest” as separate containers. Subjecting these categories to theoretical challenge and critique, I examine the colonial dimensions of three areas that are central to neoliberal urbanism: gentrification, urban policing, and accumulation by dispossession. Where IR scholars predominantly have focused their analysis of race and colonialism to North/South encounters (through war, development, humanitarianism, and so on), my argument thus reveals the importance of also examining the ways in which “domestic” landscapes are shaped by empire. As the death of Mohammed al-Haj Ali and other migrants in Grenfell Tower remind us, the global city's production of raced space is ultimately part of a wider cartography of imperial violence.

Gentrification. Urban regeneration offers a good starting point for unpacking the co-constitution of near and far peripheries under racial capitalism; after all, gentrification is sometimes described as a form of colonisation. Neil Smith, for example, has argued that urban renewal projects are informed by a colonial imaginary which draws on myths of the frontier, *terra nullius*, the “Wild West”, and pioneers. According to Smith (2005: 15) this imaginary “provides the decorative

utensils by which the city is reclaimed from wilderness and remapped for white upper-class settlers with global fantasies of again owning the world—recolonizing it from the neighborhood out.” Other scholars, such as Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge (2013: 52), have similarly described gentrification as a “new urban colonialism”:

“Those who come to occupy prestigious central city locations frequently have the characteristics of a colonial elite. They often live in exclusive residential enclaves and are supported by a domestic and local service class. Gentrifiers are employed in.... 'new class' occupations, and are marked out by their cosmopolitanism. Indeed in many locations, especially in ex-communist European and Asian countries, they often are western ex-patriots employed by transnational corporations to open up the markets of the newly emerging economies.”

While these authors correctly identify points of resemblance between gentrification and colonial forms of expansion, they problematically treat colonialism as little more than a metaphor. This overlooks that gentrification, more than just *resembling* previous forms of colonial and mercantile expansion, actually *builds* on distinctively colonial forms of urban housing policy and city planning. Modern forms of urban planning—including ideas of segregation, slum administration, and urban renewal—were first experimented with in colonial cities, before they were put into use in imperial metropolises. Colonial administrations frequently established separate living quarters for the colonised who, it was feared, carried infectious disease and epidemic plague (Abu-Lughod, 2014; Jones, 2012; Legg, 2008; Nightingale, 2012). David Theo Goldberg (2013: 48) has shown how the “sanitation syndrome” often

“caught hold of the colonial imagination as a general social metaphor for the pollution by blacks of urban space. Uncivilized Africans, it was claimed, suffered urbanization as a pathology of disorder and degeneration of their traditional tribal life. To prevent their pollution contaminating European city dwellers and services, the idea of sanitation and public health was invoked first as the legal path to remove blacks to separate locales at the city limits, and then as the principle for sustaining segregation.”

The colonial city thus came to be “cut in two”, as Fanon reminds us. Where the settler's town is “strongly built” and “brightly lit”, the town that belongs to “the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation” is “a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light... [it is] a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire” (Fanon, 2001: 39).

In the 1950s and 60s, the principle of racialized urban segregation found its way back to the metropolitan centres in the West. As formal imperial rule crumbled and postcolonial subjects migrated to the motherland, “administration of racialized urban space in the West began to reflect

the divided cityscapes produced by colonial urban planning” (Goldberg, 2013: 49).^{xvii} The postwar period's massive urban renewal and public housing programmes thus came to draw on urban planning rationales developed in the colonies, including techniques of slum clearance and racial segregation. Framed as a question of public health—of disease, criminality, alcoholism, prostitution, and other “dangers” that might “pollute” the white body politic—these regeneration projects followed their colonial predecessors in displacing the racial poor to the city limit, while simultaneously creating small and highly visibly racial slums, typified by the high-rise tower block.^{xviii} As Goldberg (2013: 53) notes, this left the racial poor “isolated within centre city space, enclosed within single entrance/exit elevator buildings, and carefully divided from respectably residential urban areas by highway, park, playing field, vacant lot or railway line.” It is ultimately within this imperial context that contemporary processes of urban regeneration and gentrification must be understood: Not as processes that simply (and accidentally) mirror prior forms of colonial expansion, but as the continuation of distinctively colonial techniques for organising urban space. The process of realising urban development—in yesteryear's colonial city *as well as* in today's global city—often takes place through the creation of raced space. Consequently, and as Briana L. Urena-Ravelo (2017) has argued, gentrification might not be the “new colonialism”, as is sometimes argued; rather, “it's just the old one.”

