Visualizing Zones of Occupation: Making Tangible the Violent Infrastructures in the Global Economy of Fear.

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Art, Art History & Visual Studies of Duke University

2017
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

In our capitalist world-economy, fear has become the primary source material for wealth production. Fear underwrites regimes of limited access and various systems of occupation. Occupation as a strategic operational paradigm extends into civilian life of the dark and unresolved colonial, imperial and totalitarian legacies. The domestic and international exclusion of certain populations is grounded in age-old, mostly violent self/other distinctions that have been re-activated from their latent state and again made into viral political discourse material. An array of complex infrastructures, which include legal architectures and the built environment, have acquired operational importance. Such infrastructures are characterized by a built-in violence designed to control, contain, and redirect the massive population flows created by the globally destabilizing and denaturalizing affects of contemporary capital. Access to opportunity, vital resources, and security have become the crucial equity that populations compete for in the early 21st century. The very nature of capital has been transformed into actual economies of fear. Whereas parts of the world’s population will have the chance to live a dignified life, other parts will be indefinitely deprived of such fortunes and left to perish. The end result of such economies is the death-world.

The analysis proposed by this dissertation blurs the disciplinary boundaries between art, cultural anthropology, sociology, military history, economics, political
science, psychology, architecture, urban studies, philosophy. This transdisciplinary methodology originates from the understanding that an effective critique of global capital as the dominant economic world-system can no longer be explained via a single knowledge field or academic specialty. Moving a step beyond interdisciplinary studies to bona fide informational crossovers between textual and visual archives allows for a more encompassing and thick investigation. The multi-sited approach of this study examines the visual traces found in the built environment and the controversial social realities expressed in current global geopolitics. The resulting synthesis between theory and practice offers new pathways for citizen participation and for potential solutions to collective grievances and global risks. This transdisciplinary approach gives art a leading role in establishing a new sense of place in which people are empowered to articulate their ideas—a new place built from a rehabilitated understanding of trust in self, trust in collective institutions, and trust in reality and truth. Above all, this new place holds the promise of a future worth living and fighting for.
Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife and our beautiful children. I could have never completed this journey without your unwavering support and patience.
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Introduction

For his spectacular untitled artwork (Figure 1), Greek Arte Povera artist, Jannis Kounellis suspended around a dozen quartered sides of beef from large iron plates attached to the walls of Barcelona’s Espai Poblenou (Moure, G., & Espai Poblenou, 2003). Artistic depictions of animal meat or the ritualized sacrifice of animals and/or humans, including Christ’s crucifixion, are always heavily symbolic and emotive. Kounellis’s work makes references to Spain’s bull fighting ritual, which culminates in the sale of the dead bull as a local food market delicacy, death camps like those under the Nazi regime, the commercialization, passive consumption and aestheticization of the macabre and the violent, and the industrialization of ritual killings, viz. the meat was replaced (for hygienic reasons) every couple of days. The format of the steel panels clearly connects to and questions traditional (modernist) painting, and the location, just next to local fresh produce markets, where butchers cut up large beef and pork halves right in front of clients, epitomizes the concept of necropower (Mbembe, 2003) and represents one of the many death-worlds that has emerged from human social forms, i.e. industrial production of agriculture and live-stock, epitomized by industrial-scale mass slaughter (Pachirat, 2011).

* * *
The various sites that are visited throughout this dissertation will be analyzed from a cross-disciplinary perspective. Artworks by the author and other artists who work in a range of visual, literary or performative genres will be highlighted in order to contextualize, expand and clarify analytical propositions and concepts. As the title suggests, *Visualizing Zones of Occupation: Making Tangible the Violent Infrastructures in the Global Economy of Fear*, this study is framed by several key hypothesis and concepts.

First, the notion of ‘occupation’ functions as an organizing principle for this text. Self-explanatory spatial and temporal meanings are attached to the term occupation; though as an operational or organizational principle, occupation can be ambiguous. For the purposes of this analysis, occupation refers to a series of socio-economic and geopolitical operations that seek to lay claim to certain territories, spaces or temporal horizons, i.e. ‘boxing in’. For instance, a military bunker can be both a fortified structure to protect its occupants (who are therefore safely boxed in) from the outside world and a garrison or watch tower to keep people on the outside from escaping\(^1\). The idea of “expulsions” (Sassen, 2014) speaks to the dimension of shutting out, of exclusion, and limited access that is the noxious underbelly of occupation. Violence, however, is a key accessory to all forms of occupation. Even in occupation’s more inconspicuous and

\(^1\) The ontological distinction between the bunker and the camp as opposing conceptual containers is discussed by Agamben (1998, 2005).
synonymous meaning as professional activity, a degree of external or internal violence is present. There exists a world of difference between Weber’s (1992) understanding of occupation (Beruf) as an ‘inner calling’ (Berufung) that compels people to pursue a certain (professional) activity, and the equivalent English term for occupation in its vernacular meaning as ‘job’. The latter is more of a listless exercise of duty and expectation, at best and a form of necessary misery or serfdom, at worst. Further meanings and implications of the term ‘occupation’ will also be analyzed.

Second, fear as an emotional state and as a socio-economic and geopolitical paradigm will be discussed from a variety of scientific and philosophical perspectives. The importance of fear rests in its primordiality. Fear trumps reason. The Cartesian logic

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2 Foucault’s society of discipline is based on an internalization of existing power relations that leads to a conception of self that is servile and docile. For Foucault (1978) “discipline is the unitary technique by which the body is reduced as a ‘political’ force at the least cost and maximized as useful force (p. 221).

3 Here, serfdom is understood as a form of enforced and exploitative labor relation with paltry remuneration. Chinese sweatshops come to mind but also extractive mining work in which the transaction of remuneration depends on results—commission-based as it were. Modern forms of serfdom may vary greatly from the older, plantation-style, or Nazi slave labor factories. To ‘slave away’ as a vernacular expression cheapens the historic legacy of slavery, but serves to illustrate how burdensome much of today’s unskilled, petty jobs truly are. The knowledge of living in a modern world and still have to be doing dehumanizing jobs is often felt as life-long suffrage, from which death alone can liberate (Cederström & Fleming, 2012). The godfather of neoliberalism, F.A. Hayek (1994), saw the path to serfdom not in unskilled labor markets, but rather in excessive government intervention into private business enterprise. Praising individualism and liberalism over any other social organizational form, he provided the ideological basis for neoliberalism, which ironically leads to the un-freedom and serfdom he sought so fervently to avoid.
behind the idea *cogito ergo sum*—I think therefore I am—(Descartes, 1983 [1644]) defines enlightened modernity⁴. A closer look at human history however suggests that emotions, in general and fear, in particular, may well be one of, if not the most important driving force for the emergence of certain social forms⁵, including Durkheim’s (1995) concept of social solidarity⁶. German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2009) rightfully suggests an updated version to Benedict Anderson’s (1991) famous idea of “imagined communities” as the basis for national(ist) identity. Beck proposes an imagined global community of risk (2009) and argues that all humankind is sitting in the same fragile boat⁷. Environmental degradation, nuclear war, pandemics, global economic ruin and

---

⁴ The Frankfurt School was always weary of the ideology of progress detached from an equal progress of intellectual abilities (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002). Technology in the hands of the wrong people can easily become a tool for (self-) destruction. Their conclusions were extracted from the blood stained earth that Europe had become under Hitler, but they are in fact much more relevant for our hyper-mediated and technology suffused 21st century world.

⁵ Thomas Hobbes’s (1651) “social contract” in which the people freely surrender their sovereignty to the ruler (the Leviathan), whose task it is to protect them from violent death is grounded in a fear of death. It is also an attempt to escape the pitfalls of human nature, which is naturally belligerent and violent.

⁶ Durkheim’s (1995) distinction between mechanical and organic law—the former is retributive, the latter restitutive in nature—will be examined in greater detail.

⁷ Ulrich Beck (2009) describes the emergence of an “impure” cosmopolitanism in which the global Other has been absorbed, and “the universal possibility of ‘risk communities’ that spring up establish themselves and become aware of their cosmopolitan composition—‘imagined cosmopolitan communities’ that might come into existence in the awareness that dangers or risks can no longer be socially delimited in space or time” (2011, p. 1346). This is an expansion of David Harvey’s (1990) concept of space-time compression under postmodernism’s global capital, in which formerly distant communities now must learn to imagine themselves as being part of something bigger, more complex and even frightening.
fundamentalist terror affect every living thing. Beck’s proposed model for a
“cosmopolitan community” is based on enlightened reason and sound science, which
dangerously overlooks fear. Indeed, humans are physiologically hardwired to bypass
logic when the going gets tough. This study probes alternative, more sound solutions for
potential forms of new, globally oriented social solidarity but begs the question: can
there be a true global community despite the growing power of locally fostered
communities of fear, which seem to be willing and able to fight until the last man is left
standing? 

Finally, this study examines infrastructure from a number of different angles.
Karl Marx’s historical materialist analyses of capital with its dominant modes of
production and social relations (class struggle, workers’ alienation, commodity
fetishism, etc.), fall short of being able to tackle the pitfalls of the 21st century’s
unprecedented technological and social transformations. Indeed, the logistics and
information highway infrastructure revolutions of the past several decades have

\footnote{German Anthropologist Elis Canetti (1998), in his groundbreaking work 
Crowds and Power (Masse und Macht), conjures the figure of “the survivor” as he who 
towers on a heap of corpses. It is “the survivor” who may well spell doom for humanity, as he does not shy back from total 
annihilation of the Other. Canetti writes, “the satisfaction in survival, which is a kind of pleasure, can become a 
dangerous and insatiable passion. It feeds on its occasions. The larger and more frequent the heaps of dead which a 
survivor confronts, the stronger and more insistent becomes his need for them” (p. 230). The Islamic State comes to mind, but also fascist and other 
fundamentalist groups, who would rather burn down the house than to embrace the Other.}

5
significantly blurred the boundaries of historically entrenched modes production. Today, production is no longer bound to factories that sit on fixed geographical sites. It has become globally distributed and mobile. Bankrolling, producing, distributing, circulating, and consuming commodities has evolved into a fluid process (Baumann, 2000; Levin, 2006; Cowen, 2014; Easterling, 2014; Lynn, 2005; Klose, 2015; Massumi, 1985) that is impossible to pick apart and analyze as isolated components of a capitalistic puzzle. Transformations in the logistics sector have also brought to the fore the fact that the built environment operates as a bridgehead to pry open new markets. How else can the sums spent for new maritime logistics infrastructure, interstate highways, railways, airports, transatlantic and pacific fiber optic networks be explained?

Marshal McLuhan’s (1964) famous dictum, “the medium is the message”, may indeed take the broad-band application of this theoretical concept a bit too far⁹:

infrastructure is clearly much more “medium” than “message” (Easterling, 2014).

Architect Keller Easterling claims that infrastructure actually has grown to be an operational paradigm of the global world economy in conjunction with quality standards and ISO norms. Further, people are modifying their own lifestyles to mimic

---

⁹ In his critical investigation on internet-based social activism, “post-internet” advocate and political theorist, Evgeny Morozov (2013) argues that internet discourse is clouded by and even buried “in obscure and unproductive McLuhansim that seeks to discover some nonexistent inner truths labour each and every medium under the sun” (p. 19).
these new operational paradigms of capital. For instance, the many new forms of personal mobility are literally lifted from transformations in production, circulation, and distribution. Labor has become hyper mobile, and the controlled or unintended scarcity of labor has become a tool for labor coercion. For Marx, the creation of a disposable industrial reserve army is fundamental to capital accumulation. He writes:

if a surplus labouring population is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, this surplus population becomes, conversely, the lever of capitalistic accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production. It forms a disposable industrial reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. Independently of the limits of the actual increase of population, it creates, for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation. (Marx, 1990, p. 784)

The cutthroat competition among this global reserve army of unemployed labor is therefore forced to accept ever lower wages. Hyper mobility as the new organizational principle of productive social relation is furthermore reified in the way modern laborers want to or are forced to live: container living can be either a chic lifestyle choice in rich western democracies or a punishing reality for migrant laborers, refugees, natural disaster survivors or prisoners.

**Boxing in: Enclose and Defend**

Walls, barriers, gates and concertina fences (Brown, 2010; Weizman, 2007; Caldeira, 2000) are the materials used to make infrastructures that box in, keep out, protect, shield, and enclose. Such infrastructure makes the ideologies, political
programs, legal frameworks, economic categories, managerial models, prejudices and even certain historic legacies, which generally elude human attention, concretely visible and (seemingly) permanent. Abstract rather than concrete fears are often the driving force behind efforts to box in or shut out. Clearly, modern military-grade defense infrastructures at borders are not designed to keep out the last remaining bears or wolves, which in pre-history would have been the real-life embodiments of danger. And yet, Europe is facing the very concrete problem of not only shutting out unwelcome refugees and other human migration flows (Figure 2), but also of interrupting the natural pathways of nomadic animals such as the last remaining lynxes, wolves, and bears. As it stands today, humans are being treated like animals and animals like humans: military grade fencing erected to keep out refugees, illegal immigrants, and any other asylum-seekers are instead impeding natural non-human migration flows and decimating non-human animal numbers (Merelli, 2016). This unintended but seemingly obvious consequence underlines the precise problem of human fear as driver for determining how, where and why physical constructions meant to abate such fears should be erected. The physicalization – the reification of categorically illogical, intangible human fears is necessarily bound to do more to enhance said fear via the boxing in/out than the reverse.

In other words, human migration flows are necessarily a much more abstract, ideological threat to local communities (than say, bears or wolves). Just who is the
concrete individual, the group, or the Other that poses this existential threat? The irrational fears behind the answers to such questions—the empty vessel of doubt and uncertainty in an increasingly globalized world—are readily filled by ideologies that promise to limit the variables and provide easy answers. Many treatises have been written on the effects and origins of ‘ideology’. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) analyzes ideology from the perspective of a cultural system. The social strain theory assigns ideology the function of a “symbolic outlet, for emotional disturbances generated by social disequilibrium” (p. 204). Patterned social strain experienced within societies can be willfully channeled to accomplish specific ends, viz. the “cathartic explanation” (p. 205) behind social scapegoating. Moral, advocatory, and solidarity interests are the explanations behind social interest theory, which can manifest themselves in more inclusive social groupings (worker’s unions, advocacy groups, etc.). Lacking, for Geertz, is strain and interest theory’s understanding of “the autonomous process of symbolic formulation” (p. 207). The three dimensional symbolism of ideologies, not their rational, simplistic functionalism is what imbues them with social meaning:

Whatever else ideologies may be—projections of unacknowledged fears, disguises for ulterior motives, phatic expressions of group solidarity—they are, most distinctively, maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience. Whether, in any particular case, the map is accurate or the conscience creditable is a separate question to which one can hardly give the same answer for Nazism and Zionism, for the nationalisms of McCarthy and of Churchill, for the defenders of segregation and its opponents. (Geertz, p. 220)
Indeed, Geertz’s spatial map metaphor for ideology relates to Frederick Jameson’s cognitive mapping (Jameson, 1991) such that ideological barriers are reified via tangible fortifications in the real world and designed to thwart potential threats to the guarded communities within.

The Berlin Wall most certainly managed to control the entry and above all exit of populations, i.e. the bidirectional flows of infiltration or escape. The so-called death-zone (Todeszone) (Figure 3) between the capitalist West and communist East Germany were the site of many a desperate individual’s last breaths just before being caught by the vigilant eyes and bullets of border patrols in the watch towers or on patrol around mined perimeters. But in 1989, once the ideological backdrop of Cold-War politics had been rendered obsolete, the wall lost all of its symbolic power (Geertz, 1973). The wall crumbled rapidly under the euphoric blows of freedoms promised and national unification envisioned. And yet, the ideological walls that had been erected over decades in the minds of the two neighboring nations—formerly one—were not as easily broken down. Even today, 28 years later, the cultural chasm between ‘West’ and the ‘East’

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10 Cold-War East Germany, like many of today’s remaining totalitarian regimes, violently counteracted the exodus of their populations. Border police had the so-called Schießbefehl, which was the order to shoot to kill any trespassers to the death-zone (Todeszone).

11 The military language used to describe defense and fortification infrastructure often falls back on notions of physical destruction and death. Mbembe’s “necropolitics” (2003) displaces the concept on biopolitics. The former administers death (necro) and the later is concerned with the regulation of life (bios). An in-depth discussion will follow.
Germany is deep and wide. The socio-economic and geopolitical realities between former western and eastern military zones of occupation live on, they have become a dark legacy that is difficult to overcome. The East is still labelled culturally backward and incapable of self-sufficiency, as it is largely still dependent on funds from the rich West. Half a century of autocratic rule in the German Democratic Republic (DDR or Ostzone), first under National Socialism and later, Soviet Socialism’s strict state-directed economy and the perpetual surveillance of the Stasi\(^1\), the state secret police and a corrosive system of domestic snitches, Ossis\(^2\), has severely handicapped east Germany’s efforts, both practically and ideologically, to adapt to the modern neoliberal model.

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, Germany’s national unification ‘birth pains’ suggest that the walls between competing ideological worldviews are not easily erased. Instead, ideological infrastructures — old modes of thinking — persist despite fallen physical infrastructures. The violent legacies of war, colonialism and occupation do not miraculously dissipate from one minute to the next; they undergo a transformation that enables them to coexist within the current political moment. An illustrative example for this is the re-vamping, re-branding of Neo-Nazis in

\(^{12}\) Stasi is the acronym for Staatssicherheitsdienst, the Ministry for State Security (compare the U.S. National Security Agency—NSA). See more at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stasi

\(^{13}\) Ossi is a derogatory term for citizens of former East Germany.
Europe. Swastikas tattooed on the forehead are no longer a prerequisite testifying affiliation with fascist ideology. Today, the leaders of ultra-right wing parties wear suits and speak multiple languages fluently. This is best exemplified in Frauke Perty, the head of the right wing German AFD, Alternative for Germany party. She is multilingual and soft spoken; not so her political agenda, which is anti-immigration and reactionary. Moreover, such legacies are embodied in the infrastructure and systemic logic left behind by past states of exceptional rule\textsuperscript{14}. They are also legible in the historic archive, which exists not only as a chronicle or human action (Arendt, 1998), but as a mighty resource for learning from the past. In her groundbreaking study \textit{The Origins of Totalitarianism}, German political philosopher Hannah Arendt (1958) found that Europe’s colonial legacies causally related to the ensuing totalitarianisms, Nazism and Fascism. For Arendt, the understanding of the past means “examining and bearing consciously the burden which our century has placed on us—neither denying its existence nor submitting meekly to its weight” (Arendt, 1958, p. viii), a notion that guides the underlying purpose of this study. That is, the observations and analyses presented herein seek to deepen our awareness of the historic legacies that cast their somber shadow onto the present and future of humankind.

\textsuperscript{14} Agamben (2005) argues that “The State of Exception” has become paradigmatic in our post-9/11 world and the suspension of legal frameworks under the U.S. Patriot Act.
Defining Occupation, Colonialism, and Imperialism

For reasons of analytical clarity, a sharp conceptual distinction between the terms occupation, colonization and imperialism needs to be made. By definition, all three terms refer to a prolonged process of laying claim to or taking possession of a foreign space or territory. All three terms also rely on violence to establish and defend these newly acquired spaces or territories. The product of colonization, the colony, is “a particular type of socio-political organization, and ‘colonialism’ is a system of domination” (Osterhammel, 1997, p. 4). In contrast, the occupation of a territory does not automatically imply the taking over of administrative institutions or organizational infrastructure. Occupation implies a vested interest in extracting benefits (i.e. socio-economic and political influence, natural resources, cheap labor, etc.) while simultaneously refusing to provide benefits in exchange. In this way, occupation resembles Marx’s idea of exploitation.

