

Globalizing Social Violence: Race, Gender, and the Spatial Politics of Crisis

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Globalization has been both heralded and decried, celebrated and debated. The critical discussion is often about the dynamics of global capital mobility and the power of transnational corporations, with the focus usually on capital-driven changes in global cultures or on the plight of labor in international wage competition. In contrast, the argument I present here looks away from corporations and technologies and points to globalization as referring to certain *political strategies* to resolve the crisis of the capitalist state. I stress two organizing dimensions of this strategy: the process of globalization includes a set of spatial rearrangements, and, second, space is reconfigured through race and gender formation. My contention is that, far from signaling a diminution of boundaries, globalization more often than not reinforces and fortifies geo-political and racial borders.

I pursue this argument by bringing together two distanced but strongly connected spaces in North America: the inner city and the borderlands. By exploring the formation of these spaces in the era of global capital, the connections between them will demonstrate my thesis that undergirding globalization is a spatial strategy that relies on the interfacing of race and gender processes. The focus here is on those people and communities on whose backs the global political economy is built. From this perspective, then, urban (re-)development and the politics of global capital on the international frontier between Mexico and

the U.S. are processes by which poor people of color experience displacement, violence, and marginalization. These processes are key to understanding how global restructuring aims to resolve the crisis of the capitalist state by managing race and gender difference.

I begin by charting the contours of the capitalist state's current crisis, or what Toni Negri has called the "crisis-state."¹ This discussion provides the crucial context for interpreting how globalization plays out in the city and in the borderlands. I then turn to each of these two spaces to specify the state's strategies in the face of crisis. In terms of the inner city, I look to the dynamics of gentrification, urban restructuring, and changes in the welfare state as examples of how boundaries within the city are drawn based upon race and access to capital. Regarding the borderlands, I use the development of the Border Industrialization Program to explain how a similar process takes place on the U.S.-Mexico frontier. My aim in piecing together these distanced spaces is twofold: first, to make globalization more understandable as a political process with similar consequences in diverse locations, and second, to draw out the social violence that accompanies this process. By "social violence," I mean those delimitations of human possibility produced on a social scale and legitimated by recognized authority: for example, the poverty, exploitation, and death that are productive of the political economy.² Gentrification and border industrialization are mechanisms of social violence against workers and communities, and by demonstrating the basis for this violence in the state's efforts to resolve the crisis of capital and difference, these diverse locations will come closer together.

Gentrification in U.S. cities and the structural changes occurring in the borderlands and other export processing zones do not form an identity because they evince identical conditions of existence. Rather, I argue that the articulation of these disparate spaces comprises a complex formation featuring structured relations of dominance and subordination between its parts. In this argument I place gentrification within the larger dynamic we have come to term "globalization" in order to reveal the dialectical relations of development and underdevelopment that produce gentrification and border industrialization as different levels of the same social formation dedicated to capital accumulation. Throughout this argument I endeavor to show how economic relations of production are never simply economic; race, gender, and space are intrinsic to the way in which the global political economy produces subjects structured in dominance.³

The Crisis-State and Globalization

The state is a complex, fractured, often contradictory, site of institutions. The state is generally depicted as it represents itself—as a benign entity serving the greater public good. John Comaroff, in his analysis of the colonial state, points to an important dimension of the representation of modern bourgeois democratic states. The excesses of the state, the inequities and dominations, Comaroff says, "are typically treated as aberrations, as ruptures in an otherwise

seamless narrative of progress. And they are, by and large, blamed not on the systemic contradictions of colonialism itself, or on any kind of structural consideration, but on misanthropic or misguided individuals.”⁴ The kinds of violence, abuse, and corruption either perpetrated by the state or sanctioned by its institutions are thus treated as anomalies.

Marxism has tended to equate the state with political domination, in the sense that the state is merely a class dictatorship.⁵ Yet, although the state’s activity reaches into all spheres of everyday life, these functions cannot be reduced to domination alone. Critical treatments that attempt to move beyond the notion of the state as a mere appendage of the dominant class often simply reproduce this image by proposing a dual-nature version of the state. In this explanation, the essence of the state is found in its purely technical functions that exist outside of class struggle (e.g., administration of laws, provision of education, regulation of commerce); the second nature of the state, depicted as “just a question of habit,” does have a class nature, perverting or contaminating the functions of the first, true nature.⁶ In contrast, Greek social theorist Nicos Poulantzas posits a theory of the state that understands both the centrality of domination to state power, as well as its limits. The state, writes Poulantzas,

really does exhibit a peculiar material framework that can by no means be reduced to mere political domination. The state apparatus—that special and hence formidable something—is not exhausted in state power. Rather political domination is itself inscribed in the institutional materiality of the State. Although the State is not created *ex nihilo* by the ruling classes, nor is it simply taken over by them: state power (that of the bourgeoisie, in the case of the capitalist State) is written into the materiality. Thus, while all the State’s actions are not reducible to political domination, their composition is nevertheless marked by it.⁷

For Poulantzas, political domination is imbricated into the very forms of the state that people experience: for example, public assistance offices, schools, police, courts, and prisons. In the situation of liberal capitalism, then, while the state is not simply or always serving capital’s needs, the interests of capital are frequently expressed through these material forms of the state,

The role of the state in shaping racial domination flows from this analysis of state power. Insofar as concepts of liberty and equality are fundamental to the liberal nation-state, racialization poses problems for the state by revealing deep historical contradictions with the universalistic aspirations of Enlightenment ideology. As David Goldberg observes, the more explicitly universal liberalism’s commitments, “the more open it is to and the more determined it is by the likes of racial subjectivity and racist exclusivity.”⁸ The modern nation-state is thus

characterized by an “unstable equilibrium of the denial and universalization” of racial and sexual difference.⁹ The contradiction at the core of modern liberal democracy is the denial of difference and the simultaneous universalization of difference.¹⁰ The racial and sexual characterizations produced from this contradiction help define liberalism and therefore the state as well. The raced and gendered failures and excesses of the modern nation-state are bound up in institutional, political, and cultural practices with expressions of equality and liberty, property, and individual self-possession to form the crucial conflicts in political community life today.¹¹

The “crisis” of the liberal capitalist state emanates not only from the race and gender contradictions inherent to modernity, but also from the contradictions that characterize capital accumulation. This crisis has its origins in the late 1960s, at the end of the long upward movement in the rate of profit that marked the end of the golden age of U.S. capitalism.¹² A basic necessity of capitalist society is near-constant economic expansion—the pursuit of larger and larger quantities of capital.¹³ As a result of economic recessions and transformations in the economy, U.S. businesses experienced a 50 percent drop in average profit rates between 1965 and the late-1970s.¹⁴ This profit crisis helped bring about the end of what has been variously called “military Keynesianism” or the “warfare-welfare state”: the broad post-war economic project consisting of investments designed to avoid the cumulative effects of downward business cycles by guaranteeing effective demand during downturns.¹⁵ While the social project of Keynesianism included protections for workers against unemployment, following on the belief that full employment of resources encourages rather than limits the production of new wealth, it was first and foremost a safety net for capital.¹⁶ With the fall in profits, however, corporations began to resist their contributions to the “social wage,” and embarked on a series of tax revolts leading to the dismantling of the Keynesian economic project in the early-1970s.

The notion of “crisis” is politically neutral in the sense that objectively it simply connotes a situation of impending or current change.¹⁷ The direction of change is determined through struggle; crises, themselves, are thus neither “good” nor “bad,” but merely describe conditions of political contestation. The crisis in modernity presented by racial and sexual exclusions combined with the economic crisis of capital’s tax revolt produced a profound struggle over the role of the U.S. state. This struggle has resulted in a deep crisis in the social contract. The ensuing “crisis-state” is characterized by a dramatic redefinition of state involvement and accountability in political, social, and economic life. The basic characteristic of the crisis-state is the “total rupture of any balance or proportionality between the struggles and needs of the proletariat on the one hand, and capitalist development on the other.”¹⁸ This rupture means a shift to a new relation of power, towards the interests of capital, and away from democratic process.¹⁹ The result is an indelible change in the ways in which the state registers social conflict at the political level. As Avery Gordon expansively observes,

our country's major institutions—the corporation, the law, the state, the media, the public—recognize narrower and narrower evidence for the harms and indignities that citizens and residents experience. The most obvious violations—the poverty, the gaping inequalities of resources, the brutality of the police, the corruption of democratic politics, the hunger and homelessness, the hateful beatings and batterings—are everywhere to be seen only in the disappearing hypervisibility of their fascinating anomalousness.²⁰

Gordon is describing the disinvestment of public institutions from the social contract and the institutionalizing of the state's transformation in a manner commensurate with a specific political form, the crisis-state.