Urban policing. Like gentrification, the urban policing of Black, Brown, Muslim, and other working class communities builds on distinctively colonial models of pacification, militarisation, and control. Colonial cities and peripheries have historically functioned as “social laboratories” where new security strategies designed to “pacify” urban geographies could be tested before they were shipped back to the metropole (Barder, 2015; Dixon, 2009; Kaplan, 2005; Khalili, 2010; Sinclair and Williams, 2007). For example, the French Empire regularly used Algeria as testing ground for forms of population control that later were exported back to the colonial metropolis; the United States relied on the Philippines to experiment with new forms of policing tactics; and Britain made use of its domestic colony, Ireland, and later Palestine, Malaya, and Kenya. Foreign and homeland security operations have never been distinct and separate, but interlink through empire and racial capitalism. The escalation of aggressive and militarised policing in today's global cities follows this trajectory. Indeed, racialized policing practices such as community surveillance, pre-emptive stop-and-frisk policies, and public order containment draw on techniques and technologies developed in colonial peripheries, and build on a long tradition of imperial exchange: Just as 19th century colonial powers imported fingerprinting, panoptic prisons, and other methods of surveillance and control, today counterinsurgency technologies and techniques tested in Palestine and on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq are being used in the global city to “clean up the streets” and protect capital investment in gentrifying areas.^{xix} As Stephen Graham (2011: xviii)

elaborates,

“Israeli drones designed to vertically subjugate and target Palestinians are now routinely deployed by police forces in North America, Europe and East Asia. Private operators of US 'supermax' prisons are heavily involved in running the global archipelago organizing incarceration and torture that has burgeoned since the start of the 'war on terror.' Private military corporations heavily colonise 'reconstruction' contracts in both Iraq and New Orleans. Israeli expertise in population control is regularly sought by those planning security operations for major summits and sporting events... Even the 'shoot to kill' policies developed to confront risks of suicide bombing in Tel Aviv and Haifa have been adopted by police forces in Western cities (a process which directly led to the state killing of Jean Charles De Menezes by London anti-terrorist police on 22nd July 2005).”

Like urban regeneration strategies, the link between counterinsurgency and urban policing techniques exceeds IR's standard language of territorial borders, inside/outside, and Westphalian sovereignty. These typically depict colonial frontiers and Western “homelands” as fundamentally separate domains. And yet, from the Black American ghetto to the French banlieue and the Brazilian favela, security and military doctrines used to police and pacify “unruly” urban landscapes are melding with those used in colonial borderlands. What Graham calls the “new military urbanism” increasingly structures the global city and colonial borderlands, as seen in the rapid expansion of policing and incarceration, gated communities, fortress suburbs, and detention centres; in the proliferation of militarised borders alongside the world's North-South equator; and in the growing “security archipelago” (Amar, 2013) designed to protect the wealthy and powerful from those rendered surplus by the economic dislocations of racial capitalism.

Accumulation by dispossession. Gentrification and racialized urban policing both exemplify what Césaire described as the “boomerang” effect of colonialism. The global city's role in this exchange has, importantly, been more than a passive and benign recipient. Cities such as London, New York, Frankfurt, and Paris occupy a central position in what David Harvey (2003) has described as the “new imperialism.” Since the 1970s, “primitive” accumulation has escalated on a global scale, as can be seen in “the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations; the conversion of various forms of property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusive private property rights; the suppression of rights to the commons; the commodification of labour power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; [and] colonial, neo-colonial, and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources)” (Harvey, 2003: 159). The prosperous cities of the global North are crucial to this process of “accumulation by dispossession”: Not only are they the main sites through which the “new imperialism” inflicted on the South is financed and orchestrated. Global cities also depend on such neocolonial violence—on the appropriation of land and resources by multinational companies, alongside the exploitation of cheap labour—in order to

sustain wealthy urban lifestyles. As Graham (2011: xxix) explains, “the North's global cities often act as economic or ecological parasites, preying on the South, violently appropriating energy, water, land and mineral resources, relying on exploitative labour conditions in offshore manufacturing, driving damaging processes of climate change, and generating an often highly damaging flow of tourism and waste.” Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, London, and New York have provided the main financial and corporate power through which Western companies have appropriated Iraqi oil reserves. Similarly, global cities also provide the main site through which neocolonial land grabs in sub-Saharan Africa are engineered, at the same time as they benefit from the increased production of food and biofuels for cars, which such large-scale land acquisitions often are used for (Graham, 2011: xxiii; see also Gillespie, 2016).