However, occupation, colonialism and imperialism differ according to the degree to which domination and modernization ideology is exercised. In contrast to...

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15 Any discussion of colonialism that leaves out its fundamental grounding in constructed racial hierarchies, alleged cultural superiority and distinctions along the lines of the civilized Us versus barbarian Other will forever remain incomplete. “The white man’s burden” (Osterhammel, 1997, p. 16) was considered to be the privileged mission of the superior Europeans to offer “salvation”
colonialism and imperialism, which can overlap and easily become isomorphic, e.g. the British Empire and the British East India Company (Stern, 2011), occupation tends to be a liminal, porous, and both temporally and spatially limited form of domination. Furthermore, occupation is more readily resisted than a wholesale imperial or colonial takeover. The occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel’s largely illegal settlements (Figure 4), “Israel’s architecture of occupation” (Weizman, 2012), is an instance for active contestation and liminality16. Colonialism, by contrast, generally implies an enduring, systematic “domination of people of another culture” (Osterhammel, 1997, p.15). Arendt identifies new tools for managing colonial: “[t]wo new devices for political organization and rule over foreign peoples were discovered during the first decades of imperialism. One was race as a principle of the body politic, and the other bureaucracy as a principle of foreign domination” (Arendt, 1950, p. 185). Occupation then is certainly the most versatile term of the three, as it can refer to many kinds of conditions, states, actions or relationships that are not exclusively related to spatial domination. In instances in which “colonization” is populistically used to refer to interpersonal “manipulation, usurpation, 

16 In his groundbreaking analysis of Israel’s multifarious, violent strategies to occupy Palestine, Weizman examines architectural counter-strategies such as tunnel systems built underneath security perimeters and fortification infrastructure. The similarity to the Gin Drinkers Line in Hong Kong comes to mind.
and illegitimate appropriation”, the so-called “negative assessment of everything related to colonialism” (Osterhammel, 1997, p. 3) is thereby also purposely evoked. Occupation, by contrast, is not limited to such negative\textsuperscript{17} connotations.

It therefore stands to reason that for the purposes of attempting to present an encompassing discussion, the term occupation is not only less loaded but also far more scalable and concrete. Spatially, “occupation” can refer to smaller, more confined and tangible areas, like a single building, i.e. squatting or even, somewhat non-specific public places, i.e. the Occupy protest movement, which happened in various locales across the globe, rather than the indefinite stretches of territory, nations or even continents generally suggested by colonialism or imperialism. The notion of military occupation may well be an operational and strategic starting point for many colonial and imperial projects, but for this investigation, the term occupation will be allowed to unfold all of its contextual and non-spatial meanings.

In its predominantly spatial reading, occupation as concept, paradigm and practice is inspired by the post-Second World War socio-economic and geopolitical restructuring of Germany and Europe. Derived from this historical moment, the notion

\textsuperscript{17} For instance, the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel is an example of negative connotation; occupation in the sense of an academic faculty tenure is not. The Occupy movement sought to invert any negative associations with the term occupation by making it the operative slogan of their protest movement against finance capital.
of Zones of Occupation\textsuperscript{18} (Besatzungszone) will be applied to describe paradigmatic shifts in global social relationships under late capital\textsuperscript{19}. The legacies of European colonialism and imperialism play a decisive role\textsuperscript{20}. This study focuses on the violence embedded within global infrastructure as having been profoundly shaped by warped racial, religious and socio-economic and geopolitical prejudices, many of which originated in century-long colonial and imperial atrocities and have been then carried through to the present.

The Portuguese were the first of many European colonial forces to project their mercantile and military power onto the coastlines of the Indian Ocean. These early explorers\textsuperscript{21} effectively used shock and awe\textsuperscript{22} to subdue their colonized subjects. Instilling fear of retaliation was part and parcel of gunship diplomacy of the early 14\textsuperscript{th} century as

\textsuperscript{18} After its capitulation to the advancing Allied Forces, Nazi Germany was split up into four Zones of Occupation, each one administered by an Allied Forces member.

\textsuperscript{19} Frederick Jameson’s (1991) term for the contemporary stage capitalism. Many other descriptors have been used by other scholars to somehow better circumscribe the deeper properties of capital. i.e. information, cognitive, knowledge capital. More important than inventing new, more narrow catch-phrase designations is thoroughly understanding the global reach of contemporary capital.

\textsuperscript{20} Due to the complexity and vastness of the existing archive, a deep causal analysis exceeds the scope of this study.

\textsuperscript{21} An entire epoch—The Vasco Da Gamma epoch—spanning centuries, was named after the very first of such explorers, the Portuguese, Vasco da Gamma (Panikkar,1959; Cliff, 2011).

\textsuperscript{22} A modern term for a military strategy with long history. Shock and Awe—the rapid dominance doctrine—was developed by U.S. Department of Defense and implemented during the first Iraq War. It was meant to overwhelm, demoralize and disarm the enemy with a maximum display of military might, technological superiority and sophistication. Nazi Germany called it Blitzkrieg.
it still is today. In the 21st century, the U.S. Navy (Friedman, 2009, 2010) with its 12 nuclear-powered aircraft carriers can project the full force of U.S. high-tech war machinery to any location in the world within a week. The Roman idea of military garrisoning in the age of aircraft carriers has become truly flexible and mobile. Nowadays, subtler forces are used to underplay the inherent threat of overwhelming military force by recasting both the potential and actual use of such force as benevolent and utilitarian. The U.S. imperialism of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, which filled the void left by the collapsing British Empire after the Second World War is a recurring theme of this investigation. What is already plainly clear is that what the U.S. Empire does or refuses to do under the banner of development, modernization, and free market ideology will unequivocally shape the future.

**History and Subjectivity**

The tireless self-destruction of enlightenment hypocritically celebrated by implacable fascists and implemented by pliable experts in humanity compels thought to forbid itself its last remaining innocence regarding the habits and tendencies of the Zeitgeist. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002)

How history is narrated depends on unique perspectives and the underlying intentions. Haitian anthropologist, Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) and Martiniquais-French post-colonial theorist and revolutionary, Franz Fanon (1961) would agree that history is written by the victors and that the histories of the occupied, colonized, oppressed, enslaved and defeated are mostly forgotten—deliberately effaced and
falsified (Trouillot, 1995; Fanon, 1961; Wolf, 2010). This immutable shortcoming of history points to a larger epistemological issue: even in the empirically based hard sciences (Haraway, 1991, Latour, 2002), there exists no such thing as an objective truth or a universally valid perception or interpretation of reality. According to French philosopher Michel Foucault, knowledge and therefore, the production of truth, by which he means certain types, formats and categories of truth (Foucault, 1978, 1990), necessarily serve the goals of and reproduce existing power structures. Foucault’s main interest rests in establishing a working genealogy of knowledge and theorizing about the power structures that can be built and extracted from the classification and categorization of all living things\(^2\). It goes without saying that knowledge for Foucault (1978) is fundamentally subjective. Indeed, if knowledge is subservient and docile to power and that subservience and docility are both the means and the end, then the categorical exclusion of objectivity is perfectly logical. Truth, reason, objective reality

\[^2\] Much attention has been paid to Foucault’s preoccupation with biopolitics and biopower. This is not surprising in an age that has been labeled by some hard scientists as its very own geological age: the Anthropocene. Climate change, the acidification of oceans, etc. and concerns about the viability of the human species in this precariously fragile world make a lot of sense. However, the framework fleshed out in this study re-envisions the administration of life in terms of Mbembe’s “necropolitics” and “necropower” (Mbembe, 2003), which presents itself as the timelier philosophical angle from which to conceptualize the potentially extinction-level threats to the human species. The world has become a stage for absolute power (Sofksy, 1997) to enact itself by determining who is deemed unfit to live and condemned to die, thereby creating death-world.
and knowledge are thus mere iterations of subjective experience—individual perceptions of the world that are at base, simple means to an end.

Applied to the practices of daily life, the dilemma of theory’s apparent lack of empirical objectivity combined with history’s inherent subjectivity becomes all the more problematic. Indeed, contemporary politics, economics and mundane administrative bodies such as urban planning, regularly demonstrate their lack of reasonable historic, scientific or moral perspective. The recent resurgence of populist, right-wing demagoguery has made plainly visible the level of denial immanent in modernity’s claim for enlightened reason. “Regimes of post-truth” (Harsin, 2016) are the specter of a new world order that was silently born of the dark underbelly of digital communication and social media networks and which often are unapologetically anti-intellectual, anti-science and anti-reason. Surprising as it may be, the (international) desire of much of the younger generation to go beyond ‘politics as usual’ has become the mark of our

24 Foucault’s (1978 [1975]) notion of “regimes of truth”, which discursively discipline citizens, is rendered meaningless in societies in which all claims of truth are denied or at least put into doubt by power (politician, media outlets, corporations, etc.). Harsin (2016) put forth the idea that regimes of post-truth are constitutive of societies of control (Deleuze, 1995) and no longer of disciplinary societies. The dissipation of truth—scientific of otherwise—by ways of hyper-mediated information overload typical for the Internet age, has far reaching consequences. Who and what is one to believe at all today? The answer to this question will be crucial.

25 Recent studies have shown that millennials—globally—are tired of democracy and willing to entertain autocratic forms of leadership (Safi, 2016). In chapter 4 it will be argued that autocratic leadership styles are rehearsed and visualized in popular TV shows and movies.
hyper-connected times. Similarly, the promise of an Internet-based, augmented enlightenment era thanks to the availability of unlimited and freely accessible information has proven to be largely false. The Internet is not free, and the information available is curated and thinned out algorithmically by search engines. Internet critic Evgeny Morozov (2011) lauds the paradox of information overload as a new type of security feature: “security by obscurity” (p. 163). He explains that because “at least one billion other users are also blogging, Googling, Facebooking, and tweeting, and most of our information is simply lost in the endless ocean of digital ephemera produced by others” (Morozov, 2001, p.163).

Indeed, it is important to note the radical subjectivity and emotionally charged irrationality of human nature in order to avoid repeating the darkest chapters of history. Ontologically, modernity’s now worn out enlightenment ideals have always contained both the seeds of promise and doom. Shaped by the afterimages of industrial-scale slaughter during the Second World War, the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer &

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26 Here, Herbert Marcuse’s philosophical concept of ‘radical subjectivity’ is juxtaposed with Cartesian ‘subjectivism’. Radical subjectivity resonates with Hardt & Negri’s (2004) notion of ‘subjectivities’ defined as sovereign, autonomous agents acting within cultural contexts. According to Kellner (1999), “Marcuse’s radical subjectivity is also political, refusing domination and oppression, struggling against conditions which block freedom and happiness and for a freer and better world”.

27 Europe’s early 20th century rise of fascism, Stalinism and Hitler’s National Socialism in the wake of the Weimar Republic’s breakdown, bears resemblance on many levels with today’s democracy instabilities and social solidarity breakdowns all across the world.
Adorno, 2002) forebodingly warned of the enlightenment’s potential to destroy all life on earth as a result of its favoring of and overreliance on technological progress and the culture industry’s mass deception rather than its advancement of collective, socio-political maturity and social cohesion. As difficult accepting humans’ unavoidable subjectivity, it may well be the only reliable basis on which common ground between individuals, communities and nations can be built. This is not to suggest a capitulation to the whims and tantrums of reckless politics and modern day demagogues. Rather, this is a proposal for a new sort of knowledge production in which knowledge fields intersect with subjective human experiences. Theory and practice need to constructively inform one another in order to intellectually and symbolically increase social solidarity (Durkheim, 1995) rather than producing regimes of truth (or post-truth) that seek to occupy and dominate social groupings.

It is through art and poetry that the fusion of history and subjectivity can be best appreciated. In his essay On the Concept of History, Walter Benjamin (2007) famously interprets Angelus Novus (Figure 5), a painting by Swiss artist Paul Klee, to formulate a poetic image of history. He describes the angel of history as a figure that is forcefully and involuntarily blown into the future by the winds of progress. The angel sees the endless rubble of human destruction piling up at his feet—details botched together in one big unintelligible pile. The angel tries her best to fix things but is hopelessly overwhelmed by indomitable, progressive forces. Benjamin describes the angel as facing
backward, incapable of turning her gaze towards the future. In fact, Klee’s angel is staring *sideways* into the space beyond the picture. The viewer unmistakably stands in the present moment and will inevitably move towards the future, not, as Benjamin suggests, towards the past. The angel’s gaze may well be questioning the viewer’s stance or spatial points of reference, but the viewer unmistakably occupies the temporal present. And being alive, it is clear that the viewer is inevitably responsible for shaping the future. In other words, in contrast to Benjamin’s interpretation, Klee’s angel is overlooking all possible futures. If historic time is to be understood as unfolding in circles\(^\text{28}\) rather than drudging along a temporal vector, then history itself must be interpreted as a network constellation\(^\text{29}\) shaped by multifarious temporal practices (Fabian, 1983; de Certeau, 1984). Benjamin is nevertheless correct to use a work of art as

\[\text{28} \text{Einstein’s spatio-temporal model hinges on his theory of relativity, which implies not only the relativity or ‘subjectivity’ of our understanding of time and space, but above all, a spherical rather than non-linear model of the universe. Only at the threshold of singularities, black holes—where time somehow merges with space—does his scientific model break down. In the confines of our human mind, these rules of physics do not matter. Our understanding of time and space is largely shaped by our subjective imagination.}
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\[\text{29} \text{The hallmark of postmodern philosophy is the loss of grand narratives (Lyotard, 1984) or as Frederick Jameson (1991) famously put it, “the waning of affect” (p. 10). This analyses suggests that it might rather be a ‘swelling of affect’. Fear and other emotions that fall under the rubric of the primordial have become veritable triggers that activate predetermined, mediated stress responses. Human affective repertoires have become occupied, boxed in and even hijacked by sophisticated human machine interfaces and algorithms (Google’s AdSense, Facebook content algorithm, etc.). It is not a waning of affect but rather affective echo chambers and random affective noise that seem to rule our current moment, viz. ‘swelling’.}
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inspiration for philosophical ruminations. Art is always a visual chronicle of sorts—
one that has a temporal horizon of its own.

Indeed, through art, human history can be traced much farther back than via any
existing textual archive. Writing itself is a relatively recent human invention or
“technology” (Kittler, 1999) and print, even more so. In McLuhan’s thinking, media is an
extension of man, a prosthesis that expands the physiological and neurological
limitations of humans. As useful a concept as this is, the term extension entails distance,
but the appreciation of art requires presence not distance. In his essay, Art in the Age of
Mechanical Reproduction, Benjamin (2007) insists on the physical presence in time and
space of both the spectator and the work of art in order for the “aura” of the work to
manifest itself. Moreover, it can be argued that the pictorial and sculptural traces left by
pre-literate humans have preserved the aura of human history, whereas today’s
overabundance of mechanically reproduced media—selfies, Vines, text messages,
tweets, YouTube videos, TV—remain ephemeral and exchangeable mass commodities
without aura. This is not at all to say that the textual or virtual archive is irrelevant.
Instead, the argument will be made throughout this study that the tangible, man-made

\[\text{In a comparative analyses of prehistoric cave paintings with Jeff Koons’s hyper-commercial, surface-obsessed art, the function of art as chronicle becomes clear. Both cave painting and Koons’s shiny surface art tell the receptive audience all it needs to know about the deeper (or shallower) qualities of the respective cultures and period.}\]
environments humans inhabit in their daily lives are an “auratic”, i.e., truly authentic, testament to and material embodiment of the status of human culture and the human condition. Authenticity and with it, aura, both depend on being embedded within ritual practices, “the unique value of the ‘authentic’ work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value” (Benjamin, 2007, p. 224). This means that a theoretical and practical architecture can be assembled on the basis of a close reading and thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the built environment.

**Art and the Social**

The boundaries of art and science (especially the human sciences) are ideological and shifting, and intellectual history is itself enmeshed in these shifts — its genres do not remain firmly anchored. Changing definitions of art or science must provoke new retrospective unities, new ideal types for historical description. In this sense, “ethnographic surrealism” is a utopian construct, a statement at once about past and future possibilities for cultural analysis. (Clifford, 1989, p. 540)

Art is the study of the human condition and human culture. Accordingly, if art is recognized as a form of conceptual inquiry and practical activity and not merely as aesthetic expression, its practice rightfully intersects with that of the social sciences and other disciplines in the humanities\(^{31}\). The growing fragmentation of the humanities into

\(^{31}\) In German, the studies in ‘the humanities’ translates into *Geisteswissenschaften*, the ‘sciences of the spirit’. This points to an important linguistic and conceptual distinction, which gives primacy to theoretical inquiry — that is cognitive and spiritual inquiry — and that completely excludes more practice-oriented fields like the arts. A similar categorical contrast exists in how ‘the arts’
separate and often insular sub-disciplines was intended to better serve and adapt to the multifarious dimensions and growing complexities of human nature and culture. This ‘diversification’, to borrow from the lingo of investment banking, into disjointed ‘portfolios’ of knowledge, methodologies and best practices, may well be one of the reason for the humanities’ increasing marginalization in terms of federal funding and ultimately its (shrinking) social impact (Mathäs, 2013). German artist Joseph Beuys proposed an expanded concept of art, one that embraces participatory action. And Hannah Arendt (1998) would certainly agree that “spaces of appearance” in the public realm are crucial institutions for healthy, democratic life. Any cutting back on the public sphere and citizen participation equals a weakening of social cohesion and democracy itself (Habermas, 1991). Indeed, a return to a more socially relevant, encompassing humanism is needed now more than ever. The diversification, specialization and fragmentation of formerly unified knowledge fields has generated a form of intellectual and epistemological noise, which even the so-called experts are having a hard time disentangling.

are defined; in German, the field includes Baukunst (architecture) and Bühnenbild (set-design) for instance, neither of which falls under the same conceptual designation in English.

32 Alexander Mathäs points out that “[i]nside the academy the welcome study of issues, such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationalism, and colonialism, has emphasized the particular and the local. Yet the splintering of the humanities into sub-disciplines has also resulted in their marginalization” (2013, p. 95).
It is therefore not surprising that the current incarnations of political
demagoguery so successfully implement and champion anti-intellectualism and regimes
of post-truth\textsuperscript{33}. If making sense of the world has become all but impossible, if society’s
moral compass rendered dysfunctional, if a generalized disorientation has become the
new normal, our biographical identities and social cohesion are very much at stake. The
role of the artist in this hyper-mediated, noisy\textsuperscript{34} reality may well be that of ‘teller of
truths’, the figure that cuts through the haze of information overload. The performative
role of artists as those who must and can best affect social change is really nothing new.
Hans Holbein was not only able to produce life-like portraiture thanks to
technologically novel oil colors. His subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) socio-political
and religious critiques were metaphorically camouflaged to avoid disciplinary
repercussions. Henry VIII, founder of the reformist Church of England was not known
for being level-headed when it came to dealing with political critics or adversaries. This

\textsuperscript{33} Conceptually the term is aligned with Orwell’s (1949) “newspeak” or “double speak”, which he
introduced to the literary community in his dystopian novel “1984”. Posttruth is basically a
euphemism for regimes of deception, one might even say military-style psyops. Lying and
deception have unfortunately become tolerated socio-political tools within 21\textsuperscript{st} century political
and media discourse.