The features of the crisis-state include the restructuring of the economy away from productive investment towards monetary policies, the devolution of welfare, and the enhancement of repressive forces in the form of military build-up and increases in spending on policing and incarceration. The state's austerity-based program implies as its corollary the extension of new techniques of coercive state intervention in society at large. Changes in public spending such as the transfer of resources from higher education to prisons, the cutting of social services, and the use of punishment and surveillance as investment opportunities (as represented by the "industrial complex" of corporate, administrative, and political interests that converge on the prison system, border patrol, and private property security) demonstrate how the state takes the problems of capital as problems of its own.²¹ These features of the crisis-state are designed to resolve the social, political, and economic crisis; they also constitute the guiding components of globalization.

Since the early-1970's, the rising dominance of capital and the reduction of the state's commitment to balancing the costs to workers of capital production is apparent in indicators of inequality, wage erosion, and sectoral shifts in the economy. The 1970s saw a rapidly accelerating decline in traditional, highly unionized, high-wage manufacturing jobs. The growth of the high-technology-manufacturing, craft-specialty, and advanced service sectors of the economy throughout the 1980s coincided with the combination of downsizing, capital flight out of the inner cities to regions of the country or to nations providing less expensive labor pools, and the introduction of labor-replacing technology. These structural changes in the economy led to high unemployment and depressed real average wages. During one indicative year in this process of large-scale job loss due to sectoral shifts, approximately 400,000 U.S. workers lost their jobs in 1979 alone because of plant closings or relocations.²² After the early-1980s, the percentage of total displaced workers who come from the manufacturing sector still continues to outpace the industry's share of overall employment; this downward trend signals the ongoing decline of the sector as a source of viable work.

From January 1997 through December 1999, 7.6 million workers were displaced from their jobs because their plant or company closed or moved, there was insufficient work for them to do, or their position or shift was abolished.²³

A central strategy by corporations to recoup lost profits and capitalize on new technological developments is the employment of part-time or temporary labor. This business strategy has important repercussions for workers, especially without a welfare safety net available. One historical watermark occurred in 1992 when fully half of all new jobs were for temporary, subcontracted work.²⁴ Typically, this contingent labor force works in the burgeoning low-end service sector for low wages, accrues no seniority, enjoys few benefits, and undermines organized labor. A parallel process is the pursuit of less expensive, non-unionized foreign labor, either by investing overseas, importing less expensive foreign parts, subcontracting to smaller firms locally and abroad, or actually importing low-wage foreign labor.²⁵

Much is made of the booming economy and falling rates of unemployment between 1993 and 2000.²⁶ While people may be working, they are still in poverty. Of the 36.4 million people living below the official poverty line in 1995, 7.2 million were employed more than half the year and about 60 percent of these worked full-time.²⁷ There were over 4 million families in poverty, even though one or more members worked for at least half the year.²⁸ Other estimates put the number of working poor at 30 million and the full-time, year-round working poor at 7 million.²⁹ The share of the population with working family members has increased since 1993. In 2000, a greater percentage of the poor had one full-time worker than in 1993 (44.5 percent vs. 36.0 percent). Therefore, although people with working family members are somewhat less likely to be poor in 2000 compared with 1993, the poor are more likely to come from working families.³⁰ The cumulative result of the structural changes in the economy is that for the first time in history, U.S. society has been experiencing continuous economic growth *and* rising poverty and income disparity for full-time workers.³¹

Economic growth has traditionally reduced poverty rates and increased the share of income garnered by the poorest families, but this was not the case in the otherwise prosperous 1980s and 1990s: in 1989, after six years of sustained economic growth, the national poverty rate stood at 12.8 percent.³² In 1991, 31.2 percent of full-time workers earned less than the poverty line, which has increased by 30 percent since 1973.³³ The 2000 census revealed a reduction in the poverty rate to 11.3 percent nationally; this rate rises to over twenty percent for blacks and Latinos, however, and continues to rise the more specific you get by age, race, gender, and geographic location.³⁴ In the U.S. in 1999, one out of five children was being raised in poverty, and while three-fourths of the working poor are white, poverty rates for blacks and Latinos are two and three times higher, respectively, than the rate for whites, and women are more likely to earn poverty-level wages than men.³⁵

Declining real wages and increasing earning disparity are major reasons why workers remain mired in poverty despite constant economic growth. Real hourly wages for all employees fell by 12 percent between 1973 and 1990 and remained flat throughout the “boom” of the 1990s; the median family of four earned the same real income in 1996 as in 1973, while working more hours; the wealth of the bottom 40 percent fell by half from 1983 to 1992 while that of the top 20 percent grew by one-fifth.³⁶ A 1998 study estimated that 46 percent of the jobs with the most growth between 1994 and 2005 pay less than \$16,000 a year—wages that will not lift families out of poverty.³⁷ Moreover, 74 percent of these jobs pay below a livable wage (\$32,185 for a family of four).³⁸ Although real wages grew at all levels from 1997 through the end of the century, these increases have not counteracted the history of stagnant and declining wages from the early-1970s. Had the average wage continued to grow after 1973 at the rate it did from 1947 to 1973, workers in 1992 would have earned \$19 an hour instead of \$10.56, a difference of more than \$17,000 for full-time workers.³⁹ As it is, however, the real value of the minimum wage in 1997 was 18.1 percent *less* than in 1979.⁴⁰

Official unemployment and poverty rates can be misleading if we miss the specifics. In the growth economy, almost all new jobs are in the service sector, where contingent employment is most likely to occur.⁴¹ Almost a quarter of the workforce (32 million) is now employed in temporary, part-time work.⁴² While part-time work can be good for some workers by offering flexibility, it can also be a form of disguised unemployment. This picture of poverty and part-time labor indicates that contingent work is predominantly an employer, not an employee, preference. Part-time work becomes a trap that makes it virtually impossible to work oneself out of poverty. Moreover, the persistence of hand labor in the retail and service sectors, rather than laborsaving machines, simply demonstrates that employers have calculated the comparative advantages of employing direct labor to investing in large-scale technology. Labor in these industries is therefore a form of disguised unemployment, or underemployment.⁴³

The end of welfare entitlements and the requirement of workfare are forcing increasing numbers of poor families into this constricted labor market. Replacing welfare with workfare is an example of the crisis-state’s withdrawal of support from labor and acquiescence to capital. The welfare reform laws “regulate a reserve army of surplus labor that keeps in check the minimum wage rate and thus the wage profile of the low-end service sector.”⁴⁴ The new legislation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), was enacted in August 1996; states were permitted to begin implementation almost immediately and were required to begin no later than July 1, 1997. Within the first year and a half of TANF, the nation’s welfare caseload dropped 27 percent. The reasons for the decline are contested in the literature, but it appears indisputable that the new legislation has produced an increase in employment entries among the poor—into jobs that do not provide sufficient wages for families to reach the poverty

line, even though earnings were high enough to make them ineligible for TANF assistance.⁴⁵

The restructuring of the economy around finance and service industries, the erosion of the low-skill wage profile, and the devolution of welfare are key features of the crisis-state. Race and gender are central to this picture of the crisis-state. Blacks and Latinos are disproportionately represented among the poor, among workers displaced from downsizing sectors of the economy, and among former welfare recipients forced into low-wage labor. It cannot be overstated that the crisis-state's reproduction of the class relations of capitalism directly targets the raced and gendered working poor. The crisis produced by capital's tax revolt and the ensuing dismantling of Keynesianism beginning in the early-1970s was blamed not on social disinvestment and shifts in the productive sectors of the economy, but rather on the "failures" of social expenditures. The U.S. corporate right charged that the social programs of the 1960's produced welfare state policies that "overreached realistic possibilities for reform, overloaded the state, rewarded free-riders, and undermined authority, civic morality, and labor discipline."⁴⁶ In other words, capital sought to reinvigorate a flattened profit-rate in this period by reducing its contribution to the "social wage," and yet social welfare programs and their constituents were blamed for the ensuing anxiety and upheaval. The increased economic uncertainty helped focus public antipathy on government spending for social programs. In this way, people negatively affected by the state's divestment from social welfare were convinced to actually promote the celebration of social program cutbacks.