These processes are however less novel than terms such as the “new imperialism” might imply. As Paula Chakravartty and Denise Ferreira da Silva have argued, Harvey's account of new forms of dispossession elides “how neoliberal architectures and discourses of dispossession act on earlier forms of racial and colonial subjugation.” (Chakravartty and Silva, 2012: 368–9) Like gentrification and law-and-order policing, the manner in which dispossession is carried out today cannot be understood outside the “legacies of colonial expropriation” (Ibid: 369; 374). That is, “accumulation by dispossession” is less a new stage in the history of capitalism than an intensification of the structural inequalities which have always been necessary for capital accumulation. Similarly, while it might be true that today's global cities function as “the 'brains' of the global war machine” (Graham, 2011: 133), this close relationship between cities and empire is hardly new: Cities have arguably always funded, managed, and profited from colonialism (Hunt, 2015). As nodes of colonial extraction, they have historically been, and arguably continue to operate as, places where racialized forms of dispossession and expropriation are orchestrated and reproduced—not just in the metropole but also in the (post)colonies.

Conclusion

In this article I have argued that the Grenfell fire alerts us to the racial structuring of neoliberal urban governance, and the need to draw on Black, post/decolonial, and Indigenous scholarship to make sense of the global city and its place in the world. Where Marxist and liberal scholars point to the salience of neoliberalism in explaining the violence, inequalities, and hierarchies that often accompany the “making” of the global city, I have argued that global cities are part of a historical and ongoing imperial terrain. Although cities such as London, New York, Cape Town, Dubai, Shanghai, and Rio de Janeiro over the last few decades have transformed themselves into glitzy centres of financial capital and real estate speculation, the cost of this transformation has predominantly been carried by racialized “surplus” people and places. Racialized forms of

expropriation, dispossession, and policing have made the global city “cleaner”, “safer”, and more amenable to capital investment and middle class consumer habits. As Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism* reminds us, this is not surprising: Capitalism has historically operated through racial projects that differentiate between those associated with rights, wages, and citizenship and those subject to super-exploitation and dispossession. Capitalism has *de facto* always been racial capitalism. The failure to account for this link between racial differentiation and capital accumulation has ultimately lead IR scholars to overestimate the “newness” of the global city. Notwithstanding the long list of declarations of novelty—of global cities as “new actors” or indicators of a “new international system”; of gentrification as a “new urban colonialism” or “new military urbanism”—many of the processes that sustain the “renaissance” of global cities are strikingly un-novel. Strategies of urban regeneration, slum administration, and racialized policing draw directly on techniques and technologies experimented with in the (post)colonies. For IR theorists interested in the changing relationship between the urban and the global this has important implications. Looking through the lens of the global city, I have argued, does not in itself challenge established geographies of power, nor does it yield a radically different image of world politics. Proclaiming the advent of a new global era of cities and urbanising world politics requires accepting, at least to some extent, the previous hegemonic narrative—namely, that of the Westphalian system with its territorially bounded nation-states in an anarchic realm. Escaping this “territorial trap” necessitates an engagement with the distinctive ways in which both the global and the urban are structured by the political economy of race and empire. This means looking beyond IR's static categories of territorial borders, inside/outside, and Westphalian sovereignty so as to recognise the co-constitution of the global and the local with the colonial. The fire that ripped through Grenfell Tower is, from this perspective, part of a much wider cartography of imperial and racial violence. More than a purely domestic problem of widening class inequality under neoliberalism, the makings of Grenfell were inherently global-colonial in character. Robin Kelley's (2015b) conclusions about Michael Brown—that he was “collateral damage in a perpetual war whose colonial roots are still alive”—ultimately ring as true here, in North Kensington, as they do in Ferguson, the favelas of São Paulo, the townships of Cape Town, the kampungs of Jakarta, and the banlieues of Paris.