\textsuperscript{34} Noise here is not limited to aural stimuli but all kinds of sensory stimuli, above all visual and
informational. With an average screen-time consumption of 10 h 32 min per day, many humans
take in vast amounts of information, which they are unable to process or use in any meaningful
way. The concept of ‘society of noise’ matches this new human condition and replaces Debord’s
“The Society of the Spectacle” (1994), a point this study will make clear.
didn’t deter his favorite court painter Holbein’s (1533) to sneak all sorts of subversive symbolisms about Catholicism and religious strife into his famous painting The Ambassadors (Figure 6). His favorable painting of Anne of Cleves even convinced Henry VIII to marry her, such was the suggestive power of his art. What has changed is the way artists stage and frame35 their work both politically and technologically.

Benjamin (2002) understood the collection of textual ruminations in his Arcade Project (Passagenwerk) as a form of montage36. He was an avid collector and inspector of early consumer culture and its artifacts, which he encountered while walking through Paris’s fancy shopping arcades. Benjamin was privileged enough to enjoy an activity that has become an artifact of consumer culture in its own standing: meandering while looking at and selecting objects in an ‘auratic’ presence. Consumption today takes place increasingly at a distance, mediated by the ‘human interface’ with computer hardware, a

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35 Goffman (1974) in his “Frame Analyses” essay describes the workings of audience—actor interaction in theatrical settings. The active “suspension of disbelief” is a foundational principle that allows audiences to believe what they see and to take it seriously from a didactic perspective. Once the frame is broken (something Berthold Brecht deliberately did), disbelief sets in and the performance falls apart. Staying in character entails that the artist maintains the frame he proposed to his audience.

36 On many occasions, Benjamin uses the concept montage, often relating to photomontages or other visual assemblages. In his note [N1a,8] he beautifully summarizes his understanding of its textual practice: “Method of this project: literary montage. I needn’t say anything. Merely show. I shall purloin no valuables, appropriate no ingenious formulations. But the rags, the refuse—these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them” (Benjamin, 2002, p. 460).
truly disembodied and mechanically mediated method symptomatic of time-space compressed economies (Harvey, 1990). As the archetypical flaneur, Benjamin would walk through Paris, the City of Light, in search of things that caught his attention\textsuperscript{37}. The act of walking through the city was also what de Certeau (1984) calls writing the subjective urban text\textsuperscript{38}. To be a flaneur was to engage on a temporal, polysensorial, psychogeographical\textsuperscript{39} level with the built environment. A novel concept of time was crucial to inhabit this new space invented for consumers:

\begin{quote}
    Rather than pass the time, one must invite it in. To pass the time (to kill time, expel it): the gambler. Time spills from his every pore. -To store time as a battery stores energy: the flaneur. Finally, the third type: he who waits. He takes in the time and renders it up in altered form—that of expectation. [D3,4]. (Benjamin, 2002 p. 107)
\end{quote}

The arcades were the architectural setting that produced the requisite aura and space required for the \textit{flaneur}. Consumer goods acted as performers in the theatrical setting of large, glass display windows, which the flaneur would absorb with his eyes, ears, nose, hands, feet—indeed, his entire body would have been stimulated by the aura of a total

\textsuperscript{37}‘Attention economy’ is the other catch-phrase descriptor of modern life. Interestingly, attention deficit disorders among adults and children are at shockingly high and rising.

\textsuperscript{38}Michel de Certeau’s (1984) notion of walking the urban space as an act of writing the urban text is a subversive practice that challenges the procedures of urban mapping by power. The later is an exercise in control and disciplining of urban dwellers, coercing them to follow predetermined pathways. The potential of walking as subversive activity was inspirational for the Situationist International who developed a theory of dérive, a practice in which the rigid symbolisms of the built environment and signage are inverted or put on their heads (Debord, 1994).

\textsuperscript{39}This drifting through urban space and its geography was typical for the Situationist International movement in 1960s Paris (Debord, 1994).
consumer experience\textsuperscript{40}. Benjamin ‘transcribes’ his obsession with collecting physical objects\textsuperscript{41} to a textual montage style and research methodology. He taps into and combines various intellectual traditions including sociology, poetry, philosophy and an idiosyncratic detective style. In order to unravel the mysteries hidden deep inside human nature, this study will take stock of the many primordial human response systems uncovered thanks to and documented through Benjamin’s meandering and textual montages. The infrastructures of fear, for instance, which evades control by conscious, rational choice, has consequences that are so far-reaching that the primordial psychologies behind them must be taken seriously if the nature of social organizational forms is to be better understood.

\textit{The Stakes of Fear}

All the distances which men create round themselves are dictated by this fear [the touch of the unknown]. They shut themselves in houses which no-one may enter, and only there feel some measure of security. (Canetti, 1998, p. 15)

\textsuperscript{40} Of course, Benjamin’s eye as culture critic and chronicler of history would have been attentive like a hawk not to fall prey to the allures of commodity fetishism and gluttonous consumer culture. The social scientist and philosopher in Benjamin would stay on high ground and not succumb, or so at least we prefer to believe.

\textsuperscript{41} This speaks to the addictive power and appeal of an emergent consumer culture even to self-conscious and self-critical intellectuals like Benjamin. In Marx’s historical materialist critique of capital, the undeniable allure of industrial commodities—cars, clothes, or even tourism as emergent ‘product’—is largely absent.
One of the elements that makes the state of exception so difficult to define is certainly its close relationship to civil war, insurrection, and resistance. (Agamben, 2005, p. 2)

An affinity for military might emerged [after World War II] as central to the American identity. (Bacevich, 2010, p. 13)

The house or home has historically been the quintessential safe haven for human beings. It is a refuge from the elements of nature, a shield against attacks from the outside, and the hearth for the family/social community. The house is a physical and conceptual structure: it is a fragile membrane between an inside and an outside world such that what is cherished is guarded on the inside and what is feared or rejected is kept securely on the outside. The loss of one’s home in times of war (or civil war, as with Syria), natural catastrophe (Hurricane Katrina), economic misfortune (foreclosure) are some of the instances in which the intimacy, privacy, and safety of these precious four walls can suddenly be snuffed out. The local community, the neighborhood and the nation state are symbolic extensions of the house as home; the aforementioned “states of exception” (Agamben, 2005) imperil their structural and symbolic integrity.

With the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, the world community—if such a concept can at all hold up to scrutiny—was ready for a respite from decades of unnecessary proxy wars and geopolitical tensions. However, the sudden loss of a decades-old ideological opponent left a void in the West (Bacevich, 2005, 2010). A new enemy that would justify America’s excessive defense budgets was in demand but not immediately available, which meant that a new enemy would have to be either found or
created or perhaps better, a combination of both. With the 9/11 terror attacks, Western democracies had finally uncovered a new enemy: Islamic fundamentalists, despite their insignificant numbers and antiquated weapons, had the “right stuff”\(^{42}\) to be made into the world’s new global enemy. The Global War on Terror (GWOT) had begun. Back in the U.S. American homeland, the War on Drugs\(^{43}\) (WOD) (Balko, 2013), which had already pitted militarized law enforcement agencies against the enemy within, i.e. the mostly black, male, and racially profiled (Meeks, 2000) residents of the inner city. Both wars\(^{44}\), the GWOT and the WOD, were based on a diffuse, subcutaneous (Jameson, 1991) fear of the unknown (Canetti, 1998), propagated to the American public and by association, most other Western democracies. For Massumi (2015), the idea behind the political use (Robin, 2004) of fear in America, is to “affectively attune” (p. 239) the public will “to go politically conditional” (p. 13) and have the government go to any lengths to

\(^{42}\) This intentional reference to the heroic astronaut movie, “The Right Stuff” (Kaufman, 1983) seeks to highlight the slight of hand that was used by the Pentagon in its propaganda efforts to make the Al-Qaeda terror organization look more powerful and numerous than they actually were.

\(^{43}\) As early as 1971 the WOD was launched when President Nixon famously declared that drugs were “the public enemy number one in the United States” (Nixon quoted in Stamper, 2005).

\(^{44}\) In his anthropological study of policing in America, William Garriott (2013) writes “[t]he semi-metaphorical “War on Drugs” and “War on Terror”, which were launched formally by the United States but have since metastasized to nations across the globe, have further blurred the lines between police and war, internal governance, and foreign affairs. Such shifts have prompted some theorists to suggest that war itself is on the wane (conceptually at least), progressively replaced by a state of ‘continuous police activity’ (Hardt and Negri 2004, 20-21)” (p. 13).
overcome the pitfalls of an uncontrolled collective fear response. Fear “[w]eakens your resolve, creates stress, lowers consumer confidence, and may ultimately lead to individual and/or economic paralysis” (Massumi, 2015, p. 13). America can never afford a downturn in consumer spending, for the entire U.S. economic model hinges on intangible and even irrational metrics such as consumer confidence. And of course, geopolitical scapegoating is a very potent method of counteracting the corrosive effects of a perpetually present, diffuse fear.

**Diffuse Fear**

In the United States, Britain and across the European Continent, people are convulsed with political frustration and anxiety about the future. Refugees and migrants clamor for the chance to live in these safe, prosperous countries, but those who already live in those promised lands report great uneasiness about their own futures that seems to border on hopelessness. (Dalai Lama & Brooks, 2016)

What "the fog of war" means is: war is so complex it’s beyond the ability of the human mind to comprehend all the variables. Our judgment, our understanding, are not adequate. And we kill people unnecessarily. (McNamara & Morris, 2003)

A diffuse fear blurs the perception of reality like a haze\(^45\). As noted by the Dalai Lama in his recent Op-Ed for the New York Times (2016), the world has never seen a

\(^{45}\) ‘Haze’ as an ecological metaphor, instead of the meteorological ‘fog’ used by military experts, implies a much more man-made dimension to the current quagmire the entire world finds itself immersed in. Fog is a meteorological phenomenon in which water droplets accumulate in the air to form a cloudlike, opaque appearance. Haze in contrast, is created by sunlight that is reflected
safer and more equitable era than the current one. Yet, a perpetual fear that is difficult to pinpoint casts its shadow over all modern human activity brings to mind a fifty-year-old expression born of an earlier era of a scapegoated personification of a formless fear.

1960s U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara uttered the catch-phrase “the fog of war” during a soul-searching documentary by filmmaker Errol Morris (2003) about his role in the Vietnam War. During the interview, a McNamara who is fully cognizant of the extent of his guilt and at times, even repentant, visibly shaken and teary, nevertheless attempts to downplay his complicity in the atrocities committed by U.S. military forces on the people of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. McNamara relied on the suggestive power and symbolism of a meteorological metaphor to somehow exempt him from the unprecedented humanitarian, political and moral quagmire that had unfolded under his leadership and which Frederick Jameson dubbed “[t]his first terrible postmodernist war” (1991, p. 44). According to Jameson, what was so notably terrible

from pollutants released into the air by modern human activity. Haze can develop into smog, which is damaging to biological life.

46 The “fog of war” eventually vanished, if only temporarily, only to be reproduced by the next military campaigns, this time in the Middle East. America’s war in Vietnam was driven by a set of clear and openly discussed fears: the spreading of communist ideology and geopolitical influencing had to be contained at all cost. The Cold War front between the two economic superpowers—one capitalist, the other communist—could only be carried out via conventional proxy warfare (Vahabi, 2016). The danger of mutual annihilation in case of a direct nuclear exchange between the superpowers had to be avoided at all cost. The wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan decades later were also waged to dominate and control the regional natural resources. Hence, the Vietnam War was geopolitical and the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, imperial.
and novel about the Vietnam War was its “virtually unimaginable quantum leap in technological alienation” (1991, p. 45), experienced by American soldiers as a subcutaneous urge to keep moving and to remain forever mobile. Just how the postmodern soldier’s deep seated fear of being a moving target has been transmogrified onto the quotidian civil society will be explored in more detail later in this study. Suffice it to say, the fear of professionally missing out or of becoming the target of the boss’s criticism has made modern corporate employees (Weil, 2014; Berardi, 2009) live in constant fear. In fact, the binary relationship between fear and greed are the constitutive pillars of modern day finance capitalism: “According to the self-understanding of finance capitalism, greed and fear are the decisive behavioral motives in stock markets and in the capitalist economy as a whole” (Streek, 2014, p. 5).

Decades later, McNamara’s successor, Donald Rumsfeld, came up with a slightly different but conceptually similar spin designed to justify the impending U.S. military invasion and occupation of Iraq beginning in 2003 and the atrocities\(^{47}\) committed under his direct orders. During a press briefing and in a seemingly off-the-cuff, epistemological

\(^{47}\) The most morally and legally incriminating of these are the tortured prisoners at the U.S. prisoner of war facility in Abu Ghraib and Rumsfeld’s approval of enhanced interrogation techniques. An open archive of his sinister internal memos during his tenure as Secretary of Defense are well documented. In a hand-written note, Rumsfeld famously questioned the harshness of “enhanced interrogation techniques”, the practice of forced standing positions (Diamond, 2004) among many others (Rushe, MacAskill, Yuhas, & Laughland, 2014).
solipsism, Rumsfeld famously responded to a question about evidence that links Baghdad and the terrorist cells that supposedly perpetrated the attacks of 9/11 with the following:

As we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don’t know we don’t know. (Rumsfeld quoted in: Graham, 2014)

Both U.S. Secretaries of State claim to have responded reasonably and rationally to self-admittedly unquantifiable, unidentifiable and indeed unknown threats. Yet for both, military invasion and occupation of foreign territories via a full show of the U.S.’s military-technological superiority was necessary and inevitable. Put bluntly, historian and former U.S. Army colonel, Andrew J. Bacevich (2010) argues that “[w]hatever mayhem might occur as a result of U.S. actions, good intentions ensured that American innocence remained unstained and uncompromised” (p. 144). Rumsfeld’s generals were even transparent enough to give their military strategy a name: the “Shock and Awe” doctrine, the idea of which was to instill overwhelming and paralyzing fear in an admittedly unknown enemy through a spectacular display of military and technological prowess.

48 Naomi Klein (2007) analytically expands the doctrine into a paradigmatic principle for late capital. For her, capital uses crisis events to implement far-reaching structural transformations. Without the shock and awe effect, many of these radical alterations would not have been accepted by the citizenry.
The generals’ assumptions were straightforward if naïve and even, irrational. However, their belief—that shocked and awed enemy armies would drop their weapons and surrender without much fuss and bloodshed—proved baseless, and the fog of shock and awe rapidly dissolved. Shock and awe was, in fact, appropriated, mimicked, revamped and thrown back into the face of the occupier by a growing insurgency movement, which has by now spread like a wildfire of violence and destruction through the entire Middle East. The fear that was supposed to haunt and domesticate the indigenous populations has now returned to the homeland. The insurgency took the military and political elites by surprise but hardly surprising for anyone moderately familiar with the century-long legacy of colonial domination (Bacevich, 2016; Johnson, 2000). That Rumsfeld confessed a lack of knowledge about the cultural conditions on the ground should have been a red flag and convinced the U.S. military leadership to pursue a more level-headed or even diplomatic response to the 9/11 terror attacks. But the fire of vengeance (Aladjem, 2009) and the war-profiteering greed of the military-industrial complex (Bacevich, 2004) clearly outweighed reason.

Indeed, it is this abstract and diffuse fear of the unknown that is now haunting the souls of the so-called free and democratic nations of the world. As anthropologist Elias Canetti (1998) ominously noted, “[t]here is nothing that man fears more than the touch of the unknown”, and it is only by becoming part of a crowd that “he ceases to fear its touch” (p. 15). Following Canetti’s barbaric vision of human crowd behavior, it
appears to be engrained in our specie’s emotional constitution to want to be able
recognize and classify a perceived threat and to desire assimilation into crowds—what
Durkheim called social groupings (1995)—in order to feel safe. This is best accomplished
by constructing binary social categories of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’. The socioeconomic or
cultural minorities living among the dominant majority become the perfect scapegoat for
channeling the much more abstract fears of global terror networks or a global economic
system gone haywire. Scapegoating is a form of fear projection onto an identifiable and
perceived alien Other: the immigrant, the refugee, the poor. In the words of the Dalai
Lama, “[i]t is the growing number of people who feel they are no longer useful, no
longer needed, no longer one with their societies” (Dalai Lama & Brooks, 2016) who are
indignant and fearful of what the future holds for them, making them volatile and
unpredictable.

From Infrastructure of Feeling to Economies of Fear

In his 1954 film theory study, Marxist literary critic Raymond Williams
developed the concept of “structure of feeling” to describe and better understand the
dominant dramatic conventions in theatrical performances in a given era. He found that
for dramatic performances to be an effective communication media of, a tacit agreement
between producers, actors, and audiences had to be pre-established, viz. the structure of
feeling of a historic period. That is to say, without such “technical means in an acted
performance” (1954, p. 20), the audience’s willingness to suspend its disbelief and to take the performance seriously would be hampered. In later works, Williams expanded this concept from the filmic-theatrical genre to include social and political forms, networks of ideas, and established belief systems. Accordingly, the underlying economies of fear concept explored throughout this study are manifestations of contemporary structures of feeling from which profits are extracted. These immaterial structures of feeling become tangible in the material structures of the built environment, which then can be read like a visual text (Geertz, 1973; de Certeau, 1984). The concrete infrastructure of cities, suburbs, and large public works projects can therefore be conceived of as ‘infrastructures of feeling’. They directly impact the way citizens feel about their own culture in the presence of these structures. This includes all forms of

49Goffman’s (1974) “Frame Analyses” develops these ideas further, adding several layers of complexity to people’s culturally learned ability to suspend their disbelief in theatrical but also day-to-day situations.

50 With the concept, Williams (1954) tried to capture the informal, somewhat fuzzy nature of how societies “live” and “feel” momentous changes in existing social forms in a “true social present” (p. 132). He wanted the notion of “structures of feelings” to work and be made analytically useful as a cultural hypothesis rather than other more formal, systematic and established conceptual frameworks in circulation. Terms such as ideology (Marx), Zeitgeist (Hegel), hegemony (Gramsci) or the more popular idea of a dominant world-view are not variable or practice and presence-oriented enough for what he considered to be a much more free-floating coalescence of feeling and thought.

51 A master at exploiting the infrastructure of feeling was Hitler. His architect, Albert Speer, built the Marble Gallery hallway leading to Hitler’s oversized office in the Berlin Reich Chancellery Reichskanzlei in a polished marble that appeared ice-like. All visitors who came to speak to Hitler were already psychologically intimidated, because they had walked on a surface that resembled thin ice, about to break and swallow them up (Kitchen, 2015, p. 233)
architecture, public and private spaces, logistics and travel infrastructure such as interstate highway systems, airports, maritime ports and railway stations, consumer centers like malls, department stores and big box shopping centers, government and administration buildings, and last but not least the immaterial structures of our collective imagination, all of which are sites where the infrastructure of feeling is produced, performed and also contested.