The winning of support by individuals for policies inimical to their material needs is made possible through racist culture. Building on the insight that it is through culture that we make sense of the world, David Goldberg notes the role of racism in organizing cultural life: "Racist culture has been one of the central ways modern social subjects make sense of and express themselves about the world they inhabit and invent; it has been key in their responding to the world they conjointly make."⁴⁷ Racism permits the reconfiguration of actual power relations that present whites, the wealthy, and males as "victims" of the unfair advantages purportedly secured by people of color, the poor, and women.⁴⁸ Poor whites would not consent to marginalization by a punitive welfare state were it not that "welfare" and "public assistance" have come to signify racial otherness, particularly blackness. The pervasive stereotype of welfare continues to be the image of the single, black, drug-addicted mother—the "welfare queen." The case of the former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke's 1991 gubernatorial bid in Louisiana illustrates how racism drives this process. Duke campaigned on a pledge to reduce the numbers of blacks on welfare by cutting benefits and by offering women a monetary bonus to use Norplant, a controversial injectable contraceptive that prevents pregnancy for up to five years by gradually releasing a low dose of a synthetic hormone into the bloodstream.⁴⁹ One white woman explained that, *although she relied on welfare herself*, she voted for Duke because "blacks just have those babies and go on welfare."⁵⁰

Not only are welfare and poverty raced and gendered in this way, but the crisis-state's move to reduce the security to labor and to enhance the returns to capital are attempts to empty the state of its racial and sexual make-up in that the social programs that have been targeted by capital for divestment have become identified with women and people of color. Its detractors argued that the state had become too closely aligned with particularistic interests. Although advocates of neoliberal and laissez-faire economic models reject the idea that the crises of race and gender exclusions have contributed to the current composition of the crisis-state, the interfacing of race and gender difference with the subordination of labor is the defining feature of the dislocations described above, of the political strategy embedded in global restructuring. Capitalism proceeds on the basis of differentiation but pretends to create equality and uniformity. I turn now to the city and to the borderlands to explore the ways this political strategy is manifested spatially.

The City

U.S. cities have been shaped historically by residential, occupational, and educational segregation, and by urban planning in which creating landscapes for capital accumulation has not been effectively counter-balanced by public interests. The suburban swell, especially in the post-World War II era, that pulled whites out of inner cities led to new levels of spatial segregation in the metropolis. The desire by these suburban communities to be fiscally and politically autonomous of deteriorating and racially identified cities led to the proliferation of local governments, a condition described as "metropolitan political fragmentation."⁵¹ By 1990, fourteen cities with a population larger than 100,000 had a majority black population, eleven more had black populations of between 40 and 50 percent, and 40 cities larger than 25,000 had majority black populations.⁵² And by 2000, the central cities were 53.1 percent black and 21.2 percent white, while the metropolitan areas outside of the inner cities were 34.9 percent black and 56.2 percent white.⁵³ The political organization of urban space into multiple jurisdictions segregated by race leaves U.S. cities with serious distributional inequalities in terms of the spatial location of problems and the location of fiscal resources needed to solve these problems. In this way, segregation is a totalizing condition: since resource availability determines educational opportunity, and thus jobs, and thus quality of housing, segregation in one area of social life tends to require and produce segregation in every area.⁵⁴

The outcome of this segregation is that urban politics in the U.S. is intensely geographical and spatial, as interest groups move to maximize and preserve the positive effects around their homes or businesses, or minimize the negative impacts of surrounding community effects on their property values.⁵⁵ As the site of many competing interests, then, the notion that the state is a neutral agent in urban politics rings hollow. The state as the source of more or less consistent progress can be heard in narratives about "growth" in certain cities or

neighborhoods, as if gentrification and redevelopment, although painful, were natural, organic, and inevitable—i.e., growing up can be rough at times, but ultimately good. This discourse is related to the traditional liberal conception of historical and national progress, with its narratives of conquest and cultivation of the “frontier.”⁵⁶ It also reflects the ideology of laissez-faire capitalism, which insists that social conflicts will be mediated through the market. However, what is usually called “growth,” urban critic Mike Davis has noted, is “neither a purely natural metabolism (as neoliberals imagine the marketplace to be) nor an enlightened volition (as politicians and planners like to claim).”⁵⁷

The racial segregation of central cities persists in new forms in the political economy of the crisis-state. I focus here upon the new spatial economies of globalization that play out in the form of urban gentrification. The spatially fragmented manufacturing process has intensified the spatial concentration of finance in cities, increased the demand on service industries, spurred the profitability of the real estate industry, and escalated the connection between racial segregation and the affordable housing emergency.⁵⁸

In the process known as “gentrification,” the real estate and finance industries capitalize on urban areas as sites for surplus value through a continual process of destroying and rebuilding. Under the guise of “revitalizing” neighborhoods, the real estate industry withdraws investment from one location in order to reinvest elsewhere. The perversity of the real estate market is such that landlords benefit going out and coming back in: they pocket the money they withheld from repairs and upkeep, and then having created dilapidated buildings, they now have the conditions for a new round of capital reinvestment.⁵⁹

Gentrification has occurred simultaneously with the sectoral switch to capital investment and is symptomatic of the larger crisis in the capitalist state described in the first section of this paper. The disinvestment in central cities that marked the rise of the suburbs created an ideal location for new financial investments in the urban built environment. We can place the beginning of the disinvestment in the older inner-city neighborhoods with the Federal Housing Act of 1934 that channeled most of the new government-backed loans towards white home buyers moving into segregated suburbs and away from communities of color throughout the post-World War II period.⁶⁰ In capital’s search for a fix to the profit crisis, financial capital flowed into the inner cities. As the Federal Housing Agency and the federal highway building projects facilitated suburbanization, urban renewal programs in the 1950s and 1960s proceeded to destroy residential housing in the inner-cities. Although urban renewal programs were ostensibly designed to increase the housing opportunities of lower-income residents, 90 percent of the low-income units removed for urban renewal during the program’s entire history were never replaced, with commercial and industrial projects occupying almost all of the land cleared by the renewal projects.⁶¹ The capital reinvestments in the central cities brought by urban renewal programs came to include residential redevelopment as the old neighborhoods be-

gan to gentrify in the 1960s and 1970s.⁶² In this way, redevelopment of the cities may be a geographical reversal, but it demonstrates economic continuity with the forces and relations of suburbanization in that both gentrification and suburbanization function as substantial engines of profit.⁶³

According to the discourse of gentrification, the process revitalizes neighborhoods. In actuality, what is revitalized is simply the profit rate; the process is disastrous for the traditional residents of targeted communities. The 1979 Annual Housing Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that approximately 500,000 households—possibly amounting to as many as two million people—were displaced by gentrification each year.⁶⁴ The withdrawal of state assistance in housing has led to increasing privatization of housing, contributing to the gentrification process: 86 percent of the aforementioned 500,000 households were displaced by private-market activity, and they are predominantly urban working class.⁶⁵

The role of the crisis-state in encouraging gentrification should not be missed. Real estate laws favorable to developers allow them to profit from both their intentional dilapidation of buildings, as well as from the investment opportunities offered by the rehabilitated property. The profits of private industry are in this way dependent upon favorable relationships in the political economy. We can see a similar disposition from federal budget expenditures: in 2000, low-income housing assistance had declined to \$24.6 billion, while the cost to the Federal Treasury for homeowner tax deductions (and other minor tax expenditures) had skyrocketed to \$121.1 billion. The federal investment in housing is thus dramatically inequitable and starkly bifurcated; the more expensive one's mortgage is, the bigger one's tax break.⁶⁶