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- ⁱ The music video of the song is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztUamrChczQ>
 - ⁱⁱ According to 2011 census data, just over half of residents in the Grenfell postcode were born outside of England; only 7 of the victims were white (Rice-Oxley, 2018; Shilliam, 2018: 170).
 - ⁱⁱⁱ The deracialized critique of neoliberalism was a leitmotif in many leading British newspapers. Where the racial composition of Grenfell victims was noted, it was typically analysed in separation from political economy and questions of neoliberal restructuring. For an exception, see Bhandar (2018) and Shilliam (2018). The local community in North Kensington has from the beginning argued that race was central to the neoliberal makings of the fire.
 - ^{iv} Important feminist research has suggested that similar questions need to be asked about the gender, sexual, and the intimate in urban settings. For an excellent analysis of the role of heteronormativity and the “proper” family in the making of Singapore as a “world-class” city, see Oswin (2014).
 - ^v I borrow this phrase from Davis (2004).
 - ^{vi} In this article I approach race, not as a pre-political, biological characteristic but a social construct brought into being by political, economic, and colonial forces. Race thus conceived is not reducible to skin-colour (which is one of many possible markers of racism), but instead describes a relation of subordination drawn along the line of the human (Grosfoguel, 2004; Omi and Winant, 2014). For the purposes of this article, this definition is particularly useful as it helps us understand why processes of racialization might not look exactly the same in London as they do in, say, São Paulo, Dubai, Jakarta, and Nairobi.
 - ^{vii} North Kensington local Ish interviewed in the documentary *Failed By The State* (Redfish, 2017).
 - ^{viii} Tracy Shildrick (2018: 787) similarly argues that the Grenfell fire exposed some of the “worst aspects of contemporary neoliberal capitalism, not just in terms of inequality and social housing, but also in the ways that profits can be put before people’s lives and well-being and how cuts to public services such as the police and fire services, made in the name of austerity, can have deadly consequences.” For others, such as David Madden (2017: 2–3), Grenfell exemplifies the “structural violence of urban life in neoliberal capitalist society.”
 - ^{ix} Some notable work examines these riots as protests against gentrification and rising inequality under neoliberal urbanism, see Angélil and Siress (2012), Back and Gilroy (2013), Briggs (2012), and Dikec (2011). See Maharawal (2017) for a discussion of Black Lives Matter as a movement against gentrification.
 - ^x In his Opening Statement, Imran Khan QC stated that: “Our clients firmly believe that it is absolutely vital that the terms of reference are amended so that race, religion and social class are considered, because whilst there will be—and I accept rightly—focus on the construction and refurbishment of the tower which led to the fire, that will not be the full story. That will not explain why it was that these particular people—these particular people—were the ones that died and that will not explain what led them to their death” (Siddique, 2018).
 - ^{xi} Similarly, out of the 19% of the urban population that live in poverty in the United States, more than 60% are Black or Latino (Wilson, 2009: 139).
 - ^{xii} Sassen (1993) in particular has emphasised that the global cities depend on the existence of a service class of workers such as taxi drivers, private nannies, cleaners, and so on. Nonetheless, while she recognises that this army of workers typically is racialized as non-white, she refrains from a more thorough analysis of how racial differentiation might be fundamental to processes capital accumulation and urban regeneration.
 - ^{xiii} Anthony Bogues has described this as a Black radical heretical practice, through which Black radicals sought to expose Marxism’s incompleteness when it came to the non-white and colonial world. As Bogues (2015: 13) explains, black heretics entailed “a double operation—an engagement with Western radical theory and then a critique of this theory.”
 - ^{xiv} In fact, and as Glen Coulthard (2014, 175) has argued, “gentrifiers often defend their projects as a form of improvement, where previously ‘wasted’ land and lives are made more socially and economically productive.”
 - ^{xv} As Alves (2018) explains, the most conservative statistics suggest that between 1999 and 2014, 10,152 people were killed by the Military Police in the state of São Paulo; at least 50% of these deaths occurred in the metropolitan region of São Paulo.

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- ^{xvi} Many of the residents that have been rehoused have been moved to new homes far from the area in North Kensington where they previously lived, lending further weight to critiques of social cleansing.
- ^{xvii} Sherene Razack (2002: 129) has similarly documented how the end of the colonial era combined with 1950s and 60s urbanisation policies of segregation to replicate the spatial zones produced by colonisation whereby “slum administration replaces colonial administration.”
- ^{xviii} For a comparison between post-war regeneration and contemporary gentrification, see Jones (2008). On the afterlives of colonial architecture, see Kusno (2010).
- ^{xix} For an analysis of how counterinsurgency methods routinely are deployed to police racialized populations in global cities, see Abourahme (2018), Camp and Heatherton (2016), Graham (2011), and Neocleous and Kastrinou (2016).
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