Within the conceptual framework of infrastructures of feeling, fear occupies a privileged space. Fear functions as productive force, both literally and figuratively. Fear can be mobilized and put to work for capital by underwriting a quasi-autonomous sector of the American economy. Starting with the Cold War, the defense sector grew to become the most lucrative and stable business sector in the U.S. American economy. First, the Department of Defense (DoD) was put in charge of containing the spread of expansionist Communism at any cost. Since then, in our post-9/11 world, the GWOT has mutated into vast and ambiguous Homeland Security Department with its innumerable, often competing intelligence agencies, made possible by unprecedented defense budgets\(^{52}\) topping $600 billion dollars in 2016 (Karklis, 2016) or more than $1 trillion, if

\(^{52}\) The defense budget alone hardly captures the economic importance of the military machine in the U.S. “The Washington rules deliver profit, power, and privilege to a long list of beneficiaries: elected and appointed officials, corporate executives and corporate lobbyists, admirals and generals, functionaries staffing the national security apparatus, media personalities, and policy intellectuals from universities and research organizations” (Bacevich, 2010, p. 228).
all affiliated military branches are included (Bacevich, 2010)—a fact that is all the more striking in view of the irrefutable fact that the actual threat posed by Islamic Fundamentalist Terror to national security interests is in no way comparable to the genuine threat that the Soviet nuclear and conventional arsenal posed during the Cold War era. Simply put, the perception of a collective threat and with it, the fear and anxiety that ripple through America when it comes to the quantitative and qualitative features of radical Islam, have been artificially inflated to the point of pure irrationality. Yet, this collectively experienced and artificially induced fear has successfully been channeled into red-hot industrial production. As a result of America’s fearfulness, its level of sophistication in weapon, anti-terrorist, cyber and other surveillance systems is globally unsurpassed.

In the current capitalist mode of production, fear has indeed become structural and ontological (Massumi, 2015). Marx (1990) already diagnosed the fear of competition as a driving force behind capital, forcing it into spiraling, compound growth that sees no end in time or space and therefore becomes all-consuming in its productive and destructive potential. Insatiable like a zombie—the monstrous figure that has sprung
from a collective American imagination\footnote{According to film studies scholars, the predominant figure of the zombie is quintessentially American, as opposed to characters Frankenstein, Dracula, Godzilla, etc. (Bishop, 2010; Christie & Lauro, 2011, Lenz & Boluk, 2011).}—that does not need to feed, but is driven to do so anyway. Since the 2008 financial crisis, “Zombification” (Harman, 2012) has become a legitimate term for describing certain dysfunctional businesses. This new state of affairs is beautifully illustrated by the so-called “zombie banks”, described by Chris Harman in his book, Zombie Capitalism (2010):

Faced with the financial crisis that began in 2007, some economic commentators did begin to talk of “zombie banks” — financial institutions that were in the “undead state” and incapable of fulfilling any positive function, but representing a threat to everything else. What they do not recognize is that 21st century capitalism as a whole is a zombie system, seemingly dead when it comes to achieving human goals and responding to human feelings, but capable of sudden spurts of activity that cause chaos all around. (2010, pp. 11-12)

Indeed, during the 2008 financial crisis, the so-called ‘too-big-to-fail’ banks and bank insurers needed to be artificially kept ‘alive’, despite their apparent operational ‘death’. These ‘living-dead’ banks were quickly taken over by healthier ones for the purpose of maintaining the illusion that all was well. In a 2012 art project entitled, Zombie Corporations, I picked up on this phenomenon. The work humorously features an eclectic list of private institutions\footnote{As an illustrative sample here are some to the institutions listed according to their business sectors: “Energy Zombies”: Enron; “Transportation Zombies”: Swissair, “Hedge Zombies”: hfimplode.com; “Trust Zombies”: Madofftrustee.com; “Bench Zombies”: Lehman Brothers; and many many more. All of these corporations violated public trust, defrauded investors, and made life miserable for innumerable millions of unsuspecting clients.} that stood out according to their level of failure. The artworks
are hosted online and seek to remind audiences of the ephemeral and highly volatile nature of contemporary finance capital and the corruption of some of America’s largest private corporations. Harman’s notion of “zombie capitalism” furthermore illustrates how contemporary capital has managed to create vast death-worlds (Mbembe, 2003), in which economic failure equates either a figurative or in many cases, a literal death sentence. The sudden removal of the means to earn a living casts entire populations living and laboring on the periphery of the globalized economic world system into free fall. The 65 million migrant (United Nations, 2016) who are currently on the move are testament to a new level of global precariousness and upheaval, largely caused by the fallout of finance capital operations and their repeated failures.

**Urbanism and Fear Production**

The phenomenon of white urban flight (Light, 2005) in postwar America is another example of America’s fear-guided infrastructure of feeling and the economy that closely follows in its wake. White flight describes a massive reconfiguration of urban and sub-urban populations that started in the aftermath of the Second World War.

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55 The artworks are viewable here: https://www.tumblr.com/blog/zombiecorporations
and rapidly picked up pace in the early 1960s. More affluent, mostly white urbanites\textsuperscript{56} gave up their urban life-styles in exchange for an allegedly healthier, safer and more spacious life in suburbia. They gladly left behind less affluent, mostly black and other minority communities, boxing them into decades of institutional and infrastructural underdevelopment and blight. Part of the reason for this de facto racial segregation was America’s domestic “War on Poverty” (Light, 2005, p. 2). For instance, when confronted with 38 urban rebellions, Detroit Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh strongly urged the National League of Cities to recognize the threat levels that he saw emanating from within America’s cities\textsuperscript{57}, comparing them with “the guerilla warfare in the Mekong Delta” (Light, 2005, p. 1). Even as early as the late 1940s, the president of the American Institute of Planners, Tracy Augur—author of an influential paper proposing the dispersal of populations from urban centers as defense against nuclear attacks—reasoned, “it is not to be expected that people who are forced to live in slums will give unquestionable allegiance to the system that keeps them there” (Light, 2005, p. 63). Black minorities were considered potential enemies because of their vulnerability or even receptiveness

\textsuperscript{56} This socio-economically privileged class was able to take full advantage of and vastly expanded highway systems leading from urban centers to the still largely undeveloped periphery areas, the suburbs, or exurbs.

\textsuperscript{57} The urban riots in the summers between 1965 and 168, lead to “more than three hundred episodes of civil disorder, resulting in two hundred deaths and the destruction of several thousand businesses” (Light, 2005, p. 4).
to communist ideology, despite the fact that black migration from the south to the major urban centers took place partially because of the many defense industry jobs that became available to them during the massive Second World War military preparation efforts. All of this was just the beginning of a systematic ratcheting up of domestic fear psychologically designed to underwrite new interstate highway construction and new zoning laws that allowed for the massive transfer of populations to their new suburban and exurban housing developments. Minorities, however, were simply shut out.

The original shift of populations and productive industries from urban centers to the periphery was triggered by a generalized fear of a Soviet nuclear attack that would target dense urban and industrial nuclei. The idea of population and industrial production dispersal was considered a viable civil defense strategy (Tobin, 2002) for reducing these urban vulnerabilities. The 1960s race riots that resulted from this artificially created structural inequality replaced a somewhat shapeless fear of the nuclear apocalypse with a much more tangible fear of the racial and ethnic Other. White populations’ already historically deep-seated stereotypical fear of black violence in

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58 The postwar decades also gave rise to the so-called ‘preppers’, or ‘doomsday preppers’. This was a type of DIY survival community, which built subterranean nuclear fallout shelters and stashed them with week or months worth of consumables in case of a nuclear war. Such infrastructures were a direct product of fear scenarios. Today, we have preppers who readying themselves for pandemics such as the zombie apocalypse. Many TV shows cater to these audiences who are excited about readiness exercises. A detailed discussion will follow.
urban centers accelerated a veritable exodus of white middle and upper class populations to the suburbs. New Jim Crow (Alexander, 2012) laws, disguised as repressive “War on Drugs” policing doctrines projected that fear and its violence into the very future of every black, brown or non-white looking person living in the US today. Chapter 3 will explore this topic in detail.

Currently, fear is an instrumental force behind urban planning and urban renewal operations. The massive proliferation of gated communities, for-profit prisons, securitized perimeters around civil and commercial infrastructure, ballooning defense budgets and a renaissance in the construction of walls, fences, barriers, bunkers, (Brown, 2010) to keep out or to box in certain populations are just the tip of a globalized iceberg. The fantastic potential profit from infrastructures that excludes, contains, surveils, regulates, siphons, extracts, influences, controls, dominates or eliminates altogether is growing by the minute. By contrast, the money that is put towards rebuilding, reinventing, improving, enhancing or refurbishing existing infrastructure is lagging. The priorities of modern capital have clearly shifted. The erosion of the Keynesian welfare state developed under Eisenhower’s New Deal was effectively undone by Reagan’s and Thatcher’s neoliberal revolution. The 2008 financial crisis59, which some heralded as the

59 The bank bailout of too-big-to-fail organizations was but a vast tax-dollar, public treasure handover made to the wealthy culprits of the financial crisis.
timely death of finance capitalism and its underlying neoliberal economic model, has turned out to be just another milestone for capital’s continuous transformation through global crisis (Klein, 2007). The 2008 credit crunch has accelerated the global world economic “postmodernization”, which Hardt and Negri describe as “the economic process that emerges when mechanical and industrial technologies have expanded to invest the entire world, when the modernization process is complete, and when the formal subsumption of the noncapitalist environment has become subject to capital” (2000, p. 272).

**Social Solidarity and The Transgression of Order**

Man has built up the rational world by his own efforts, but there remains within him an undercurrent of violence. Nature herself is violent, and however reasonable we may grow we may be mastered anew by a violence no longer that of nature but that of a rational being who tries to obey but who succumbs to stirrings within himself which he cannot bring to heel. (Bataille, 1986, p. 40)

Social order for Bataille is regulated by a series of collectively established taboos that exist primarily to avoid violence. The articulation of today’s taboos comes in the form of state laws, religious tenets and social mores. For the most part, each individual in a collective tries to uphold its rules. This process of collective grappling with taboos is what gives humans the gift of rational clarity, a “lucid and distinct awareness” (Bataille, 1986, p. 38) that is the basis of modern science. But for Bataille the concept of human awareness also implies a capability to liberate ourselves from the shackles of our own prohibitions. If taboos define our humanity and help make us the rational beings that we
believe ourselves to be, it is via the “completed transgression” (Bataille, 1986, p. 38) of taboos that we confirm and complete these same taboos. Our humanity depends equally on the exceptional emotions we experience in moments of transgression and in moments of obedience that we may protect our Self. In other words, the irrational dimension of taboos is essential to their existence as is the reason they seek to preserve; indeed, it is this irrationality that explains the acceptability of war despite the prohibition of murder. Ironically, war as collective organized violence (Battaile, 1986, p. 64) seeks to reestablish a social order of non-violence. This brings to mind the popular adage, ‘the exception proves the rule’.

Bataille’s transgression of collectively established taboos as an expression of social cohesion resonates with Emile Durkheim’s (1984) concept of breaching collective rules and shared values. For Durkheim, social order depends on solidarity among its members, a state that manifests itself in the moment of transgression (Ho, 2015). In the case of a crime, the violence inflicted on an individual is understood as having been inflicted on the collective as a whole. Crimes constitute one instance of breaching social solidarity\(^6\); for order to be restored then, the crimes must be punished. Criminal law, which is retributive in nature, inflicts a violent punishment on the perpetrator as a form

\(^6\) Durkheim (1984) argues that “law reproduces the main forms of social solidarity” (p. 28), which signifies that a crime is indirectly also a rebuttal of what the collective order stands for.
of payback. For Durkheim, such societies are governed by what he calls mechanical\textsuperscript{61} solidarity (1984) and easily agree on the idea of retribution as a means to maintain social cohesion. Durkheim’s other type of society functions more organically in that it seeks the restitution of equilibrium without resorting to retributive punishment. Such societies are allegedly more advanced and feature specialized divisions of labor, which lead to pronounced differences between individual members that make the social collective more interdependent (Ho, 2015, p. 2), not less. Importantly, such societies not only thrive despite these pronounced differences (profession, religion, beliefs, race, etc.) but are actually enhanced by their high levels of interdependence.

Indeed, Durkheim’s concept of organic solidarity offers modern societies, with their ever growing divisions of labor and their tendency to embrace social atomization and hyper-individualization, a path to reestablishing a more equitable social order based on the acknowledgment of mutual interdependence. The seeming success of this system is belied by a thoughtful caveat: “[though] normally the division of labour produces social solidarity, it can happen [...] that it has entirely different or even opposite results” (1984, p. 291). “[I]ndustrial class conflict was such a pathological state” (Ho, 2015, p. 2) for Durkheim, whereas for anthropologist Engseng Ho (2015), today’s conflicts arise

\textsuperscript{61} The designation “mechanical” comes from the fact that the individuals in such societies display less division of labor and are therefore more similar to one another.
from an infinitely more complex reality and an entirely new ambiguity of collective representations:

A theory of collective representations is also suggestive for thinking about the dynamic slew of media representations, old and new, that uphold and upend national regimes of authority and spread the fire of conflict across swathes of the world, as in Al Jazeera’s fanning the flames of the revolt in the ‘Arab Spring’, and in the mutual fear and revulsion that bind the West and the Islamic world into one international society, possessing hardly any solidarity mechanical or organic, but knotted together by dense media representations of violence and destruction on a daily basis. (p. 5)

The division of labor in the postmodern world is no longer bound to industrial factory production or even the immaterial labor markets of intellectual property management, corporate administration or any number of other miscellaneous service industries. Today’s division of labor affects all aspects of biological life, and the production, circulation, distribution and consumption of collective representations have become essential to a new form of social solidarity, which is based on civil war. The ultraviolent media representations of the Islamic State, for instance, articulate a form of collective consciousness and social solidarity that build on the iconoclasm of the Other. If one collective consciousness depends on the previous annihilation of another collective consciousness, then the pathological end result must be death-worlds. Unfortunately, this particular form of social solidarity has so far proven to be remarkably successful in its mission to deface all that is precious to others, even life itself.
Camps, Necropolitics and the Apocalypse

Two World Wars in one generation, separated by an uninterrupted chain of local wars and revolutions, followed by no peace treaty for the vanquished and no respite for the victor, have ended in the anticipation of a third World War between the two remaining world powers. This moment of anticipation is like the calm that settles after all hopes have died. We no longer hope for an eventual restoration of the old world order with all its traditions, or for the reintegration of the masses of five continents who have been thrown into a chaos produced by the violence of wars and revolutions and the growing decay of all that has still been spared. Under the most diverse conditions and disparate circumstances, we watch the development of the same phenomena—homelessness on an unprecedented scale, rootlessness to an unprecedented depth. (Arendt, 1958)

Mankind has come a long way since the great wars of the 20th century. The threat of nuclear annihilation appears to have dissipated, but a new global threat has emerged: global warming. The balance of the earth’s atmosphere is endangered by skyrocketing CO2 levels from human technological activity (Kolbert, 2014). The Anthropocene is the neologism on the stage of global risk discourse (Beck, 2009), and fear scenarios inspire both awe and derision. So far, the growing threat appears largely in the data sets and visualization models of researchers. Scientifically documented patterns of receding glaciers, melting polar caps and rising oceanic water levels are mostly only recognized by experts, intellectuals, and the social groups that are already suffering under the effects of climate change. Nonetheless, all of this seemingly irrefutable evidence has still not been sufficient to convince the global public that the human species and with it, our entire ecosystem are in for a very rough ride. The most sweeping appeal has been amongst Hollywood’s creative class and its international fan base. Chapter 4 will discuss the extreme fascination with violently apocalyptic movies and TV shows.
Meanwhile, the reality of our non-fictional world is increasingly characterized by massive human migration flows (United Nations, 2016), mostly from the so-called the “Global South”\(^{62}\), and a massive increase in the number of incarcerated and otherwise socially and/or personally immobile people (Sassen, 2014, p. 14), mostly in the “Global North”. Whereas the imagined accessibility of wealth and the irresistible promise of a better life elsewhere is inspiring millions to leave their homelands, citizens of these ‘greener pastures’ increasingly perceive the influx of Global Southerners as a sort of foreign occupation. ‘Fortress Europe’ is the latest unflattering nickname for an entire continent that is pulling back ever more aggressively on post-war benevolence in favor of increasingly restrictive aid laws. Europe as metropolis of Empire is responsible for the many structural ills the “Global South” inherited. The sectarian and ethnic strife that have resulted from cruel, socio-culturally illogical (colonial) geopolitical subdivisions and politics of favoritism have unsettled most of the regions in the Global South indefinitely\(^{63}\). Whether a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant worker, whether the

\(^{62}\) This is a recent designation for those parts of the world that are economically and by and large technologically less ‘advanced’ or ‘developed’. This new appellation presumes that member peoples or nations have fallen into the category as a result of a colonial past. The argument can be made that it is merely a euphemism for the now unfashionable terms, ‘developing nations’ and ‘Third World’. Leaving the argument about political correctness alone, the term is used here to indicate a geographical phenomenon of migration involving travel across vast stretches of land, sea, or air.

\(^{63}\) The British Empire was not alone in masterfully distributing administrative powers among local ethnic minorities in order to maintain leverage and bargaining power (against the risk of an
survivor of an incredible journey via an inflatable rubber lifeboat or a trip as a
(de)human(ized) parcel packed in a truck or train to cross the subcontinent, most
survivors end up in camps. And many of these camps, experts believe, will become
cities in their own right (Figure 7).

The varieties of camp are many, but their various symbolisms are relatively few
and broadly understood across ethnic, cultural, generational and geopolitical boards.

For Agamben (1998), the camp is the contemporary and fundamental bio-political
paradigm of the West. He posits that camps are a continuation of the systematic
exclusion of certain populations already stripped of their political identity and as such,
reduced to simple biological life forms. Agamben (1998) writes,

[t]here is no return from the camps to classical politics. In the camps, city and
house became indistinguishable, and the possibility of differentiating between
our biological body and our political body – between what is incommunicable

uprising). Angry local majority groups’ occasional uprisings then were conveniently directed at
the privileged “collaborator” minority. The ruthless exploitation of antagonism between
indigenous social groups was vital for managing huge populations with very few colonists
(Osterhammel, 1997, p. 63). The relatively few Nazi concentration camp guards applied the same
control method to the huge masses of death-camp inmates. The promises made to collaborators
and snitches within the camp were, of course, always betrayed. No inmate was supposed to leave
the Nazi camps alive, so any bargaining had a preset limit on rewards, even if inmates were told
otherwise (Sofski, 1997).

German Kilian Kleinschmidt, one of the world’s leading authorities refugee camp management
recommends that governments stop thinking of refugee camps as provisional structures. They
are here to stay, Kilian states unequivocally, for the average stay in a camp is 17 years, which is
an entire generation. “In the Middle East, we were building camps: storage facilities for people.
But the refugees were building a city,” Kilian told Dezeen (Radford, 2015).
and mute and. What is communicable and sayable – was taken from us forever. (p. 105)

The camp paradigm is always also translated into concrete infrastructure, e.g. the vast Middle Eastern or African refugee camps, the temporary housing of Europe’s asylum seekers, the U. S. American prisons to name of few of the more extreme examples from a wide spectrum of what this analyses qualifies as ‘violent infrastructures’ meant to contain, store, and control populations. As a scholar of the politics of power, Foucault sought to describe the forces at work within a bound nation state with functioning institutions and legal frameworks. Foucault’s theories (1995 and 2003) interrogate the regular state of affairs in society, its discourses, and the apparatuses of ruling power structures. His work is concerned with the administration of life, e.g. biopolitics, in all its complexities and and relevant domains. Agamben’s camp paradigm annihilates many of the biopolitical implications of Foucault’s work. Agamben’s concepts build on “the state of exception” (2005) in which law has been paralyzed or vanquished.