Urban displacement is intimately connected to the raced and gendered impact of the restructuring economy. The persistence of underemployment (which includes the unemployed, the involuntary part-time employed, and those who have given up looking for employment) and the decline in wages have put decent housing out of reach for many workers. In 2000, the national median housing wage for a two-bedroom apartment at the Fair Market Rent, weighted by Census 2000 population figures, was \$13.87 an hour, more than twice the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.⁶⁷ In the median state a minimum-wage worker would have to work 83 hours each week to afford a two-bedroom apartment at 30 percent of his or her income, which is the federal definition of affordable housing.⁶⁸ The number of poor renters remains static or increases, while the number of affordable places to live diminishes. Between 1993 and 1995 there was a loss of 900,000 rental units affordable to very low income families (below 50 percent of the local area median), a reduction of nine percent; an even greater reduction—16 percent—occurred in the same period for the extremely poor, those renters with incomes below 30 percent of area median.⁶⁹ The intervening years have seen this situation exacerbated. The loss of housing includes the destruction of single-room occupancy (SRO) housing. Consequently, not

only are the poor largely working, but because of insufficient wages and the gentrification-inflated values of their residences, they are also becoming homeless: a 1998 survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors of 30 U.S. cities found that almost one in five homeless persons is employed, with significantly higher percentages in other cities and states.⁷⁰

In considering the racial specifics of gentrification it is necessary to recognize the relationship between *displacee* and *displacer*. The conditions and direction of gentrification are undergirded by the logic of capital accumulation, meaning that the process cannot be reduced to the behavior of individuals, no matter how purposive and powerful they may be. Nevertheless, it is equally important to note that gentrifiers are not mere bearers of a process determined independently of them; they are integral to the definition of gentrification itself.⁷¹ The characteristics of the displacer, as certain types of workers and as people with particular racial identifications and socio-economic lifestyles, is as central to the production of gentrification as is the redevelopment of the dwellings they come to occupy. In other words, inner city neighborhoods are ripe for capital investment and redevelopment not for simple economic reasons alone, but precisely because of who lives there presently and who will live there after gentrification takes place. The opportunity for investment would not exist if patterns of racial segregation, unequal resource allocation (based on race), and uneven development (impacted by race) did not already prevail. Furthermore, gentrification is financially lucrative to a range of industries because it capitalizes on the racial construction of capital investment—meaning that capital is not a *thing* but rather a social *relation* that has contingencies in a manner similar (but different) to racial difference.⁷² Gentrification is an instance that reveals the ways in which the meanings of race on the one hand, and capital on the other, are constructed interdependently.

This conception of race and economic development is related to a particular vision of race and social space. Gentrification participates in a reification of race by linking the environmental problems poor people of color face to racial identity, thereby simply overlooking the realities of the political economy. The instrumental explanation of space maintains that the built environment and the city itself are merely functional forms whose meaning and purpose are given by the use to which they are put. This functionary view of space obscures the politics that give it its shape and imbue it with meaning, as well as the role of space in shaping politics. This instrumental perspective of space encourages two problematic conclusions regarding the relationship between people and the spaces in which they live. Because space is divorced from its social production, it becomes independent and understood as functionally empty until acted upon. This understanding of space leads to the argument that run-down neighborhoods are dilapidated because of the people who occupy them. The policy remedy here is to remove the residents in order to “revitalize” the neighborhood. The second view maintains that the built environment exercises control over the people who

inhabit it, which leads to the policy of “slum clearance,” the basis of the urban renewal programs. We have seen this process occur in various cities around the world throughout history, including recently the leveling of Chicago’s Cabrini Green housing projects. Notice that both policy remedies—the construction of what historian Arnold Hirsch has characterized as the “second ghetto” and its subsequent destruction—are potentially lucrative to real estate developers since they require the redevelopment of the space.⁷³

The narrative of urban decay and decline is founded in these notions of space. Positing “growth” or “revitalization” as a remedy for decay contorts reality and history. Since gentrification produces homelessness as part of a larger restructuring, we are essentially being asked to believe that the housing crisis can be cured only by encouraging its causes.⁷⁴ However, gentrification narratives do more than simply obscure reality; they participate in the construction of racial identities. The “ideological siting of decline,” as Robert Beauregard calls the association of decay and degeneracy with urbanization,⁷⁵ is produced by and participates in the formation of racial identities. Representing poverty and slum conditions as the effect of factors present in the physical spaces to which poverty is segregated essentializes space by separating it from dynamics in the political economy. Additionally, it stands in for what is a series of racisms, one of which conflates race with space. In this sense, then, we can see a reification of space that mirrors the reification of race.⁷⁶

Gentrification is one practice through which the crisis-state reproduces spatial segregation in the central city. This process is a prominent feature of the crisis-state’s political strategy to recoup profits and subordinate labor and racial difference. I turn now to the borderlands as a related space where this practice occurs.

Borderlands

The case of the Border Industrialization Program demonstrates how the state is both the vehicle for globalization and the legitimator of new economic activity through the production of legality. The termination of the Bracero Program by the U.S. government in 1964 exacerbated problems in México. Unemployment rates along the border approached 50 percent as Mexican workers displaced from U.S. markets resettled along the border.⁷⁷ At this time, U.S. multinationals were increasing off-shore production operations, principally in Asia. The Mexican government successfully recruited U.S. companies to the borderlands and the two governments produced the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) in 1965. Mexico attracted firms to investment opportunities in its country because of lower wages and the proximity to the United States. However, the U.S. government ensured the success of the BIP by means of two provisions in tariff legislation. U.S. trade law items “permit the basing of import duties on the value added outside the United States when the products are not substantially altered in character by manufacturing activities in foreign countries.”⁷⁸

Subsequent tariff amendments further encouraged the expansion of foreign subsidiary operations by providing tax loopholes for articles assembled abroad for export that have not been altered in their identity, advanced in value, or improved in condition except by being assembled.⁷⁹ These legal provisions spurred the growth of the *maquiladoras* (low-wage manufacturing plants), especially—at least initially—in the electronics and apparel manufacturing industries that consist almost entirely of assembly procedures. For example, Audio-Mex, a subsidiary of a large U.S. company that manufactures a range of electronics products, was one of the first of these maquilas to move into the industrial parks near the border.⁸⁰ A typical electronics company operating in the border town of Mexicali, Audio-Mex assembled eight-track magnetic tapes and cassettes with parts manufactured outside of México and brought to the plant for assembly. U.S. trade laws would only tax the company for the value-added to the product since manufacturing processes outside of the United States did not alter its parts.

The transnational economic space of the borderlands also was created through efforts by the Mexican government. The benefits and flexibility of maquiladoras stem from their privileged positions in the host nations. México permitted the duty-free importation of machinery, equipment, and raw materials on the condition that everything produced was exported.⁸¹ Permit applications and fees for imports underwent major simplification. Restrictions on foreign firms owning land has been relaxed and plants operating under the BIP have been granted 100 percent foreign control over investment so long as their total production is exported—an extraordinary measure considering that under “normal” circumstances foreign investment in México is only permitted, at most, a 49 percent share.⁸² With the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, the allowances for foreign ownership, investment, and production were further enhanced.

According to the Mexican and U.S. governments, the stated objective of the BIP was to reduce unemployment and stem immigration from México to the United States. That it has proven extremely profitable for multinational firms and for governments as well, while realizing the direct opposite of its employment and immigration goals, reveals an important dimension of global capitalism: the need for high unemployment. Excess in the supply of labor is created through the economic dependency of México on U.S. investments (uneven development) and by the particular employment practices of firms. For instance, one reason why the BIP did not re-employ the displaced workers from the Bracero Program is that firms ended up targeting women for work in the factories, thereby virtually doubling the post-Bracero labor market because prior to the BIP women were either excluded or did not participate in the mainstream labor market.⁸³

Its proponents claimed that NAFTA would help México by ushering international capital investment into the country, thereby invigorating economic growth and stimulating wages for the Mexican worker. The jobs created by the foreign investment generated by NAFTA would leave little reason for Mexican workers

to migrate to the U.S. simply for higher wages.⁸⁴ U.S. corporations and labor would thus both benefit from free trade: the former from enhanced investment opportunities and the latter from the reduced competition from immigrant labor. As Robert Manning and Anita Butera reported in the recent *American Studies* special issue on globalization, however, this assumption has not been realized in the post-NAFTA regime: "The initial six years of NAFTA have been characterized by economic volatility that has reduced real wages and thus reinforced the 'rational' behavior of Mexican workers to seek employment in the stable labor market of the United States."⁸⁵ Manning and Butera accordingly document sharp increases in the number of Mexicans migrating to the U.S. after the enactment of NAFTA.