In a comparison between mechanical and organic societies, Durkheim (1984) stated that the less sophisticated a society is and the less specialized labor it brings forth,

65 Foucault’s biopower administers life discursive. It is the end result of a gradual transition, begun in the 18th and 19th centuries, from the punitive power of an absolute sovereign over the bodies of his subjects to a disciplinary model concerned with living but docile subjects. The sovereign’s power was based on retaining the authority to bring death to his subjects. The disciplinary society of the early industrial era needed subservient, living bodies.
the more punitive, retributive its legal framework would be. In contrast to this mechanical model, the organic model, like that for current Western post-industrial societies, is defined by highly complex and specialized division of labor levels. Shutting out certain groups from entering the geographic or national territory of organic societies would have been considered a contradiction to Durkheim’s social model. Instead, countries like Germany, use the power of bilateral agreements with far away geopolitical regions to make sure migration flows are contained and dealt with remotely. In other words, camps are essentially outsourced death-worlds. Once Europe has decided to isolate and shield its territories from the excessive influx of human bodies, no matter from where they may come, it has taken on the role of administrators of death. Europe has created a mechanical law shield as an external barrier to protect the organic societies that rest within. Who will live and who will die becomes a footnote of bilateral policies such as that, most recently, between Germany and Turkey. Furthermore, it should be noted that the individuals affected by such necropolitics are left to their own devices. Necropolitics (Mbembe’s, 2003), conceptually extends Foucault’s (1990) “biopolitics”, by including the violent, oppressive regimes of death and destruction. (Mbembe’s conceptual frameworks will be revisited in greater detail in chapters 3 and 4.) Whereas biopolitical administrators and public institutions care very much for their ‘clients’, inmates, patients, pupils, as it is their function to control, teach, heal, contain and discipline said bodies, necropower permits and enables the
annihilation of bodies that are treated like human waste products (Mbembe, 2003; Bauman, 2004; Taussig, 1987). Mbembe writes, “under conditions of necropower, the lines between resistance and suicide, sacrifice and redemption, martyrdom and freedom are blurred” (2003, p. 40). (The creation of death-worlds and death-spaces will be investigated later in this study.)

**Globally Imagined Communities of Fear**

Sociologist Ulrich Beck (2008) takes the humanistic imperative of the care for others and with it, potentially new forms of global social solidarity by the horns. The conceptual backdrop for Beck’s notion of a “cosmopolitan moment” (2008) lies in his belief that global problems can only be solved and theorized on a global scale. But what if the fear of the global and all that it represents for those who have not prospered from its espoused promises, trumps the cosmopolitan unity that Beck proposes? After all, many formerly privileged Westerners have had to come to terms with the loss of biographical and national identity, jobs lost or shipped overseas, an incessant flood of immigrant or refugee labor, and indeed, the very tangible specter of downward social mobility. What if the cosmopolitan outlook instead recedes and is replaced by parochialism and its potentially destructive alter-egos, xenophobia and intolerance, all of which seek to box in the local and shut out the alien? The effects of a globalized world economy are felt by many as a form of occupation by an unknown agent or power.
Forces that have become impossible to grasp, let alone control take over the daily lives of ordinary citizens. Losing one’s job to competition from overseas markets, losing one’s home to foreclosure, losing all that was once familiar and watching it be replaced by much that is foreign can easily be experienced as a loss of personal, political, and national sovereignty. The so-called American Way of Life and its sibling, the American Dream are lifestyles that are increasingly perceived as having been kidnapped or occupied by a foreign power.

Indeed, it appears that notions of community and social solidarity are no longer sustained by the same sort of positive outlook that was so central to historic labor or civil rights movements. The improvement of working conditions in factories, the affirmation of basic human, civil rights for all citizens, the American Dream, and even World Peace have been surrendered to the negative outlook of collective and global vulnerabilities. Can the experience of shared vulnerabilities become the foundation for novel forms of social solidarity? The list for fears that make us aware of our physical and emotional vulnerability not only as individuals, but also as members of social groups, organizations, nation-states or even, as world citizens appears to be endless. Beck offers a new kind of global “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991) that is formed around a
collectively concept of global risks\textsuperscript{66}. Anderson’s (1991) original ideas of imagined communities refers to the belief that the individuals of a group or nation who do not necessarily personally know each other still imagine themselves agreeing on certain core values that may therefore be defined as universally valid and communal\textsuperscript{67}. This feeling of collective belonging and cohesion may be based on ideologies, abstract belief systems or mythological histories (or even a fabrication (Zerubavel, 1995)) that construct the image of a concrete, if only imagined, group solidarity\textsuperscript{68}. A sense of community is generally based on positive premises, i.e. ones that create positive feelings. By contrast, what Beck proposes is a strongly negative basis for a sense of community—a new global community that arises from a solidarity of negative space.

\textsuperscript{66} The list for potential global risks are many. Beck touches on the most relevant ones from recent history, like global terrorism, global warming, global financial market breakdown, nuclear reactor accidents, etc.
\textsuperscript{67} “Print capitalism” is the term and period that Anderson (1991) ascribes to an economic system that was enabled by novel communication technologies, i.e. Gutenberg’s moveable type printing press. This allowed vernacular languages to displace “truth languages”, like Latin, which dominated mass communication in earlier times and which were therefore reserved for a knowing elite. Local identities were suddenly capable of expressing their vernacular idioms and form new imagined communities that undermined larger, historical ones (the church, the sovereign).
\textsuperscript{68} Examples for imagined community are many and not at all positive: the German National Socialist’s imagined their Aryan racial superiority; The Hutu ethnic cleansing of Tutsis in Rwanda based on beliefs of superiority and entitlement; the world religions fall into this category as well; on a smaller scale, minority populations might imagine a community with other minority groups that are ostracized as a collective.
The work of Spanish artist Santiago Sierra falls in line with Beck’s vision of solidarity based on negativity. For Sierra, negation (Sierra, 2012) is the only viable path to counteract the pitfalls of modern society, which are obsessed with affirming existing practices and positive space: “Negativity is the only coherent reaction one can have in a society where the battle is already lost” (Sierra, 2012, p. 29). His “NO, Global Tour” (Sierra, 2012) is an illustration of how the notion of refusal and negation can be constructed in physical, social, and legal space, without otherwise interfering with capital circulation and its business as usual. A large painted steel, mobile “NO” sign attached to the back of a delivery truck (Figure 8) is very difficult for corporations or law enforcement agencies to legally contain. The symbolism of the “NO” sign can therefore penetrate deep into the securitized perimeters of global business corporations.

Who else then is part of this imagined community of risk that Beck proposes? The perception of systemic risks or potentially global threats are by no means objective categories. “One man’s freedom fighter is another man’s terrorist” (Friedersdorf, 2012), as the obnoxious cliché goes. And yet, it is irrefutable that the human species itself is at stake. Climate change, terrorism, mass migrations and civil war affect everybody, and the solution Beck proposes represents a new kind of cosmopolitanism⁶⁹. First, comes the

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⁶⁹ How exactly Beck envisions this cosmopolitanism to function on the policy level remains unclear.
work of creating consensus about what humanity is up against. Marginalized regions need to be included in order to build a “crucible of global reflexivity” (Beck, 2008, p. 186). The parochial fears expressed by disenfranchised, hateful, and often xenophobic proto-fascists, who are currently riding the tidal waves of right-wing populisms all over the world, do not contribute to the indispensable changes the structure of feeling has to undergo to create a newly oriented, global social solidarity. Neither will the economic selfishness and greed of the economically privileged strata of society provide sufficient incentives or leadership (by example) necessary to establish a new global social order, grounded in a collectively fear of a global catastrophe. So although somewhat compelling, Beck’s concept is more of an invitation to theorize and speculate than to establish legal or political frameworks. This study explores viable alternatives to such a negative reloaded version of social solidarity.

**The Biology of Fear**

The study of human emotion has been approached from many different angles. The sociological approach questions whether and to what degree emotions are culturally determined. Biology and genetics try to determine whether and to what degree emotions are the product of genes and the neurological structures of the brain, viz. the evolution of emotions. In his book, *The Emotional Brain*, neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux (1996) combines several of these approaches to craft a more integrated framework for
the study of human emotions. He focuses on fear and the so-called fear complex, which he considers to be part of a more deeply engrained, hard-wired, primordial emotional response system located in the amygdala.

Several of LeDoux’s observations are crucial for this analysis. First, fear is a defensive system that “operates independently of consciousness” (LeDoux, 1996, p.128), which shows that it is not the experience of fear itself that matters but the ability to detect danger and to avoid it efficiently. In this utilitarian, functionalist light, Leviathan (Hobbes, 1651) needs to be reimagined as a product of the fear complex’s efficiencies. The forging of a social contract between the violent but fearful natural man and an almighty, sovereign ruler, whom he awards the absolute power necessary to produce a situation that maximizes chances for the survival of potentially life-threatening situations (Hobbes, 1651, p. 126). If the human desire for world peace is limited to the principle of “the weak fear the strong”, then laws would only exist to protect us from social chaos. Hobbes also comments on the fragility of the established social bond or contract, which explains why humanity has such a long history of breaching contracts and waging wars:

But as men, for the attaining of peace and conservation of themselves thereby, have made an artificial man, which we call a Commonwealth; so also have they made artificial chains, called civil laws, which they themselves, by mutual covenants, have fastened at one end to the lips of that man, or assembly, to whom they have given the sovereign power, and at the other to their own ears. These bonds, in their own nature but weak, may nevertheless be made to hold, by the danger, though not by the difficulty of breaking them. (1951, p. 130)
Such a highly problematic, survivalist stance is not long sustainable either at the level of the individual or his society, a discussion of which will be a major topic in chapter 4.

Second, fear can be artificially conditioned, which means that there exists a clear neurological input path for external stimuli to allow for learning. LeDoux, like others assigns fear a selective function that opens up “channels of evolutionary shaped responsivity to new environmental events, allowing novel stimuli that predict danger […] to gain control over tried-and-true ways of responding to danger” (1996, p.143). On the one hand, since fear works independently of conscious awareness, the fear complex can be triggered artificially by any associated stimulus. On the other hand, once fear is indelibility linked to a specific negative or even traumatic memory, a newly conditioned stimulus can be activated artificially in order to unleash the unpleasant memory.

Crucially, then, this phenomenon illustrates how populist fear mongering can become a truly effective method of manipulating the collective consciousness and social interactions based on abstract fears. For example, the figure of the Islamic terrorist has created a generalized bias against any individual of a certain phenotype, religious belief or donning traditional attire. The fear response of people who have been deeply

70 In one of her recent public speeches, German Chancellor Angela Merkel (Oltermann, 2016) proclaimed that the *burqa* and *niqap* will be banished from all public spaces in Germany wherever law allows for doing so. Needless to say, this panders to the growing anti-Islamic populism in Germany and the rest of Europe, but also provides solid support for LeDoux’s thesis of emotional.
affected by the terror attacks of 9/11, either in person or through media representation\textsuperscript{71}, has been isolated from the event and can now be triggered symbolically by a mental image alone\textsuperscript{72}. Removed from lab situations, the socio-political dimension of this knowledge becomes a virulent and powerful weapon that puts fear to work for social, economic, political manipulation and domination.

Political scientist Corey Robins (2004) describes fear as a political idea and “a symptom of pervasive conflict and political unhappiness” (p. 3). For him, political fear “arises from conflicts within and between societies” (Robins, 2004, p. 2), a far cry from the earlier neuroscientific explanation. Robins’ negative view of political fear aligns with that of French Renaissance philosopher Michel de Montaigne, who famously coined the phrase, “It is fear that I am most afraid of” (2003, p.83) in response to the war atrocities he had witnessed. His observations of soldiers’ deeply irrational acts when overwhelmed by the fear of battle led him to conclude that fear and fear responses are, 

stimulus association: the burqa and niqap have come to symbolize terrorism in the idiom of modern xenophobia.

\textsuperscript{71} This can lead to a paradoxical situation in which the feared Other (immigrants, refugees) is described as taking away the jobs of the very same locals who are accused of being lazy welfare recipients who hate to work. This paradox confirms the irrationality of many socio-economic fears.

\textsuperscript{72} For this reason, The National September 11 Memorial in NYC is a thoroughly ambiguous and moribund site, as it seeks to keep the emotionally negative memory of terrorism alive as a means to healing while never forgetting. The true process of mourning and healing, which the memorial was designed for has been displaced as an apparatus (Foucault, 1991) to rally peoples behind America’s war efforts in the Greater Middle East (Bacevich, 2016).
in fact, akin to madness. Some soldiers froze on the spot; others fled right into the hands of the enemy; still others simply died on the spot without any apparent physical injury. Remarkably, Montaigne’s 16th century discovery that fear affects the human body in extreme ways aligns very well with the current neuroscience findings of non-cognitive, unconscious fear responses. What modern thinkers—scientists, philosophers, politicians and military theorists—have deduced from these observations is that the heightened state of arousal, awareness and preparedness that fear subconsciously elicits can be ruthlessly exploited by skilled manipulators. Robins sees how fear can easily be appropriation for purely political purposes (2004) and is therefore critical of the positivistic way that modern neuroscience describes the function of fear as a mere avoidance of peril. Indeed, his research investigates the socio-political use and abuse of fear as tool to access subjectivities under the radar of cognitive awareness. Robins cites Locke, who found fear very useful for increasing human industry and similarly, Burke, who thought fear allowed people to experience “delightful terror” (2004, p. 4) in triggering a(n) (albeit artificial) state of activity. For Burke, nothing was more loathsome than death-like passivity. The notion of a collectively experienced fear as an opportunity for collective renewal has been at the heart of many political ideologies and military doctrines, the most recent of which is GWOT. Fear is often seen as a life-force enhancer,
a provider of personal virtues and a re-inventor of the self. The multi-billion dollar extreme sports industry is just one example that will be examined in greater detail later. Fear as a powerful economic engine has been largely ignored by economists and demands deeper exploration.

Sociologist Jonathan Turner approaches fear from a slightly different angle. For Turner (2007), fear indisputably falls into the category of primary human emotions, although there is an ongoing debate as to which other emotions are ‘primary’. According to a recent study by the the Institute of Neuroscience and Psychology at the University of Glasgow, only four gross human emotional states exist: happy, sad, afraid/surprised, and angry/disgusted (Beck, 2014). Turner (2007) defines primary emotions as “states of affective arousal that are presumed to be hard-wired in human neuroanatomy, [meaning] “humans probably inherited these not only from our primate ancestors but from all mammals” (p. 2-3). The secondary and tertiary emotions that allow for more refined responses to stimuli are also the fundamental ingredients for the emergence of social solidarity. Their interplay, which includes important variations in levels of intensity, are combinations with more conscious cognitive neurological

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73 For sociologist Jonathan Turner (2007), “the human conception of ‘the self’ depends on an interplay of automatic biological functions. The ‘self’ is not so much a cognitive construct as an activation of the emotion systems implicated in storing memories in the frontal lobe, in thought processes couched in the brain’s way of thinking, in subcortical emotional memory systems, and in the reactivation of the emotional body system” (p. 61).
processes. Turner characterizes natural selection as an active agent of change that rewards combinations of primary, secondary and tertiary emotions and thereby stimulate the positive side of the emotional spectrum, which for him are the requisite building blocks of social structures. Turner (2007) cites anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1967) and his theory of gift exchange as an example of a total social fact. Turner describes “[e]xchange, per se, [as generating] positive emotions” (p. 33). That Turner omits the part of Mauss’s study in which gift exchange is defined as an all encompassing economic system that can result in the complete destruction of common wealth, the emotional cost of which is clearly devastating to the social group, which can find itself stripped of much of its collective resources and confronted with starvation.

Borrowing from sociologist and anthropologist Emile Durkheim, Turner uses the concept of totemic symbols as emotionally charged social representations to illustrate the catastrophic effects of such a violation the established social order. He explains that social solidarity will be “punished with negative emotions”, and the upholding of expectations will be “rewarded with positive emotional responses” (Turner, 2007, p.33)

74 In the case of the potlatch, the underlying social obligation of reciprocity can lead to competitive giving excesses and correspondingly high levels of negative emotions. Arendt (1958) here contrasts Darwin’s natural laws with Marx’s historical laws. Both foreshadowed the liquidation of certain social groups: the former by following racial superiority ideology and the latter by making certain social classes historically superfluous. Despite Arendt’s dire assertions, she nevertheless finds reason for hope.
such humans’ learned ability to control emotions can also be made into a coercive tool. That is, the torture and execution of criminal offenders qualifies as the administration of negative emotions. To reduce complex and highly controversial social practices to “positive” or “negative” categories is potentially dangerous. In contrast, Foucault’s (1978) gruesome, detail-laden description of the spectacle of public execution as a public display of the sovereign’s power over his subject’s life and death serves a larger argument. Foucault (1978) clearly advocates regimes of truth, knowledge and the supremacy of human cognitive functions as reasonable guides for the organization and administration of society. Turner (2007), on the other hand, frames “fitness-enhancing social bonds and group solidarity” (p. 41) in terms of natural selection, which “worked on the hominid neuroanatomy to increase control over emotions” (p. 41). Turner insists on the primacy of biology over social determination when he argues, “[h]ow can we understand violent revolutions, terrorism, fanatical conformity, war, collective behavior, and many other processes where the emotional intensity is very high only with cognitive view of emotions?” (2007, p.43). As such, the neuro-sociological model of social solidarity proposed by Turner clashes with the historical, epistemological model suggested by Foucault. This study will try to uncover possible responses to the list of items Turner included in his question.

A large variety of socio-economic and socio-political forms coexist today, each with its own administrative institutions, legal frameworks, rituals, military, cultural, and
scientific practices. How to read culture like a text (Geertz, 1973) and to understand that
man-made structures are the product of our cognitive abilities is not a skill confined
only to researchers and artists, for design, architecture, science, and art all express
culture. To quote Eibl-Eibesfeld, the founder of the field of human ethology: “Perhaps
man is one of the most fearful creatures, since added to the basic fear of predators and
hostile conspecifics come intellectually based existential fears” (LeDoux, 1996, p. 129).
This view opens the field of human emotion studies to psychoanalyses, philosophy and
art. Humans today are affected psychologically in far more harmful ways than by any
natural predator. As a species, our greatest existential threat is human thought and in
particular, fear.

The Psychology of Fear

Arbitrary power, unrestricted by law, yielded in the interest of the ruler and
hostile to the interests of the governed, on one hand, fear as the principle of
action, namely fear of the people by the ruler and fear of the ruler by the people,
on the other these have been the hallmarks of tyranny throughout our tradition.
(Arendt, 1958, p. 461)

Thinking about the politics of subconscious fear responses versus the purely
biological stirs up an array of diverging perspectives. Fear can, in fact, be made into the
building blocks for governing structures. Arendt (1958) rightly identifies fear as a key
psychological ingredient of totalitarian terror regimes. She goes so far as to entertain the
idea that fear-based totalitarian rule might actually be yet another “natural” or
“essential” form of government next to “traditional political forces—liberal or
conservative, national or socialist, republican or monarchist, authoritarian or
democratic” (pp. 460-461). Arendt also recognizes that when employed as a political
tool, fear loses its utility as a biological defense mechanism: “Under totalitarian
conditions [...] fear has lost its practical usefulness when actions guided by it can no
longer help to avoid the dangers man fears” (1958, p. 467). Totalitarianism appropriated
and put into effect what natural and historical laws, theorized by Darwin and Marx,
have already proclaimed. Both foreshadowed the liquidation of certain social groups:
the former by following racial superiority ideology and the latter by making certain
social classes would be rendered historically superfluous. According to her analyses,
under totalitarian rule the traditionally established parameters of lawfulness or
lawlessness cease to be the essence of government and principle.