The conditions for workers in export processing zones like those created by the BIP are proportionately similar to those faced by workers in U.S. cities. In Mexican border industrial cities and other export processing zones like Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the legal or market wage rate is considerably less than a "living wage." In Port-au-Prince, where unemployment runs to 70 percent, a worker will spend her entire daily earnings of \$2.40 on the cost of transportation and food before returning home.⁸⁶ Contrary to popular belief, the cost of living in places like Haiti is not commensurate with the local wage rates, which is 28 cents an hour in Haiti. Seventy percent of what Haiti consumes has to be imported, the consequences of transforming the economy into a "free trade" export processing zone, making food as expensive in Haiti as in the United States.⁸⁷

In Matamoros, México, a typical maquiladora worker will work grueling double shifts of 15 hours a day, earn a daily salary of \$7.43, or 92 cents an hour, and still not be able to make ends meet.⁸⁸ As a result, most women workers must take odd jobs peddling various wares, scavenge for recyclables at the city dump, or sell their bodies. In Juárez, México, wages in the maquiladoras rose by 50 percent from 1995-97, but inflation increased over 100 percent during the same period.⁸⁹ The "loaded" minimum wage there comes to about \$1.36 an hour. "Loaded" includes vouchers for groceries at the supermarket and company-paid contributions to the national health care system.⁹⁰ The employment practices of the plants in Juárez make getting a job there relatively hard, and keeping it for a long period of time even more difficult. Two gendered subdivisions in the labor force exist due to the different hiring practices of electronics plants versus those of textile factories. Electronics workers must have relatively high levels of schooling, be young, single, childless, available for both morning and night shifts, and able to document a minimal period of six months of residence in Juárez.⁹¹ Textile factories, meanwhile, tend to employ workers who do not meet the criteria of the electronics plants, and therefore whose position in the local labor market is very weak. As a result, these women are more susceptible to exploitative conditions and practices. Turnover in the maquiladoras is high because plants shut down or reduce production without notice; or workers will simply be fired for no reason other than to maintain a highly disciplined workforce.

The social dynamics of global commodity production are deeply gendered. Images of the border economy and culture have always been fused with representations of sexual degeneracy, linking geographic with moral marginality. The rise of the representation of Tijuana, for instance, as a gigantic brothel at the service of the United States was made possible by a trajectory of economic and population growth that has gone hand in hand with activities that are stigmatized or prohibited in other places.⁹² Tijuana is degradingly feminized from both central México and the United States as a result of United States men crossing to purchase sex while Mexican men cross to the United States to sell their labor in the fields and cities. This discursive linkage points to how a margin always converges with another margin, which by definition can be penetrated.⁹³ National margins conspire with sex and gender margins, penetrated by economic interests.

For many Mexicans, then, the border symbolizes the vulnerability of openness. This openness is characterized not just by U.S. men in the Mexican bordertown cantinas, but also by the BIP and its overwhelming use of young Mexican female workers. The maquiladoras, representing the commodity exchange relationship of capitalism, come to symbolize prostitution.⁹⁴ Thanks to this coupling, maquila workers have become targets for discursive and physical violence just as they have been targeted by U.S. multinationals for labor exploitation. The female assembly-plant workers are thus violating traditional Mexican cultural norms in at least two ways. First, the maquiladora's hiring practices, and the accompanying lack of viable employment for male workers in the Mexican economy, have compelled thousands of women to break with cultural norms and become the primary wage-earner of their families.

Second, in the patriarchal norm that maintains women should be indifferent to sex, the prostitute who has sex for money, a service she may find unpleasant but necessary, fits more easily into the patriarchal norm for female sexuality than the liberated woman who has sex for pleasure.⁹⁵ Female assembly-plant workers are thus doubly associated with danger. They are disrupting economic and familial gender roles, and they are associated with degenerate sexual looseness. These women have thus been constructed as a primary threat to México's social and moral fabric—a paradoxical representation considering that the Mexican government has bent over backwards to facilitate the profitability of U.S. multinationals operating in the country.

Related to this constellation of representations is the violence against women that typifies much of the borderlands. Sexual violence is an especially overwhelming feature of life in border towns like Juárez and Tijuana. In Juárez, according to government officials, at least 150 girls disappeared in the city during 1995.⁹⁶ At least 20 percent of these girls were maquila workers.⁹⁷ When NAFTA went into effect in 1994, the homicide rate in Juárez skyrocketed to more than 54 deaths for every 100,000 people, five times the rate in Mexico City. This number includes 200 women killed since 1993, many of whom were victims of gruesome sex murders.⁹⁸

The attorney general of Chihuahua, México, stated in 1999 that, "It is impossible not to get wet when you go outside in the rain; it is also impossible for a woman to not get killed when she goes out alone at night."⁹⁹ Esther Chavez Cano, an activist from Juárez, observes that this official discourse states that femicide is bad, but homicide is worse. Many young women still "live" because they have not yet been found on the side of the road or dumped in the desert, but everyday they die because of economic, sexual, and racial violence, claims Cano.¹⁰⁰ She states that as consumers in the global market, these women are a debt that belongs to all of us. It is a debt that is borne with terrible disdain: Juárez produces millions of dollars in value-added goods and yet does not have a single battered women's shelter.¹⁰¹ As a place structurally dedicated to meeting the needs of capitalist production, both the form of discursive violence that Cano is describing and the kind it is geared to dismiss (murder, rape, poverty) are central strategies of the crisis-state. This social violence entails a "fabrication of an entire space-time world—and the insinuation of its logic into the mundane practices of human beings-as-citizen. Thus are subjects subjected to modes of social control that are rendered invisible in their very enactment."¹⁰² The female maquila workers become increasingly disposable precisely as they become integral to the border economy.

The turbulence of the borderlands provides an uncensored view of the violent relations produced by the austerity and globalizing efforts of the crisis-state. The BIP represents the forces shaping the new geographies of globalization. The global economy is rooted in specific spaces and routed through concrete infrastructures. The movement of capital and people across national borders is part of a process of capital reinvestments and worker displacements within and across national spaces. The international boundary both divides national spaces and houses a distinct region. The border is less a line and more accurately a real place in which several incompatible, heterogeneous sites are juxtaposed. This meeting of heterogeneous spaces presupposes a system of opening/closing that both isolates and makes penetrable the physical locations and imagined identities of each side.¹⁰³ The conditions of the political economy in the borderlands leaves many Mexicans with no option but to immigrate, to physically cross the border in search of a more viable life.

The movement of capital and people across borders is constitutive of the construction of race and gender, the racial division of labor, and racially segregated space, globally and locally. Again, as with the previously observed relationship between gentrifiers and the people displaced by gentrification, the connection between U.S. workers and workers in the borderlands requires our attention. The process of globalization must be understood as including both ideological and repressive expressions of the state's apparatus, as both symptomatic and determining of the relations of production. The conditions of global restructuring exploit workers of color abroad and in the deindustrialized United States in ways that intensify the erosion of labor's position vis-a-vis capital and exacer-

bate interracial conflicts. The perception that immigrants are taking jobs from U.S. workers heightens animosities that only end up maintaining the supremacy of whiteness and capital. Documentation is available to support the notion of a direct transfer of jobs from the U.S. labor market to México or other off-shore locations;¹⁰⁴ nevertheless, while the existence of inexpensive foreign labor competition is real indeed, the phenomenon is overstated. The increase in second-rate service sector jobs in the United States has less to do with immigration and global competition than with the release of workers from manufacturing and low rates of productivity growth in the service-sectors.¹⁰⁵ Strikingly, the long-term decline in U.S. wages began in the 1960s, well before any of the global labor markets became factors.¹⁰⁶

If simultaneous employment growth and deterioration in wages and job quality is not directly caused by immigration and off-shore production, then the issue is one of the crisis-state facilitating the reproduction of the relations of capital. Evidence from the borderlands demonstrates how capital accumulation benefits from differentiation. We can also see how the maintenance of white supremacy in the North American context benefits from gender domination. Employment practices in the maquiladoras rely upon the persistence of cultural norms for women even as they disrupt other normative gender roles in the family and the community. The sexualized violence against women also serves to buttress that which it lashes out against: the restructuring of Mexican culture and political economy to accommodate the penetration of U.S. multinationals.

Race, Gender, and Space: Towards an Account of Underdevelopment and Social Violence

This discussion of the crisis-state and globalization leaves us with at least three critical considerations. First, the production of space takes up and reproduces the fluidity and contingency of race and gender hierarchies; second, the relationship between global capital production and social violence compels us to view the exploitation and displacement of workers in U.S. inner cities and in the U.S.-México borderlands as necessary parts of the same equation; and third, the global political economy, as a response to the crisis of capital, relies upon the management of race and gender difference to resolve the related crisis in liberal bourgeois democracy.

To understand race, gender, and space within the global political economy, we must focus on the modalities of identity and commodity *production*, on “the process of making” within a labor market highly fractured along racial lines. The flexible accumulation capacities of the global economy simultaneously emanate from and take up the different expressions of racism and sexism. Racism undergirds narratives about “depressed” neighborhoods and the spatial threat of the inner city, thereby justifying the displacement practices of urban renewal. The gender and generation conflicts occurring in the México borderlands as girls and young women are recruited for maquiladora jobs while their brothers,

husbands, and fathers have to scramble for work parallels the process in U.S. cities where black and Latino youths must compete with their own parents for employment at the same low-wage service jobs. In both places, underemployment and spatial displacement (from home, family, work, neighborhood, country) are mediated through state interventions in the global racial division of labor. Global capitalism has been so lucrative for capital and for the crisis-state in part because of the availability of race and gender hierarchies. Speaking of the fluidity and contingency of these hierarchies means understanding difference as not a fixed essence but as the locus in which economic, gender, sex, and race contradictions converge.

Workers and social spaces are less narrated by citizenship and geo-political boundaries, and more by histories of violence, segregation, immigration, and global economics. We need to consider the national relations of U.S. racial subjects within an international context, while seeing the international history of the borderlands within a national context, and how both redefine each.¹⁰⁷ The interaction between these contexts takes place as relations of dominance and subordination—a “complex unity, structured in dominance.”¹⁰⁸ In this complex structure, things are related as much through their differences as through their similarities. It is in this dialectical interaction that we can see the connection between the local and the global.

Of critical importance for an analysis of globalization is the principle that development always has been uneven, occurring in different societies, cultures, and nations at different rates. Uneven development means that societies meet at different stages of their development. When two societies of different sorts come into contact, the rate and character of change already taking place is seriously affected to the extent that new patterns are created—namely, a relationship of dependency is entered in which the weaker of the two societies (i.e., the one with less economic capacity) is adversely affected and its development is transformed to serve the development of the stronger society. Underdevelopment is therefore not the absence of development, but rather only makes sense in dialectical relation to development.

In addition to the comparative idea of underdevelopment, an even more indispensable component of this concept is that it points to a particular relationship of exploitation.¹⁰⁹ All of the “developed” nations directly or indirectly exploit the countries of the “underdeveloped” world. As the Guyanese scholar-activist Walter Rodney explains: “In a way, underdevelopment is a paradox: Many parts of the world that are naturally rich are actually poor and parts that are not so well off in wealth of soil and sub-soil are enjoying the highest standards of living.”¹¹⁰ The reasons for underdevelopment thus lie not *within* a society but in the relations *between* societies: unequal trade, direct ownership of the means of production by external entities, and foreign investment in the form of loans and “aid” to the governments of underdeveloped nations maintain relations of dominance and subordination. It is typical of underdeveloped economies

that they do not (or are not allowed to) concentrate on those sectors of the economy that in turn will generate growth and raise production to a new level altogether. In other words, while a country may increase its exports, thereby quantitatively raising its level of production, underdevelopment persists because the relations of exploitation hamper qualitative improvements in the different levels of the society. This situation includes the “brain drain” from Africa, Asia, Latin America, on the one (global) hand, and from the inner cities on the other (local) hand; it includes the absence of the educational, welfare, and distributional systems necessary to raise productive, qualified personnel (either in Africa, central México, or in South Central Los Angeles, for example); and it includes the tendency for whatever savings that are made within the underdeveloped economy to be mainly consumed or sent abroad (and often these two things are one-and-the-same given the extensive foreign investment in local consumer markets).

By the same token, the standard of living of the developed capitalist countries owes not to its own internal resources, but rather to their exploitative practices with other nations. Dependency is thus established inversely proportional to a nation’s natural resources. This dialectical interaction describes not only the underdevelopment of the so-called Third World in relation to the developed capitalist societies, but it also governs the relationship between inner cities and suburbs and between the central cities and borderlands. Gentrification and border industrialization demonstrate this process. Suburbanization is constitutive of inner-city decline in a wider pattern of uneven development at the urban scale. Neil Smith explains the dialectics of this level of development:

The investment of capital in the central and inner city caused a physical and economic barrier to further investment in that space. The movement of capital into suburban development led to a systematic devalorization of inner- and central-city capital, and this in turn, with the development of the rent gap, led to the creation of new investment opportunities in the inner city precisely because an effective barrier to a new investment had previously operated there.¹¹¹

Smith is describing how the development of the suburbs was simultaneously the economic abandonment of the inner city, and how gentrification, as mentioned earlier, is a geographic reversal but an economic continuation of suburbanization. Furthermore, Smith draws our attention to how both the underdevelopment of the inner city and its later re-development through gentrification is spurred by falling profit rates. Gentrification is thus simultaneous to the sectoral shifts in capital investment that respond to the crises intrinsic to capitalist economic systems. For this reason, revitalizing cities is seen as integral to the overall revitalization of the economy. Since 1980, therefore, the governments of the United

States, United Kingdom, and most other advanced capitalist economies, have applied the same strategies to urban spaces as in other areas of the economy: state involvement in housing investment has been effectively withdrawn, creating a new climate of privatization in which gentrification has flourished.¹¹²

Through the lens of underdevelopment we can see how the organization and collective plunder of capitalism is simultaneously local and global. The economic relations of production must be reproduced, however, and this reproduction is never simply economic, but also is social, technical, and political. The economic may be the necessary but not the sufficient condition of any racially structured society.¹¹³ Capitalist social relations require elaborate development at the non-economic levels of politics, civil society, and culture. Racism, gender oppression, and spatial segregation are “practices which secure the hegemony of a dominant group over a series of subordinate ones, in such a way as to dominate the whole social formation in a form favorable to the long-term development of the economic productive base.”¹¹⁴ In understanding how gentrification is an example of global restructuring touching down in local communities, we have to analyze the dialectical intercourse between and among relations that do not correspond but are over-determining on and for one another.

I have suggested in this article that the crisis-state offers a productive framework for understanding these articulations and their production of political subjects structured in dominance, both in the inner cities and the borderlands. The profit crisis and the crisis of liberal democracy posed by race and gender inequality spurred the reconstitution of the capitalist state. The profitability problems of capital have led to a long corporate assault on labor, and managerial and government aggressions have contributed to the decline in real wages, job quality, and job security since the mid-1970s.¹¹⁵ The situation faced by labor prevails across international boundaries and points to the essential marker of the crisis-state: the multi-faceted strategy to subordinate labor to resuscitate the profit rate. The list of strategies employed by the crisis-state include the weakening of labor protections and assets, the removal of social subsidies to the poor, lower taxes on the rich, selling off state companies and assets, deregulation of financial markets, re-regulation of intellectual property rights, reductions of tariffs and quotas on international trade, relaxation of child labor laws, downsizing and the emphasis on contingent work, the redirection of social resources from services such as education to policing, border patrol, and incarceration, and a variety of corporate subversions of workers’ ability to organize and engage in collective bargaining.¹¹⁶ The downward pressure on wages is a product of capital’s failure to reconcile its own contradictions; the deteriorating and increasingly violent conditions, which workers in U.S. cities and in the borderlands share in common, are thus the results of the crisis-state’s efforts to resolve these contradictions. The conditions of possibility for capital accumulation in both central cities and the borderlands also occupy the same ideological

seam: open the market and get rid of the artificial barriers and subsidies—in other words, eliminate welfare support and trade tariffs, erode working conditions and undermine labor unions—and both workers and corporations will prosper.¹¹⁷

An equally important component of the state's strategy is to harness race and gender difference to revitalize the profit rate. As we have seen, racialized workers inhabit the contradictions of liberalism's imagined universality, making race and gender into sites of contradiction between political emancipation and economic exploitation. The crisis-state attempts to recuperate the mobilizing power of race and gender difference that so threatens the liberal project. The deep divisions produced by racial and sexual exclusions are reduced to the issue of diversity in order to mystify social reality and distract from an actual engagement with problems of discrimination, inequality, and social justice.¹¹⁸ The crisis-state's use of diversity in this way actually creates homogeneity within each culture or ethnicity, fostering a community of separate homogeneous units. This homogenized notion of community presents difficult problems when it comes to questions of representation, authenticity, and other matters of import when attempting to organize a collective voice of resistance.¹¹⁹

The recuperation of difference operates by employing the language of multiculturalism

to create strategies of “coping with differences” rather than taking steps toward a radical deepening of democracy. A recuperative multiculturalism dissimulates the reality of economic inequality, political and institutional discrimination, and cultural exclusion, which cuts across the basic social divisions of gender, “race,” and class. The key discursive tactic is to denature and reduce exploitation, oppression, and domination to “respect for differences.” She does Hanukkah, he does Kwanzaa; I like sushi, you like pizza. Create “diversity” and then homogenize it.¹²⁰

Globalization takes up this version of difference to further cover for the extension of inequality caused by economic restructuring. The result is that the spaces of globalization are not freely accessible like a public place.¹²¹ The rhetoric of liberalizing borders and freeing markets, suggesting a system of pure and simple openings, is a grand illusion. The new social formation created by the crisis-state in fact hides serious exclusions. The old divisions are now simply reformulated in ever tighter circuits of segregation: industry returns to the inner city only to constrain residents to low-wage service positions; it comes to the borderlands only to offer a standard of living unrecognizable in industrialized societies.