Indeed, the importance of fear as a powerful psychological governing tool has
not escaped the attention of political theorists. In his treatise on diplomacy, statecraft

75 Arendt (1958) here contrasts Darwin’s natural laws with Marx’s historical laws. Darwin’s
natural selection concept was based on his survival of the fittest principle. Such notions were
tailor-made for Hitler’s racial categories or worthy and unworthy humans. Marx’s dialectical
class struggle would lead to the final dissolution of class difference.
76 Despite Arendt’s dire assertions, she nevertheless finds reason for hope when she claims that
“[j]ust as lawfulness in constitutional government is insufficient to inspire and guide men’s
actions, so terror in totalitarian government is not sufficient to inspire and guide human
behavior” (p. 467).
77 Psyops (Psychological Operations) is the U.S. military term for clandestine spying,
manipulation, conspiring and subverting of the enemy or any unwelcome form of government.
American secret service offices have made heavy use of psyops to topple democratically elected

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and military undertakings, Renaissance political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli famously states that rulers needed to fear both internal and external enemies but for completely different reasons:

For this reason, a prince ought to have two fears, one from within, on account of his subjects, the other from without, on account of external powers. From the latter he is defended by being well armed and having good allies, and if he is well armed he will have good friends, and affairs will always remain quiet within when they are quiet without, unless they should have been already disturbed by conspiracy; and even should affairs outside be disturbed, if he has carried out his preparations and has lived as I have said, as long as he does not despair, he will resist every attack […]. (2003, p. 71)

Machiavelli’s 500-year-old prescription could not be more timely. For instance, NATO is just such a well-armed community of allies who are contractually bound to help one another in the case of a military attack by an outside force. Machiavelli also addresses the relevance of built fortification for the governing rulers, which also holds water in our times:

Fortresses, therefore, are useful or not according to circumstances; if they do you good in one way they injure you in another. And this question can be reasoned thus: the prince who has more to fear from the people than from foreigners ought to build fortresses, but he who has more to fear from foreigners than from the people ought to leave them alone. (2003, p. 82)

This speaks directly to several of the main concerns of this study, including its response to the burning question: can a convincing theoretical argument be made for considering governments such as the other 9/11, Allende in Chile, who was simply killed and replaced by the military dictator Pinochet.
domestic fortifications, security perimeters and gated communities, and so on, as a form of—alien or otherwise foreign—occupation? A vernacular understanding of occupation suggests an outside power’s aggressive takeover of domestic territory. Following Machiavelli’s logic then, certain forms of domestic power and their infrastructure can be seen as the enemy to the sovereign or the *demos* or people of a democratic society. It is historically well documented that small pockets of a society have been able to create exclusive social clubs, as it were, that are both impenetrable from the social outside and from which regimes and political agendas have cleverly, subtly dispensed with the rights, holdings, visibility of the rest. In all such cases, of these powerful entities have the ability to practically and legally occupy domestic territory and to shut unwelcome presences out by lethal force, if need be. This amounts to occupation by a hostile alien force or, to use a biological metaphor, an allergic reaction, which is little more than an infection by the body’s very own immune response to what should be a harmless external stimulant. In other words, a domestic occupation is very like a potentially lethal autoimmune response.

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78 For instance, the British aristocracy and landed gentry dispossessed of the common lands for the poor majority and forced the latter into wage labor. Today, private corporations fence in their property both physically with guards and gates and immaterially with restrictive intellectual property laws. Another example are the ubiquitous presence of militarized police and heavily secured military bases, which include more and more private military subcontractors.
The question of how to effectively protect the domestic population from such a lethal response begs the question of whether or not security infrastructure such as bunkers, airport security checkpoints, and so on, really deliver. Is the “National Security State” (Bacevich, 2005) mere gimmickry, meant to make the world believe that the U.S. is safe and secure? Or is national security a highly sophisticated apparatus (Foucault, 1995) designed for a Machiavellian ruler to control his/her ‘subjects’? Here again, Anderson’s (1991) concept of “imagined community” is handily invoked (by inversion) by anthropologist Ajun Appadurai (2006):

> The puzzle is about why the relatively small numbers that give the word minority its most simple meaning and usually imply political and military weakness do not prevent minorities from being objects of fear and of rage. Why kill, torture, or ghettoize the weak? (p. 49)

The often paradoxical and irrational nature or fear responses becomes is exemplified by Appadurai’s findings that citizens of more or less ethnically homogenous societies\(^79\) tend to be very afraid of even the smallest number of immigrants or asylum seekers. Finland’s extremely restrictive asylum laws, which allow for no more than one hundred new asylum seekers per year, further illustrate this paradox. To that end, Chilean artist

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\(^79\) Smaller nations or communities face a different dilemma, the fear of cultural absorption. The slogan: “one man’s imagined community is another man’s political prison” (Appadurai, 1990, p. 6) point to the idea to be culturally absorbed by larger culture in a kind of surreptitious assimilation process. The examples Appadurai (1990) provides are the normative effect of “McDonaldization” and “Americanization” (pp. 3, 5) experienced almost all over the world.
Alfredo Jaar (1995) made a stunningly reproachful work (*Figure 9*) entitled *One Million Finnish Passports*. Were it not for its fear of small numbers, Finland would by now have granted one million people citizenship, a conditional (non-)reality that Jaar reflects by invoking in their appropriately restrictive legal infrastructure. In his work, passports acquire a built-environment physicality like walls or barriers such that the passports themselves become infrastructure just like a border security checkpoint or the Berlin Wall. In his installation, the one million fake Finnish passports were stacked behind a secured steel and glass barrier supposedly and provocatively to prevent theft. According to an anecdote by Jaar during his 2013 artist talk at the Rhode Island School of Design, on one occasion, a Finnish citizen threw his authentic passport over the enclosure onto the stack as an act of protest against Finland’s restrictive asylum laws. Paraphrasing the artist’s sentiments towards Finish lawmakers, Suomennos Patrik Nyberg (2014), editor of the catalogue to Jaar’s work, writes, “[t]he passports represent the number of Finnish citizens that would exist today if Finnish authorities had not enforced a xenophobic immigration policy. If my choice of the term xenophobic sounds awkward, you can replace it with Jaar’s own word: racist” (p. 135). The function of a passport to regulate access—that is, to limit or deny entry to the bound nation state—is performed visually and embodied by the boxing-in of the passports behind a secure steel and glass wall.

Jaar’s play with an inside(r)/outside(r) space brings us to the We/Other distinction that is so fundamental to the study of fear and occupation. Freud’s early 20th
century psychoanalyses of culture, *Totem and Taboo* (1952) is suffused with Eurocentric distinctions between the “savage” or “primitive” peoples abroad and the “civilized” European cultures of his home. Freud identifies “primitive” prohibitions like those against incest and patricide\(^80\) as early predecessors or law. The power and function of communal taboos as social institutions that regulate and control social behavior rely on fear, for the taboo “grows into a force with a basis of its own, independent of the belief in demons” (Freud, 1952, p. 31). To avoid this looming demonic retaliation, fear is objectified or in psychoanalytical terms, displaced. A previously fear inducing or otherwise emotionally ambivalent situation is *displaced* onto a tangible object that can then be avoided by simply not touching or using it. An example of an unconscious displacement process is the “primitive\(^81\) taboo upon the dead”, which prohibits any physical contact with the dead who are “treated as enemies” (Freud, 1952, p. 65). This specific taboo serves the dual purpose of externalizing and thereby objectifying an internal contradiction, which originates in the emotional ambivalence created by the prohibition of feeling both grief and satisfaction about the loved one’s death\(^82\). By

\(^80\) Today we know that both incest and patricide interdictions are cultural universals, which means they are present in most if not all cultures of this world.
\(^81\) Much of Freud’s research is couched in profoundly Eurocentric notions of civilization and the “primitive” Other, which is typical for late 19th and early 20th century.
\(^82\) Canetti describes the sense of pleasure experienced by the figure of the survivor, who lives while others have died (1998).
transforming the spirit of the dead loved one into a demon, it can be loathed and feared freely, thus effectively resolving any emotional ambivalence created by the prohibition to feel satisfaction about the loved person’s death. In the event of the inevitable break with a taboo, purification and sacrificial rituals (1952, pp. 164-174) are practiced to assuage the demons. Thus, communal taboo prohibitions contain a path for reestablishing the natural balance and order of things.

In contrast to the behavioral patterns of so-called primitives, the “instinctual repression” of Freud’s members of the “civilized” world should be used as “a measure of the level of civilization that has been reached” (p. 122). Indeed, the obsessional neurosis of his Austrian patients are the main subject of his doctoring: how to come to terms with their conflicting but understandable emotional states. That is, taboo prohibitions are the unrepessed versions of typical ‘civilized’ psycho-pathologies such that the unconscious has to do the work of ridding a person of ambivalent feelings or guilt, say, after the death, in the ‘civilized’ world, of a loved one. This unconscious process constitutes a “pathological form of mourning” that results in “obsessive self-reproaches” (1952, p. 75). It is interesting that Freud does not suggest that “civilized

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83For George Bataille (1986) the transgression constitutes the taboo (p. 38). By violating a prohibition, anguish is experienced, which is constitutive of the taboo itself.
neurotics” are by any means emotionally healthier than the equivalent “savage mind” (1952, p. 77), for the “civilized” person internalizes these “ambivalent emotional attitudes”, i.e. the displacements of “primitive peoples”, thereby creating the additional negative feelings of bad conscience and guilt (1952, p.85). In forthcoming discussion of the Muselmann (Agamben, 1999; Sofsky, 1997) and by extension, the popular culture figure of the zombie, Freud’s findings prove significant and perhaps surprisingly relevant. From his psychoanalytical standpoint, the living mask their feelings of pleasure for being survivors (Canetti, 1998) by demonizing the dead or quasi-dead. The Muselmann and the zombie figures are therefore totemic representations of survivors’ own bad conscience; avoiding and shutting them out must be part of the taboo ritual. Examined in this light, the more common interpretation of the zombie figure by horror genre illuminati as modern allegories for immigrants, refugees, terrorists or even, the postcolonial slave, etc., falls flat.

Attribution⁸⁴ (Turner, 2007) is yet another psychological defense mechanism that represses and displaces negative emotions. This mechanism transmutes the repressed negative feeling “into anger at safe targets that cannot easily fight back” (Turner, 2007, p. 91). Tension is directed outward, thus providing an outlet for what would otherwise be

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⁸⁴ In popular vernacular, this mechanism is called scape-goating and is brought to great use by political demagogues.
self-destructive. For Turner, the critical point of self-care is “that individuals are constantly making causal attributions as to the source of various outcomes” (Turner, 2007, p. 96), thus developing a large repertoire of cause and effect relationships associated with specific negative emotions. If the goal is to maximize positive and minimize negative emotions, attribution gives the individual an essentially unconscious solution to the challenge of how to accomplish this goal:

Attributions thus becomes a principle route for the attaching of emotional reactions to others and social structures, with the consequence that social structure (and the cultures that they embody) are potentially targeted with repressed anger, fear, sadness, shame or guilt that has been transmuted into negative emotions that are directed outward. With attributions, negative emotional arousal becomes a heat-seeking missile, with a guidance system provided by external attribution dynamics. (Turner, 2007, pp.97-98)

Turner’s belletristic metaphor (2007) illustrates one important aspect of this analysis: the energies aroused by fear and other negative feelings associated with the fear complex e.g. aggression, depression, or sadness, tend to be directed towards an outside target. Much of today’s violence can be framed in this way. An outstanding example that will be discussed in chapter 3 is the reaction of Muslim populations in the Greater Middle East to the virtual battlefields of U.S. drone wars being waged remotely against targets in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan. The rage remote warfare creates in local populations stems from the fact than an actual fightable enemy is simply no longer present. In modern warfare, the battlefield has been removed and replaced by a virtual arena that is inaccessible to insurgent fighters and yet infinitely mobile, like a conceptual template, for the drone fighters. Although the body count of fallen military
personnel is strikingly minimal, the psychological, infrastructural and increasingly, corporeal damage done to civilian populations is far greater. The preponderance of the shock and awe doctrine in the U.S. Revolution of Military Affairs has created a time-delayed response by enemy fighters that is expressed largely as terrorist attacks in the remote homelands of the tele-present drone pilots.

It must be noted that it is not body count that matters in modern warfare; it is the psychological spoils of state-of-the-art socio-political and often, economic campaigns. Der Derian (2001) labels this, the latest turn in military operations as “virtuous warfare”, which is characterized by the propagandistic omission of dead bodies. In the case of drone warfare, fear functions procedurally and symptomatically. Symptomatic fear reinforces the institutions of disciplinary societies. Jeremy Bentham’s (1995) blueprint for a diagram of power—the utilitarian space of panoptic architecture—is grounded in the abstract fear of constantly being watched or found out. Any subversive activities will be experienced as dangerous by the potential offender, which lead Foucault (1978) to argue that disciplinary structures become internalized by the individual. The discourse of power is therefore shaped by fear—the fear of backlash or punitive action suffered because of some abstract feeling of wrongdoig. A literary precedent is Kafka’s (2009 [1915]) novel The Trial (Der Prozess) in which the protagonist is haunted and persecuted for an alleged wrongdoing of which he is utterly unaware and for which he is nonetheless ultimately executed. Kafka describes symbolic power of fear with haunting
perfection and in so doing, proves that human fear is largely a product of our own imagination. Chapter 4 discusses how the human imagination is, contrary to popular belief, neither an autonomous nor sovereign entity.

As has already been discussed, the manipulation of symbolic meanings meant to shape our imagination and our way of thinking is nothing new. Neither is the fetishization of mechanized, essentially dehumanized warfare. Indeed, the Italian Futurist art movement beginning in 1909 lead the way with its adoration and hyper-aestheticization of violence and war. The Italian poet Marinetti, mouthpiece of the Futurists, brashly extolled the virtues of industrialized warfare while many of the collective’s young members perished in the flames of an inferno they had so passionately evoked. In the epilogue to his The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction essay, Benjamin (2007) warns about the dangers of an aestheticization of politics, which he believed would lead to fascism and war. He brings up Marinetti’s Ethiopian colonial war manifesto to make his point:

For twenty-seven years we Futurists have rebelled against the branding of war as anti-aesthetic ... Accordingly we state: ... War is beautiful because it establishes man’s dominion over the subjugated machinery by means of gas masks, terrifying megaphones, flame throwers, and small tanks. War is beautiful because it initiates the dreamt-of metallization of the human body. War is beautiful because it enriches a flowering meadow with the fiery orchids of machine guns. War is beautiful because it combines the gunfire, the cannonades, the cease-fire, the scents, and the stench of putrefaction into a symphony. War is beautiful because it creates new architecture, like that of the big tanks, the geometrical formation flights, the smoke spirals from burning villages, and many others ... Poets and artists of Futurism! ... remember these principles of an aesthetics of war so that your struggle for a new literature and a new graphic art ... may be illumined by them! (Benjamin, 2007, p. 241)
German historian Theweleit (1987) expanded the Futurist, fascist notion of the metalized body into what he called “body tanks” or “body bunkers” (Körperpanzer)—a sort of militarized human projectile waiting to be fired at the enemy so as to disintegrate and thereby completely merge with the fragments of the military machine. Theweleit saw the fear of bodily dissolution (Zerfließungsängste) as a quintessential psychological pathology of the post-First World War proto-fascist paramilitary (Freicorps). The psychology of this sexualized and perverted instantiation of fear and the various methods of countering them are explored in Chapter 4.

**Methodology: Multi-sited research**

Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography. Indeed, such multi-sited ethnography is a revival of a sophisticated practice of constructivism, one of the most interesting and fertile practices of representation and investigation by the Russian avant-garde of momentous social change just before and after their revolution. Constructivists viewed the artist as an engineer whose task was to construct useful objects, much like a factory worker, while actively participating in the building of a new society. (Marcus, 1998, p. 90)

The methodological approach for this study is inspired by Benjamin’s process of tracing and assembling bits and pieces of visual and intellectual material into novel conceptual and textual architectures. The Surrealist’s preferred artistic technique, the collage, compliments Benjamin’s textual montage by enriching it with visual and symbolic elements of the human subconscious. Indeed, Surrealism was guided by the
treasure trove of Freud’s psychoanalyses, which sought to tap into the historically repressed inner worlds of the subconscious mind. Benjamin’s polysensorial spatial meanderings were oriented outwards, towards the world of things that can be touched and seen; the Surrealists had their eyes turned inwards, aimed at hidden, often dark and repressed inner structures. Hence, the Surrealist collage and Benjamin’s textual montage are both assemblages of bodies of knowledge—of heterogeneous materials that were observed, found, picked up and reconfigured into new meanings and new knowledge. This study embodies and merges both approaches and turns them into a sort of multi-site (Marcus, 1998) methodology for creating a thick description\(^85\) (Geertz, 1973) of the subject matter.

The reasoning behind such methodological mélange is that it allows the subjects and objects of this study to be explored from multiple theoretical angles, intellectual traditions and artistic practices. Heterogeneous aspects of the intersections between theoretical research and art practice\(^86\) can be connected, as in the surrealist collage, to create new architectures of knowledge and deepened networks of meaning. This method

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\(^{85}\) Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) developed “thick description” as a research method that digs deep into the specifics of unknown cultural enactments. From thick description, cultural rituals that may otherwise remain inaccessible to its Western participant observers, culture can be read like a text, as if like looking over the shoulder of the social agents.

\(^{86}\) For Williams (1954), art is a skill that allows the artist to engage and unravel the current structures of feeling, and all theory “derives from that skill, and is not a substitute for it” (Foreword).
draws on Benjamin’s urban practice of walking (de Certeau, 1984), which embodies the meandering flaneur archetype. Recall that the flaneur is the figure who pays attention to spatial and temporal subtleties and nuances and takes in the “aura” (Benjamin, 2007) from a requisite distance\(^\text{87}\). For Benjamin (2007), a distance to an auratic object or situation is required (he brings up a landscape to highlight his understanding of the meaning distance). The desire to come close to objects in order to revere them is “the desire of contemporary masses to bring things ‘closer’ spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction” (2007, p. 221).

The now outmoded forms of ethnography took this idea of the necessary distance and an observable aura to the extreme by making the practice of anthropology essentially a purely textual and spatially removed study of “Otherness” (Clifford, 1988). So-called arm-chair anthropology was long ago proven to be misleading, at best and erroneous, at worst. What followed, participatory ethnography (Geertz, 1973), has been a vast methodological improvement for a field struggling to be recognized as

\(^{87}\) “To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose ‘sense of the universal equality of things’ has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction. Thus is manifested in the field of perception what in the theoretical sphere is noticeable in the increasing importance of statistics. The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception” (Benjamin, 2007, p. 223).
legitimately scientific and yet, utterly relevant and un-sterile. Not entirely unlike Benjamin’s observation by meanderings, at least in spirit, according to Geertz, the practice of ethnography is “like trying to read (in the sense of ‘construct a reading of’) a manuscript—foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior” (1973, p. 10). Geertz’s idea of “thick description” is a methodologically invaluable approach for making unfamiliar cultures and their rituals more palpable. But here, a lack of distance from the object of study (the Other), which Benjamin (2007) and the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002) considered so fundamental, presents its own set of contradictions and imprecisions. That is, the anthropologist’s participant observation of ritual practices s/he is trying to study inevitably alters the rituals themselves, no matter how unintentionally or subtly. Furthermore, the informants on whom anthropologists rely are narrative agents in their own right (Clifford, 1988). Narrated social reality is not the same as reality lived from the inside, and the truth value of narration is always subjective. Given that truth and knowledge are always biased, manipulative and necessarily vectors for power (no matter the scale), a new approach to the study of human society is required. The multisited research approach (Marcus, 1995; 1998) of this study seeks to reveal the invisible (or elusive) dimensions of the subjects and objects analyzed in the hope of avoiding such pitfalls.
A multi-sited approach allows for an expanded field of research in which heterogeneous elements can be combined to form a meaningful unit that does not deny their subjectivity. The collage explores and ideally, reveals part of the inner workings of the investigating researcher and the subjects or objects of his study, viz. their psycho-emotional fabric. The collage is both a discursive analysis and an assemblage of the natural and built environment in which the investigator meets her subject or object at eye level, the necessity of which is the more urgent in the Internet\textsuperscript{88} age. Today, the social and the geopolitical are intertwined in the virtual realm of digital communication networks. Mobile telecommunication competes with and often forecloses human face-to-face interactions, the implications of which are profound, particularly in the realm of research practices that insist on the isolation of their subject matter. Indeed, in a networked society (Castells, 1996) all is connected.

Still, the Internet-age proxy of the strolling flaneur, the “cyberflaneur” (Morozov, 2012), has already come and gone, almost as fast as Benjamin’s arcade flaneurs were displaced first by the department store and later by the mall. The notion of browsing or

\textsuperscript{88} Morozov’s (2011, 2013) highly critical stance towards the fetishization of information and communication technologies questions the usefulness and accuracy of the summary term “Internet”. This underwrites the idea proposed in this study that much of what is taken for granted in modern society lacks critical interrogation. The most mundane and profane expressions of a society can reveal much of the inner workings of a culture if adequately analyzed.
surfing the Internet as the equivalent of Benjamin’s meandering, which was then transformed into a form of civil resistance to power by the Situationist International movement known as the “Theory of the Dérive” (Debord, 1994). Not surprisingly, the once cutting-edge-sounding terms ‘browsing’ or ‘surfing’ sound quaint today. The new buzz-words are ‘big data’, ‘data-mining’ or media ‘streaming’, products of the overwhelming market share of visual media formats immanent to contemporary mobile communication. Internet users are now data and information consumers, not active agents in the creation of content. Here, social media participation is deliberately excluded from categories of artistic creation, although social media use is undoubtedly a novel form of capital production. Gone are the times of total Internet freedom, when one could freely roam any and every corner of the network of networks in search of extravagant collectibles.

The death of the cyber-flaneur is really a conceptual change to practice: it is the moment when the web became the inversion of exploration and meandering a.k.a. browsing and surfing, long before Edward Snowden pointed to the obvious and inevitable truth that Power would take full advantage of the information network’s

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89 Even today, this idea has an irresistible appeal to certain people, which can be followed online under http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/theory.html.
90 This highlights capital’s uncontested take-over of what had originally been imagined as the ultimate tool for truly horizontal, grassroots democratic citizen participation and guarantor of freedom of choice.
capacity to control and monitor populations (Solove, 2004). Orwellian-style power brokers now have the technological ability to observe the very entrails of citizens’ most intimate dealings. Personal information has become the site of automated pattern recognition algorithms that browse and surf in our personal wakes and that are targeted by agencies of power—mostly, capital extraction operations that monetize on the personal data slew that free citizens freely offer up via the simplest of actions: a mouse click. The Internet has created a new infrastructure of feeling91 that needs to be unraveled, a task that this study proposes to accomplish.

Structure of Feeling as Structure for Research

Raymond Williams’s (1954) concept of the structure of feeling provides several useful analytical tools and metaphors for the analyses in this study. First, his use of the term structure to describe a typology of social forms that can be experienced both as physical and emotional architecture is useful to the investigation of built environment infrastructure that are crucial to the workings of the contemporary capitalist mode of

91 The slight modification of William’s (1954) concept into infrastructure of feeling has many reasons. Internet infrastructure, as an ideal example, has altered how human beings relate to one another at a distance (and face-to-face interaction indirectly by limiting it). Social media platforms, online dating services, online pornography, online job markets and marketplaces for exchange of goods and other services, have all structured the hegemonic social practices of the past. Life has become liquid (Bauman, 2000).
production. Second, by connecting the term structure to feeling, Williams incorporates and adds emotionally charged dimensions—both collective and individual— to society’s experiences of these ubiquitous infrastructures that define their built environment\(^2\). Williams understanding of “structures” refers to a “dominant system of belief and education to influential systems of explanation and argument” (Williams 1954, p. 130), which is more akin to Foucault’s notion of “a corpus of knowledge” and “systems of truth” (Foucault 1978, p. 23). For this analysis, such an epistemological architecture of social formations has been expanded into a more comprehensive model that includes the physically built environments that enable the capitalist mode of production.

Many of the infrastructures analyzed in this study are hidden from our sensory perceptions and can only be ‘felt’ as effects on our lives (legal frameworks, urban planning guidelines, zoning laws, citizenship regulations). These are the material and immaterial building blocks of the contemporary infrastructure of feeling. In particular, this study is concerned with the violence that resides within the original design of said

\[^2\text{Williams's (1954) model of thought builds a clear relationship between theoretical inquiry and artistic practice. Williams found that the material conditions of life and the social forms of a period could not be fully captured by theory. He writes “while we may, in the study of a past period, separate out particular aspects of life, and treat them as if they were self-contained, it is obvious that this is only how they may be studied, not how they are experienced” (p. 21). Theory can analyze, describe, capture and explain aspects of reality but only practice can be experienced by audiences: a theoretically “observed totality” falls short in registering “for which there is no counterpart” (Williams 1954, p.21).}\]
infrastructures. The “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 1984) that emanates from their material presence in space supports the idea that infrastructure occupies a93 affective and socio-economic space. As such, it affects us individually and collectively on both conscious and unconscious levels. This violence can be implicit or explicit or even, both. For example, public spaces increasingly feature built elements designed to deter use by unwelcome and undesirable populations such as the homeless, the unemployed, refugees, loiterers and children (Figure 10). Photographer Nils Norman (2000) spent several years documenting the unabridged symbolic violence of an exclusionary architecture of occupation in public space. Built structures range from bladed fences to obstacles on public benches, visible CCTV surveillance indicating perpetual panoptic surveillance, Jersey barriers obstructing passageways, and so on.

93 Bourdieu was adamant in his belief that the various forms of capital (economic, cultural, etc.) quite literally occupy the socio-economic field. Describing certain risk scenarios that inherited capital (Piketty, 2014) faces Bourdieu (1984) states: “[…] as inherited capital increases, the chances of profit grow as capital increases in all its forms, not only the economic capital which gives the means of waiting for the future of ‘coming’ occupations, or the cultural capital which helps to make that future by the symbolic violence needed to create and sell new products, but perhaps especially the social capital which, in these informally organized sectors in which recruitment is effected by co-option, enables one to enter the race and stay in it” (p. 358).
94 Boxing in a tree and shutting out unwelcome agents including dogs, children, homeless people, etc. The collection of photos by Norman (2000) document the architecture of occupation. Other examples include metal spikes that are positions around the perimeter of large office building so that no person can loiter and sit there. Public seating structures are designed in a way that they preclude sleeping or getting comfortable for the same reasons mentioned earlier.
Another excellent example of the emergence of a new structure of feeling from older, more established social forms comes from the 19th century’s industrial revolution. In his analyses of the 19th century railway journey, German historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch (1986) demonstrates how the new age of industrial production impacted not only the material conditions of travel and its infrastructural architecture, but also the new kind of commodities that were suddenly available95 and in response, how people’s habits as consumers changed. The speed and mechanical quality of railway travel profoundly altered the collective and individual psyche96 and sensory perception. The incredible speed achieved through railroad travel made trains resemble projectiles that seemed to ‘fly’ through space (Schivelbusch, 1986, p. 54); the traveler’s perception of the traversed landscapes became panoramic, filmic (Schivelbusch, 1986, p. 42) and fragmented. With railway travel, the aura of the original landscape or the local identity—again Benjamin’s spatiotemporal presence—was destroyed. Instead, it became

95 In the 186s Handbook for Railways Travel (2012), a detailed account is provided of all the new consumer products that became readily available to the formerly much more isolated British Isles communities. A veritable revolution in the food industries resulted. New industries emerged such as tourism thanks to the mechanical revolution in factories, which suddenly gave workers leisure time. Tourism allowed the lower class to visit the back countries being; it also opened up travelled in anonymity. This was key to the new industry of “baby selling” – punishable by death. Since the birth of a child out of wedlock was equivalent to social death, many mothers chose to sell their babies to strangers.

96 The fear of frequent railway accidents accompanied passengers and created pathologies similar to the shell shock experience by First World War soldiers (Schivelbusch, 1986).
a mechanical reproduction (Benjamin, 2007). Points became streaks, unifying disparate images into a new sort of aesthetic assemblage, the montage (Schivelbusch, 1986).

Marx’s critical notion of the “annihilation of space by time” (1990, p. xiv) due to capital’s need to create the physical conditions for exchange became the new perceptual reality of industrialized society. Industrial products required circulation and locational movement in order to increase their value and become exchangeable commodities. Railways were the great facilitators of this new flow.

However, the industrialization and regularization of travel and the subsequent standardization of time\(^7\) and space created a rift between travelers and nature. In the pre-industrial era, space and time were experienced separately. With the invention of the steam engine and the telegraph, this experience was replaced by geo-temporal standards (Greenwich Mean Time) and regular schedules. Not only did industrialization create new objects for the subject, but also new subjects for the objects. Indeed, in emerging department stores, the mass sale of affordable commodities depended on circulation and motion creating a new “commodity esthetic” (Schivelbush, 1986, p. 192) that matched the panoramic experience of industrialized travel. Travel, transport and change of locality became the industrial product; passengers were reduced to being like

\(^7\) Lewis Mumford (1934) considered the clock to be far more momentous a “machine” than industrialization itself—all industrial activity hinged on the controlling power of the clock.
mere parcels. A new economic relationship was produced, in which the exchange value of “goods” replaced the pre-industrial use value of products (Schivelbush, 1986, p. 192). Marx would have agreed: both consumer/traveler and products were transformed into commodities. Travel itself became consumable. Indeed, all of these new temporal and spatial organizational models conditioned and subsumed the individual to the demands of a new industrial economic order.

Social Agency and Democratic Representation

If we recognize audiences as critical social agents who actively contest what Foucault (1978) classified as power and knowledge regimes, then it becomes evident that the structure of feeling is formed dialectically in the struggles between sovereign power and its alleged subjects. Even modern representative democracies fall into this category, despite the allowances of a cyclical electoral process. If the voice of the demos is simply used to gloss over apparent cultural differences and their highly charge colonial legacies, then true notions of community will not resonate save superficially. As Ho (2015) critically notes, “the normative force of electoral representation, a political party machine for converting culture into numbers, generat[es] ethnic and religious communalisms that beset the new nations of the post-colonial world” (p. 5). The sharp conceptual distinction that Ferdinand Tönnies (2001) made between the German terms Gesellschaft (civil society) and Gemeinschaft (community) are crucial here. A democratic
society may well house a multicultural mix of people under one national roof, but for civil society (Gesellschaft) to fuse together into a real community (Gemeinschaft), a mere counting of representational votes during cyclical electoral proceedings is insufficient98.

Belgian political theorist Chantal Mouffe (2000) takes her critique of democratic representation even further. She sees a “democratic paradox” in the desire of “deliberative democracy” (p. 14) to avoid antagonism between sovereign political agents that have always been the basis for true and effective deliberation. She writes: “[t]he dominant tendency today consists in envisaging democracy in such a way that it is almost exclusively identified with the Rechtsstaat and the defense of human rights, leaving aside the element of popular sovereignty, which is deemed to be obsolete” (Mouffe, 2000, p. 4-5). Indeed, reality proves that voting hardly deters the elected officials to exert their own subjective vision as to how democratic nations are to be run. Recent bank bailouts, military invasions, and foreign territories occupation speak louder.

98 In her 2010 televised speech, long-term German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that the “multicultural society” had failed on in Germany. She articulated what she believed many German’s felt: that foreigners (Ausländer) who live in Germany (the so-called Gastarbeiter—guest workers, who were, in fact, invited by the German government in the early postwar decades to provide much needed manual labor) have not tried hard enough to integrate. She added: “We kidded ourselves a while, we said: ‘They won’t stay, sometime they will be gone’, but this isn’t reality” (Evans, 2010). Lack of German language skills and willingness to assimilate into the German cultural heritage are the most common criticisms. Specifically, “she said the so-called “multikulti” concept—the blue-eyed fantasy in which all sorts of peoples happily live side-byside—did not work. The bottom line is that immigrants needed to do more to integrate, including learning German” (Evans, 2010).
and faster than votes can be cast. Participant agency and consent, understood here as citizens’ capacity to resist existing power structures—the biopolitics of control over bodies—is a crucial component of de Certeau’s (1984) urban practice theory, which seeks to return agency and power to individuals.

William’s notion of a preeminence of practice over theory is related to the notion of “habitus”, developed by French cultural anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977) in his *Outline of a Theory of Praxis*. Bourdieu (1977) writes that “it is […] not sufficient to say that the rule determines practice when there is more to be gained by obeying it than by disobeying it” (p. 22). Bourdieu’s unusual ideas about agency are derived from game theory, which favors self-interested behaviors over the passive acceptance of rules, to wit, “the good player is the one who always supposes his opponent will discern the best strategy and who directs his own play accordingly” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 12). Applied to the larger social playing field—to stick with Bourdieu’s (1977) game metaphor—individual strategies and tactics that shake up social order will always emerge no matter what. This should be good news for revolutionaries. However, the pendulum of social change can swing both ways: it can lead to representative democracy or to civil war, as

99 Bourdieu (1984) proposes a dialectical model of a collectively shared system of “dispositions” that is dynamically formed yet firmly impressed onto and internalized by social agents, individuals and groups. In practice though, these purportedly permanent dispositions and the rules that derive from “habitus” are far from static; they are in flux as they are continually challenged or taken advantage of by social agents.
we are once again witnessing in the massive collapse of civil society in the Greater Middle East (Bacevich, 2014). A recurring theme in this study is that idea that the dynamism of social systems, of individual agency and self-interest are all crucial for the emergence of resistances and struggles against entrenched power structures. Indeed, the earliest notions of contractual state forms, the “shared commonwealth”, so called by 17th century political philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1651), are based on an individual’s willingness to surrender personal sovereignty to a mighty leader and to seek peace as motivated primarily by his/her fear of death (Hobbes, 1651, p. 78). Following the 17th century structure of feeling, the generalized belief in a debased human nature, the logic behind an almighty sovereign power was self-interest insofar as it would enhance one’s chances of personal survival

Still, highly visible discordance is always a possibility, and all social orders and laws of rule have weak spots that are open to active shows of resistance and critique. Classic social anthropological theorist, Marcel Mauss (1967), famously noted that the

100 “[T]he Right of preserving his own life” (Hobbes, 1651, p. 87) is an important part of Hobbes’ second natural law and trumps any institutionalized coercion, such as torture. According to the Universal Declaration Human Rights, we consensually uphold “the Right to Life, Liberty and Personal security” (Article 3). Interestingly however, the U.S. Declaration of Independence replaces the phrase “Personal Security” with “Pursuit of Happiness”, thereby deliberately omitting any statement about the state’s stewardship of its citizens’ safety. Given that the United States has proclaimed itself the foremost ‘defender of the security’ of its people and indeed, of the free world, this careful omission is particularly suspect.
mutually obligatory reciprocity of gift exchange can be denied; the ritual chain of events
can be interrupted, if the situation compels the agent to act in his own interest. Mauss’s
(1967) famous “gift exchange” as social institution and “total social fact” clearly relates
to Williams’s (1954) “structure of feeling”, Bourdieu’s (1984) “habitus” and even
Foucault’s (1990) techniques and strategies of states to govern the people, so-called
“governmentality”. Even Foucault’s (1978) “discipline” allows for the active subversion
of social obligations, conventions, and rituals, if and whenever doing so would be to the
advantage of the actor/agent. Resisting and subverting corrosive or dehumanizing legal,
ethical, moral, structural frameworks is therefore always in the hands of a sovereign
agent.101

But this assertion of personal sovereignty always takes “bitter struggles”
(Mouffe, 2000, p. 3) and fierce opposition to the established (and collectively recognized
seat of) power. The current historical moment is indeed largely defined by the
affordances of information capitalism and the knowledge economy. Some citizens
engage in subversive and pseudo-activist activities like “hacktivism” (Morozov, 2013) or
“clicktivism” (White, 2016), but the crucial “space of appearance”—the encounter of the

101 Human agency, formed by society’s structure of feeling is based on and dynamically shaped
by practices in different “fields” (Bourdieu, 1984): art, film, politics, law. Struggles and
resistances, hence, can emerge from multiple sites, which also the basis of this study.
people in the public sphere who are willing to debate fundamentals, which Hannah Arendt (1998) defines as a basic precondition for democratic deliberation—has eroded significantly. New spaces of appearance need to be organized, occupied and defended if democracy is to survive the upheavals of the current global blowback.
1. The Occupation of Space: Spatialized Fear

Between 1998 and 1999, Swiss artist, Thomas Hirschhorn decided to complete a series of four participatory artworks. They were set in different locations around the world (Dezeuze, 2014) and were expressly designed for the public realm. Each of his “monuments” focused on a particular socio-political thinker: Baruch Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze, Georges Bataille and Antoni Gramsci. The (2000) first work in the series, the Deleuze Monument (Figure 11), was built in a neighborhood of Avignon, France, that is considered crime-ridden and dangerous. By setting the “monument” in an area located at the outer margins of the marketable historic center, Hirschhorn’s piece engaged residents who were largely socio-economically underprivileged. Describing the specificity of the project site, art historian Anna Dezeuze (2014) writes,

> Avignon still appears to replicate, in a much more exaggerated form, a pattern common to most French cities: the inequalities between the rich within the city and the poor in the banlieues; between an attractive, marketable city centre and huge, often destitute housing projects held out of sight and out of mind. (p.21)

Hirschhorn’s use of low-quality materials and slapdash structural design further embodies the precariousness of modern consumer culture and life at the fringes of mainstream society. Each of the four “monuments” is set in a location that is crucial to the design of the pieces’ participatory realization and constructed to reflect and comment on the state of the intended participants.
This chapter investigates the spatial dimension of occupation\(^1\). The different meanings of the term occupation provide a point of entry for inverting or at least, contesting the negative effects of some of its more corrosive connotations. The occupation of public, private and urban space by different power structures also produces potential sites for resistance and struggle\(^2\). Resistance movements use counter-occupation\(^3\) to challenge power. This study investigates the effectiveness of the operational principles that buoy occupation and counter-occupation.

Taken to its extreme, occupation has the potential to transform occupied spaces into death-worlds or death-spaces (Mbembe, 2003; Sofsky, 1993; Arendt, 1968; Taussig, 1987). Examples include but are not limited to prisons, camps, shanty towns and blighted inner cites. Such death-worlds are created by the enactment of what Sofsky (1993) and Arendt (1958) define as “absolute power” — a variation of Mbembe’s (2003) “necropower”. Moreover, necropower and its death-worlds are understood as

\(^{1}\) The Oxford Dictionary (2016) defines occupation according to its spatial meaning: a. [t]he action of taking or maintaining possession or control of a country, building, land, etc., esp. by (military) force; an instance of this; the period of such action; (also) the state of being subject to such action, and b. The action of occupying a work place, public building, etc., as a form of protest.