Conclusion / A Question Forward

We are left with the following problem: precisely what role does “place” have within an internationalist politics geared to resist the violence of the global political economic project? Understanding globalization through the connections surrounding the crisis-state suggests that the “place” of community is but a mere “site” where the circuits of living—much larger and intricate than their manifestation at that location—intersect.¹²² Our notions of identity, affiliation, authenticity, and authority are each challenged by this perspective. If place is but a momentary location within larger spatial circuits of power which are simultaneously national *and* transnational, then are we saying that the place of one’s home and community is unimportant as a site of political struggle and mobilization? If space is rifled through with such instability and incoherency, is it a viable location of politics? Claims of spatial authenticity are often silenced as soon as they are voiced for precisely these concerns, because “geographical traces may play to the audience as the stigmata of relativism.”¹²³ Similarly, as is true about any static notion of racial belonging, spaces cannot restore coherency to a fragmented identity, “center the decentered subject,” precisely because they are “sites of struggle which themselves are decentered, rendering the sort of identity formation that they engender always contingent.”¹²⁴ In other words, neither a space nor a race has a core essence to it, a measurably true and authentic politics; rather, the politics of space and race must always be constructed in each context. Therefore, a “return to place” as the basis for social movement says little about the political content of that movement. The formation of capitalist production is also contingent to the space of its organization.

The answers to these questions may in fact be rather simple: no, home is not unimportant; and, yes, the local is a viable space for resistance. The difficulty, of course, lies in the *how to*. We would do well to work more on conceiving a spatial politics that understands location as multi-focal and inherently connected to but not reducible to direction, history, and identity. Such a politics would aim for clarity among competing claims to place by the uneven sensations of commodity flows and personal and collective agency.¹²⁵ It also would make inroads against globalization’s tendency to reinforce geo-political, racial, and sexual borders.

Notes

I have been fortunate to benefit from conversations on these issues with Cindy Bejarano, David Goldberg, Thelma Foote, and George Lipsitz. I am also grateful to the editors of *American Studies*, Cheryl Ragar, and the anonymous reviewers, for criticisms that were instrumental in improving this piece. A portion of this research comes from work with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (NYC) and AIDS Housing of Washington.

1. See Toni Negri, *Revolution Retrieved: Writings on Marx, Keynes, Capitalist Crisis and New Social Subjects* (London: Red Notes, 1988). For additional work using the crisis-state as point of departure, see Ruth Wilson Gilmore, “Globalisation and U.S. Prison Growth: From Military Keynesianism to Post-Keynesian Militarism,” *Race & Class* 40 (October-March 1998/99): 171-188; and Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 1999).

2. The notion of "social violence" warrants more extensive deliberation than I have space for here. I can only briefly highlight the relevant components, including "the state," "force," and "justice." Jacques Derrida probes the difference between, on the one hand, force that can be just, or deemed legitimate, and on the other hand, the violence that one always deems unjust. Since, following Max Weber, the state claims a monopoly on force, I am interested in understanding social violence as justified authority, as an instance of both violence and legitimated power. By calling attention to the poverty, exploitation, and death produced by justified authority, the state and its superstructural components come into question. Derrida argues that we cannot address *directly* the problem of justice that the question of social violence always presupposes; justice is the always receding horizon. And yet grappling head-on with violence in its various incarnations is essential because the necessity of force is implied in "justice." As Derrida explains, justice is not justice, it is not achieved if it does not have the force to be "enforced"; a powerless justice is not justice. The account of "social violence" in this article takes up this implicit relationship, but a more complete treatment of the issue needs to contend with the origins of authority, to face the realization that, as Derrida states, the foundation or ground of the law cannot by definition rest on anything but itself, it is itself a violence without ground. See Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority'," in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. Drucilla Cornell et al. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3-67.

3. My focus in this paper is on selective forms of social violence produced by globalization. An important and constitutive form of violence in globalization that I will not be able to deal with here due to space limitations is that presented by the state's repressive forces, namely the police, military, and prisons. It should not go unobserved, however, that the coercive apparatus of the state is central to its political strategy of resolving the crises of capital and difference. In fact, the pervasive influence of the prison industry on all aspects of social, cultural, political, and economic life demands analysis of globalization through the state's various modes of containment and surveillance.

4. John L. Comaroff, "Reflections on the Colonial State, in South Africa and Elsewhere: Factions, Fragments, Facts, and Fictions," *Social Identities* 4 (October 1998): 6.

5. Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: NLB, 1978), 12.

6. *Ibid.*, 13.

7. *Ibid.*, 14.

8. David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), 4.

9. Etienne Balibar, *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 58.

10. Norma Alarcón, Caren Kaplan, and Minoo Moallem, "Introduction: Between Woman and Nation," in *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*, ed. Caplan, Alarcón, and Moallem, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 2.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Gilmore, "Globalisation and U.S. Prison Growth," 176.

13. Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996), 77.

14. Kitty Calavita, "The New Politics of Immigration: 'Balanced-Budget Conservatism' and the Symbolism of Proposition 187," *Social Problems* 43 (August 1996): 293.

15. Gilmore, "Globalisation and U.S. Prison Growth," 177.

16. *Ibid.*, 177.

17. *Ibid.*, 178.

18. Negri, *Revolution Retrieved*, 185.

19. *Ibid.*, 185.

20. Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 206.

21. During the ten-year period from 1984 to 1994, the state of California increased its Department of Corrections personnel by 25,864 and built sixteen new prisons at a cost exceeding \$10 billion, while higher education personnel dropped by 8,052 and the state built only one new campus of the California State University system and none for the University of California. Sociologist Troy Duster observes that for the cost of imprisoning one person for one year, California could educate ten community college students, or five California State University students, or two University of California students. Duster notes that it was Victor Hugo who nearly 145 years ago said that every time we build a prison, we close a school. See Duster, "The New Crisis of Legitimacy in Controls, Prisons, and Legal Structures," *The American Sociologist* 26 (Spring 1995): 20-29. On the parasitic relationship between prisons and social welfare see (among many others), Paula L. Dressel, "... and We Keep on Building Prisons: Racism, Poverty, and Challenges to the Welfare State," *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 21 (September 1994): 7-29. And on the prison and policing industrial complex, see among others, Alexander C. Lichtenstein and Michael A. Kroll, *The Fortress Economy: The Economic Role of the U.S. Prison System* (Philadelphia:

American Friends Service Committee, 1990), Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (London: Verso, 1999), and Eric Schlosser, "The Prison-Industrial Complex," *The Atlantic Monthly* 282 (December 1998).

22. Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 112.

23. Bureau of Labor Statistics news release, August 9, 2000. U.S. Department of Labor website: <http://stats.bls.gov/newsrels.htm>.

24. Calavita, "The New Politics of Immigration," 293.

25. Rhonda A. Williams, "Accumulation as Evisceration: Urban Rebellion and the New Growth Dynamics," in *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising*, ed. Robert Gooding-Williams, (New York: Routledge, 1993), 91.

26. See, for example, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Now is the Time: Places Left Behind in the New Economy* (Washington, D.C.: HUD, 1999).

27. Joel F. Handler, "Low-Wage Work 'As We Know It': What's Wrong/What Can Be Done," in *Hard Labor: Women and Work in the Post-Welfare Era*, ed. Handler and Lucie White, (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 3.

28. Handler, "Low-Wage Work," 3.

29. John E. Schwarz and Thomas J. Volgy, *Forgotten Americans: 30 Million Working Poor in the Land of Opportunity* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), 70.

30. U.S. Census Bureau Statistics. Website: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/p.60-214.pdf>.

31. Williams, "Accumulation as Evisceration," 84; Handler, "Low-Wage Work," 4.

32. *Ibid.*, 84.

33. Handler, "Low-Wage Work," 4.

34. U.S. Census Bureau. Website: <http://www.gov/prod/2001pubs/p.60-214.pdf>.

35. National Low Income Housing Coalition, *Out of Reach: The Gap Between Housing Costs and Income of Poor People in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: NLIHC, 1999), 5; Handler, 4.

36. Richard A. Walker, "Putting Capital in its Place: Globalization and the Prospects for Labor," working paper, Department of Geography, University of California at Berkeley, March 1, 1999, http://geography.berkeley.edu/Publications/Global%20labor_2_5.html.

37. National Priorities Project and Jobs with Justice. *Working Hard, Earning Less: The Future of Job Growth in America* (NPP: Northampton, Mass., 1998), n.p. The official poverty line in 1998 for a family of three was \$12,750; for a family of four, the poverty line was \$16,813. See <http://www.census.gov/hhes/ww/w/poverty.html> for details.

38. National Coalition for the Homeless, "Why Are People Homeless?" <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>.

39. Doug Henwood, "Clinton and the Austerity Cops," *The Nation* (November 23, 1992), 628; cited in Philip T. Neisser and Sanford F. Schram, "Redoubling Denial: Industrial Welfare Policy Meets Postindustrial Poverty," *Social Text* 41 (Winter 1994): 44.

40. Mishel, L., Bernstein, J., and Schmitt, J., *The State of Working America: 1998-99* (Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute, 1999), n.p.

41. The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines contingent workers as "persons who do not expect their jobs to last or who report that their jobs are temporary. . . . Contingent workers are those who do not have an implicit or explicit contract for ongoing employment. Persons who do not expect to continue in their jobs for personal reasons, such as retirement or returning to school, are not considered contingent workers, provided that they would have the option of continuing in the job were it not for these personal reasons." See "Contingent and Alternative Employment Arrangements, February 2001," Bureau of Labor Statistics. <http://www.bls.gov/cps/home.htm>.

42. Handler and Hasenfeld, *We the Poor People*, 42.

43. Stanley Aronowitz, *The Politics of Identity: Class, Culture, Social Movements* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 239.

44. Goldberg, "Surplus Value," 211.

45. Mark Greenberg, "Welfare Restructuring and Working-Poor Family Policy: The New Context," in *Hard Labor*, 35; S. Parrott, *Welfare Recipients Who Find Jobs: What Do We Know About Their Employment and Earnings?* (Washington, D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, November 1998).

46. Robert J. Antonio and Alessandro Bonanno, "A New Global Capitalism? From 'Americanism and Fordism' to 'Americanization-Globalization,'" *American Studies* 41 (Summer/Fall 2000), 38.

47. Goldberg, *Racist Culture*, 9.

48. George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 49.

49. Norplant was originally developed by the Population Council, a nonprofit organization that promotes family planning in the Third World, and is now distributed in the United States by the pharmaceutical giant Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories. The drug's history is located at the intersec-

tion of racial and reproductive politics. Norplant users document serious and debilitating side-effects; removing it can be as dangerous as having it in place; and the coercion that has marked its distribution to poor black women in particular makes its relative permanence a seriously problematic instance of domestic racial population control. See Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Vintage, 1997).

50. *Ibid.*, 244.

51. Lawrence A. Herzog, *Where North Meets South: Cities, Space, and Politics on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin: Center for Mexican-American Studies, 1990), 83.

52. Goldberg, "Surplus Value," 209.

53. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2000, Racial Statistics Branch. Website: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/race/black/ppl-142/tab21.txt>.

54. Goldberg, "Surplus Value," 210.

55. Herzog, *Where North Meets South*, 82-83.

56. People such as Neil Smith have made this point about frontier ideology shaping state action in urban areas more thoroughly and incisively. See Smith, "New City, New Frontier: The Lower East Side as Wild, Wild West," in *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill & Wang, 1992), 61-93. The work of Richard Slotkin is also rich regarding the role of frontier mythology in United States cultural history. See, for example, Slotkin, *Fatal Environment* (New York: Atheneum, 1985).

57. Mike Davis, "The Infinite Game: Redeveloping Downtown L.A.," in *Out of Site: A Social Criticism of Architecture*, ed. Diane Ghirardo (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 77.

58. Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 101.

59. Smith, "New City, New Frontier," 83.

60. Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, 5.

61. *Ibid.*, 7.

62. Smith, *New Urban Frontier*, 15.

63. Smith, "New City, New Frontier," 87.

64. *Ibid.*, 89.

65. *Ibid.* Smith notes that part of the government's response to the social fallout from the restructuring of urban space was to stop collecting this kind of data.

66. Sheila Crowley, "The Affordable Housing Crisis," *Poverty & Race* (Poverty & Race Research Action Council) 11 (Jan/Feb 2002): 25.

67. National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), *Out of Reach 2001: America's Growing Wage-Rent Disparity*, n.p. Website: <http://www.nlihc.org/oor2001>.

68. National Coalition for the Homeless, "Why Are People Homeless?" NCH Fact Sheet #1, May 1998.

69. NLIHC, *Out of Reach*, 7.

70. National Coalition for the Homeless, "Why Are People Homeless?" See U.S. Conference of Mayors, *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: 1998*.

71. Damaris Rose, "Rethinking Gentrification: Beyond the Uneven Development of Marxist Urban Theory," *Environment and Planning. D. Society and Space* 1 (1984): 50, 56.

72. Bob Jessop, *State Theory: Putting Capitalist States in their Place* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State Press, 1990), 196.

73. Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (New York: Cambridge, 1983).

74. Rosalyn Deutsche, "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City," in *Out of Site*, 200.

75. Robert A. Beauregard, *Voices of Decline: The Postwar Fate of U.S. Cities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 323.

76. Richard T. Ford, "The Boundaries of Race: Political Geography in Legal Analysis," in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, ed. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, (New York: New Press, 1995), 451.

77. María Patricia Fernández-Kelly, *For We Are Sold, I and My People: Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983), 26.

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80. Susan Tiano, *Patriarchy on the Line: Labor, Gender, and Ideology in the Mexican Maquila Industry* (Philadelphia: Temple, 1994), 27.

81. Fernández-Kelly, *For We Are Sold*, 27.

82. *Ibid.*, 32.

83. *Ibid.*, 45.

84. Robert D. Manning and Anita Christina Butera, "Global Restructuring and U.S.-Mexican Economic Integration: Rhetoric and Reality of Mexican Immigration Five Years After NAFTA," *American Studies* 41 (Summer/Fall 2000): 200.

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86. Kitty Krupat, "From War Zone to Free Trade Zone," in *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers*, ed. Andrew Ross, (New York: Verso, 1997), 63.
87. National Labor Committee, "An Appeal to Walt Disney," in *No Sweat*, 98. Workers in Haiti make products for the Disney Corporation. One worker will handle 375 Pocahontas shirts an hour, which will be sold at Wal-Mart for \$10.97 each, and at the end of the week, her weekly wage will have totaled only \$10.77.
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90. Debbie Nathan, "Work, Sex, and Danger in Ciudad Juarez," *NACLA: Report on the Americas* 33 (November/December 1999), 25.
91. Fernández-Kelly, *For We Are Sold*, 105.
92. Debra A. Castillo, Maria Gudelia Rangel Gomez, and Bonnie Delgado, "Border Lives: Prostitute Women in Tijuana," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24 (Winter 1999): 398.
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96. Bowden, *Juárez*, 76.
97. Burials on the Border/Sepultadas en la Frontera: A Bilingual Conference on Women and Violence at the Millenium, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, N.M., October 1, 1999.
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100. Esther Chavez Cano, "Women and Violence," at Burials on the Border/Sepultadas en la Frontera, October 1, 1999.
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114. *Ibid.*, 53.
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