\(^{2}\) The Occupy Movement comes to mind, but too do a number of important artworks, including Santiago Sierra’s counter-occupations and interruptions of flows discussed in continuation.

\(^{3}\) This study leans on de Certeau (1984) in his distinction between the concepts “strategy” and “tactic”. De Certeau attributed the former to the dominant power holders and the later to the subversive counter movements.
byproducts of Cold-War policies, colonialism⁴ and American imperialism⁵ post-war geopolitics. Later, under neoliberal capital, former Cold-War zones of occupation—with their fortified barriers, securitized borders and protected markets—were replaced by a binary infrastructure system that limited access and imposed trade barriers while simultaneously granting conditional access to unregulated markets (i.e. NAFTA, EU). Despite the much advertised slogan of open, unregulated markets and the freedom it is meant to bring to “the Global South” (Sassen, 2014, p. 13), a plethora of legal trade barriers exist to make it much harder for such nations to ‘compete’ with true, i.e. Global North ‘free market economies’. A discussion of the legal nuances exceeds the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that trade barriers often work indirectly, stifling growth in one part of the world and enhancing it in another, of which large corporate monopolies and intellectual property laws are excellent examples. After the agricultural seed storage facilities in Iraq were destroyed by war, the American corporation Monasato provided its ‘copyright protected’ seeds, the upshot of which is that Iraq’s agricultural business is...

⁴ The literary genre called Imperial Gothic (Höglund, 2014), epitomized by Joseph Conrad’s (2014) Heart of Darkness, confronts readers with the desolation of colonial death-worlds. Conrad’s novel focuses on the exploitative rubber industries in Belgian Congo. Similarly, anthropologist Michael Taussig’s (1986) work on shamanism chronicles the order of terror that Columbian rubber trade inflicted on indigenous populations by which more than 90% of the inhabitants of the Amazon Basin were exterminated either by death-labor or capricious colonial cruelty.⁵ In his book The American Imperial Gothic (2014), Swedish media theorist Johan Höglund connects notions of the U.S. Empire with imperial projects of the past. His analysis focuses on the implications of the propagation of violence and its pop culture iconography.
now forever bound to its trade agreements with Monsato (Heyes, 2016). Ironically, perhaps, the proponents of this ‘open’ (necropolitical) system espouse the natural order of capital, which in turn makes the idea of questioning neoliberal capital as a metaphorical force of nature essentially blasphemous. Peter Drucker (1972), the godfather of management and corporate principles, strongly refutes any questioning of the good intentions of corporations:

Taken literally, there is hardly any slogan that makes less sense than that of ‘production for use versus production for profit’. It seems to imply that the products of our economic machine, for instance, the bread produced by the National Biscuit Company, are not used or that they are being abused. […] ‘Production for profit is the principle of rationality and efficiency on which the corporation must base itself. The demand for ‘production for use’ thus asserts a conflict between the needs of society and those of the corporation. (p. 190)

Accordingly, society is strongly urged to acknowledge that what is good for the private corporation will benefit the members of society as well. Drucker’s thoughts foreshadow “Reaganonomics” (Schnieder, 1992)—the infamous trickle-down economic model—has been proven axiomatically wrong over the past 30 years of neoliberal policies. The trickle-down theory has not only failed to materialize, it has also, critically, lead to an unprecedented widening of the economic chasm between the ultra rich⁶ and the infinitely less affluent, perhaps better called, the structurally poor (Picketty, 2014). The

⁶According to Picketty’s analyses, the ultra rich are in the process of reestablishing a kind of economic world order that was more typical of 19th century aristocracy. Inherited wealth might well become a new class-based, organizational principle for societies.
capitalist world system, which transforms spatial relationships within societies via an unequal distribution of access to resources, wealth, opportunity and the like, therefore necessarily leads to a chronic state of fear and anxiety. Benjamin (1991) critiques:

The worries: a mental illness, which suits the capitalist epoch. Spiritual (not material) hopelessness in poverty, vagabondism-begging-monasticism. A condition that is so hopeless it is culpable (verschulend). The ‘worries’ are the index of this guilty conscience of hopelessness: ‘Worries’ originating in the fear of hopelessness that is community-based, not individual-material. (1991, p. 261)

The regulation of access through infrastructure and management regimes that either box in or shut out are essential functions of the spatial occupation.

1.1. The Long Shadow of Primitive Accumulation

This primitive accumulation plays approximately the same role in political economy as original sin does in theology. (Marx, 1990, p. 873)

All the features of primitive accumulation that Marx mentions have remained powerfully present within capitalism’s historical geography up until now. Displacement of peasant populations and the formation of a landless proletariat has accelerated in countries such as Mexico and India in the last three decades, many formerly common property resources, such as water, have been privatized (often at World Bank insistence) and brought within the capitalist logic of accumulation, alternative (indigenous and even, in the case of the United States, petty commodity) forms of production and consumption have been suppressed. Nationalized industries have been privatized. Family farming has been taken over by agribusiness. And slavery has not disappeared (particularly in the sex trade). (Harvey, 2003, p. 146)

According to Marx (1990), the crucible of capitalism was an economic stage called “primitive accumulation” (p. 873). During this phase, preindustrial England saw much of its common use lands expropriated and enclosed by an economically privileged
minority. These early capitalists were the inherited wealth aristocracy (Picketty, 2014), the landed gentry, and an emergent urban petit bourgeoisie. After this initial and violent dispossession of lands or occupation, rents were charged for continued land use. Hence, the means of production of the vast majority of the people and with it, their self-sufficiency was irreversibly compromised. Wealthy landowners capitalized on their socio-economic advantage and began building the first mechanized, industrial scale manufacturing enterprises. Lewis Mumford’s (1934) capital-intensive “paleotechnology” of steam engines powered the textile mills across England and revolutionized age-old manufacturing technologies. Social relations carried over from the “eotechnic” (Mumford, 1934) age were revamped to meet the requirements of an industrial mode of production. The expropriation and privatization of the common, in

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7 In his book, *The Invention of Capitalism*, economic historian Michael Perelman (2000) presents a deep reading of primitive accumulation and its lasting effects on modern capital. For Perelman, “primitive accumulation remains a key concept for understanding capitalism—and not just the particular phase of capitalism associated with the transition from feudalism, but capitalism proper (2000, p. 37).” It is a crucial phase in the social division of labor, which, in the context of ongoing development efforts in the “Global South” (Sassen, 2014), is a recurring process of social transformations. Perelman critiques classical political economy, which seeks to downplay the importance of primitive accumulation and to promote the ideology of “laissez-faire” capitalism. Adam Smith’s (2000) famous “invisible hand” metaphor loses credibility in Perelman’s view.

8 In his groundbreaking work *Technics and Civilization*, Mumford (1934) lays out three different ages of technological development and modes of production, starting with the mediaeval “eotechnic” age of the water and wood complex. This was supplanted by the coal and steel complex of the “paleotechnic” age, which would be the industrial revolution. The current stage is defined as “neotechnic”, dominated by electricity and its pertinent machines. Mumford couldn’t know this, but our age might best be described as the silicone and fiber optic (glass) age.
which most people had labored in a face-to-face social relation typical for agricultural societies, coerced these ‘free’ laborers into wage-based labor relations. The overwhelming success of mechanized manufacturing allowed capital to plow ahead without ever looking back. Burgeoning industrialization had an insatiable appetite for labor, which became the productive base of the capitalist valuation cycle.

Of course, the legacy of this “original sin” (Marx, 1990), which geographer David Harvey (2014) conceptually reformulated as “accumulation through dispossession” (p. 141), lives on. Today however, the dialectical complexities between the social classes that have emerged from Marx’s “original sin”—the infamous have and have-nots—have become far greater. A closer look at Marx’s (1999) base-superstructure model of the capitalist mode of production clarifies some of these novel social relations. From his historical-materialistic perspective, infrastructure or “base” refers to a set of built objects, facilities, pieces of machinery, raw materials and processes that make possible capital’s industrial modes of production. New social relations between capital and labor emerge from an ever increasing division of labor (Durkheim, 1984). The superstructure complements the infrastructural “base” level with the non-productive domains of culture and art, law, religion and family—in short, the ideological umbrella of industrial capitalist production. According to Marx, despite the fact that base and superstructure mutually influence and reinforce one another, the infrastructure level generally plays the dominant role. The basic paradigm of early industrial capital accumulation rests on an
ontological contradiction between capital and labor. Although capital needs labor to produce surplus value, labor’s dependence on capital’s means of production, e.g. offering a workplace where one can earn a living, would appear to be greater. The class struggle that emerges from this conflicted social relation is played out in a perpetual back and forth that depends on the bargaining power of each side at any given moment. The logic of scarcity becomes a guiding principle. Scarcity in the labor force obligates capital to improve the labor conditions and increase the wages of the workers; inversely, a lack of capital for investment in production infrastructure leads to competition among the underemployed labor force for what are scarce employment opportunities. This competition lowers the bargaining power of the labor force, which results in lower wages, benefits and job security.

According to Marx’s dialectical analyses, both the industrial capitalist and waged laborers are ensnared in the logic of capital itself. Both sides are inmates in capital’s prison. Sociologist Max Weber (1992), who famously argued that capitalism originated in Protestantism and its ascetic work ethic, also found industrial capitalism and “the care for external goods” tempt even the puritan to be like an “iron cage” (p. 123). For Marx, the capitalist was forced to perpetually seek growth and reinvest large parts of his
profits as a result of escalating competition\(^9\) between capitalists. Capitalism as an economic system perpetuates its own infrastructure demands independently of superstructural changes. Indeed, like the dark legacies of colonialism and slavery, the dark shadow of primitive accumulation still swathes contemporary western post-industrial nations like a thick and heavy blanket.

What is remarkable about the historical materialist infrastructure-superstructure model is its all-encompassing scope. Indeed, the occupation of the common by capital lead directly to the occupation of the laborer’s body and his life(time). And it is precisely the latter expression of occupation that reveals the spatial-territorial dimension of the term in all its social and physical violence as a physical and conceptual infrastructure affixed directly onto the body of the laborer and the social networks of which he is part. Following Marx’s (1990) concept of alienation, laboring bodies in factories are systematically deprived of a much needed connection with the consumer goods they are producing. By slicing up the production process into scientifically manageable units of

\(^9\) One way to stay competitive is to seek ever better ways to exploit laborers, which Taylorism managed to implement with fierce efficiency; the other was to perpetually update and increase constant capital expenditures to allow for ever faster, ever more efficient production lines. Yet another way was to pour surplus capital from escalating overproduction into colonial projects (Harvey, 2003, p. 139): “And, as we have seen in the case of the spatio-temporal fixes, the geographical expansion of capitalism which underlies a lot of imperialist activity is very helpful to the stabilization of the system precisely because it opens up demand for both investment goods and consumer goods elsewhere.”
time and work that can be handled separately by specialized machinery and its human “appendages” (Marx, 1884), the division of labor ultimately alienates the worker from both the finished product and the production process. Efficient and nominally humane, only alienation creates physical and psychological pathologies. The mind of the laborer is occupied by the tacit violence immanent to the lack of self-realization, self-valuation and pride he once derived from his labor. That is, Fordism’s vertical integration model has violently transformed the biological body of the laborer into a functional cogwheel of an infinitely larger, technologized production process. As such, the laborer’s time is dictated by the violence of the clock (Mumford, 1934) and the panoptic surveillance (Foucault, 1978) by invisible supervisors monitoring performance and productivity according to Taylorist ideals of augmented productive efficiencies. It is no wonder that the violence of these complex and the far-reaching processes of the industrial mode of production provide infinite source material not only for political economists such as Ricardo, Marx, Lenin, Smith, but also novelists and social critics like Dickens, Zola and Baudelaire.

German filmmaker Harun Farocki (2014) joined this tradition by creating several works that focus on industrial labor relations. The title of his video installation artwork, *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven decades* (Figure 12), is an homage to the first motion picture ever made and publicly screened. The Lumiere brothers’ original black and white film, *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1895), showed workers exiting the gates of a
nondescript factory. According to Farocki’s project description, it remains unclear if they were simply leaving the factory to go home or staging a protest. Working as a sort of media archeologist, Farocki compiled stock footage culled from the past eleven decades of film classics by accomplished directors such as Paolo Passolini, Fritz Lang and Charlie Chaplin. All footage shows workers either exiting factories, protesting in front of factory gates, or engaged in fierce clashes with armed police forces. Factory gates, like many of the other infrastructures discussed in this study, are key sites for industrial circulation and therefore ideal sites for organized labor protests. The workers, materials, and commodities that circulate in and out of factory gates represent capital flows. Wherever capital flows are at stake (Cowen, 2014), private and public forms of violence are deployed to hinder any attempts at obstruction. According to geographer Deborah Cowen (2014), the securitization of capital flows is a life or death affair for capital. She writes that “[t]hose on the outside of the system, who aim to contest its flows, face the raw force of rough trade without recourse to normal laws and protections. Logistics is no simple story of securitization or of distribution; it is an industry and assemblage that is at once bio-, necro-, and antipolitical” (2014, p. 4). Farocki’s artwork epitomizes how workers’ protests have always been crushed by police forces throughout the 20th century.

In the industrial age, Hannah Arendt’s (1998) “space of appearance”, which she describes as the face-to-face encounter of a political public engaged in debate in the
public sphere, depends on workers’ bargaining battles with capital. In the post-industrial age, a lack of workers’ strikes or protest movements also implies a diminished democratic citizen participation. The recession of “spaces of appearance” are symptomatic of waning democratic participation and “action” (Arendt, 1998). The downside of Marx’s political economy model is quite understandably that it no longer applies to the post-industrial era of information capital. If late 19th century industrialization can be described in terms of ever more complex, scientifically grounded and specialized modes of production, then early 21st century information capital must be described in altogether new terms. The boundaries between the different component parts of the productive process have been irreversibly blurred. For instance, the production, circulation, distribution, and consumption of consumer goods are no longer distinct phases happening in discrete locations. In what has been coined a logistics revolution (Lynn, 2005), highly complex, information-based and cybernetics-

\[10\] Modern capital is the result of three major historical transformations in capital’s mode of production beginning with the colonial and imperial period and leading up to modern America’s non-colonial, non-settler imperialism or a version of what Hardt and Negri (2000) termed “Empire”. Each period was concerned with legitimizing a particular type of exploitative regime. In its earliest period, capital legitimized slavery. This was replaced by a legitimization of colonialism, which in the post-war and post industrial period of the past 40 years was then replaced by a legitimization of a transformation of industrial capital to a flexible accumulation mode of production.
inspired control processes, a consumer good may be produced, assembled, RFID-tagged, packaged and prepared for sale while being shipped across the world oceans or provisionally stored in freight forwarding facilities located in strategic logistics hubs spread like a web across the globe. The need for securitization of logistics and infrastructure space and operations has become a crucial to capital production flows. In fact, security has ballooned into its very own dynamic marketplace with military organizational regimes unfolding freely.

1.2. Infrastructure Rules: Occupation of the Everyday

Contemporary infrastructure space is the secret weapon of the most powerful people in the world precisely because it orchestrates activities that can remain unstated but are nevertheless consequential. (Easterling, 2014, p. 15)

Architect and urbanist Keller Easterling (2016) defines “infrastructure space” as an overarching form of governance of the everyday. Infrastructure space finds expression in multi-layered and multi-functional grids of objects, rules, norms, quality standards and ingrained habits. Infrastructure space has become a “medium of information” (Easterling, 2014, p. 13), which, rather than being restricted to the

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11 Both Bourdieu and Foucault have pointed to the importance of deeply engrained cultural norms and habits. Bourdieu (1984) calls this “habitus” and Foucault (1978), discourse. Bourdieu focuses on a theory of praxis, of dispositions based in the everyday, whereas Foucault sees larger structures—dispositifs and institutional assemblages—as frames for individual self-disciplining, docility and ultimately, totalizing social control.
architectural forms of the built environment, “resides in invisible, powerful activities that determine how objects and content are organized and circulated” (Easterling, 2014, p. 13). Under information capital, infrastructure space functions more like an operating system that regulates and controls the flows of the city (Easterling, 2014, p. 13). For Easterling, infrastructure space is far more than traditional “large-scale spatial organizations” (p. 15) like early railway networks or modern day sub-oceanic fiber-optic cable networks. Instead, it is an extensive administrative system built not just in brick and mortar, but also from more immaterial things such as laws, regulations and quality norms. “Extrastatecraft” is the term Easterling assigns this governing, non-state form of capital production. Implicit in the suffix “extra” is an understanding that this form of governance actively, aggressively attempts to elude democratic oversight. Indeed, in the western, post-industrial democracies, “extrastatecraft” exemplifies and amplifies the “democratic paradox” (Mouffe, 2000) in which the electoral representative model has become increasingly dysfunctional.

The hidden power exercised in the domains of “extrastatecraft” make it a form of occupation, which returns this study to a question posed earlier: can an albeit invisible domestic agent of power be considered a form of occupation by a foreign force that

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12 In military terms, ‘occupation’ envisages a foreign power taking control of a sovereign national territory that is not theirs. In the expanded definition of this study, domestic power that has not
surreptitiously occupies national resources? In the representational model of Western democracies, the exertion of power is supposedly legitimized by a voting process. Power structures that successfully evade democratic deliberation and constitutional electoral processes are therefore per definition illegitimately exerting their power and influence. That Easterling labels such power structures as “extrastatecraft” highlights the fact that infrastructure space exists in the legal grey-zones of our democratic system. “Extrastatecraft” acts indirectly, behind closed quarters and is subversive of democratic statecraft. The power of “extrastatecraft” is based on the occupation of a space—infrastructure space—from which it has managed to shut out the public.

In my artwork (2012) entitled 150,000,000 Empty Boardrooms (Figure 13), I illustrate the void of public deliberation typical for corporate infrastructure space. Boardrooms are the nerve centers and closed quarters of global corporate enterprises. In boardrooms, decisions are made that affect millions or even billions of people all across the world. Yet in the artwork, the spaces pictured are all empty. The image of billions of empty boardrooms speaks to the idea of a loss of control. Neither democratic processes can and should also be understood as a form of ‘foreign’ power. ‘Foreign’ in the sense of residing outside of due process, and of exerting unwarranted political and economic influence secretly and behind closed quarters. A comparison to organized crime comes to mind and is valid to the point that it operates within the legal confines of a nation state. Money laundering for instance is a typical tactic that organized crime employs to make their criminal activities appear legitimate.
constituencies nor managing directors are in charge any more. Rather, it is the system itself, the order of infrastructure space that rules. After all, corporate CEOs ultimately answers to anonymous shareholder interests, who are interested in statistics and mathematical performance, not personal histories. Certainly, capital follows a circular logic in which workers earning minimum wage have their retirement assets invested in stock portfolios managed by predatory financial corporations such as Goldman Sachs.

Easterling’s “extrastatecraft” concept speaks to a new kind of systemic rule, which is actually an autonomous anti-rule because it can no longer be controlled by any single agent. Adam Smith’s (2000) almost metaphysical, religious notion of the “invisible hand“ that regulates free market efficiencies like abstract supply and demand equilibria, still implies a sense of control and logic. By contrast, “extrastatecraft” is non-transcendental and fundamentally secular in character. It is self-sufficient, as only a piece of utilitarian infrastructure can be. It means no harm in and of itself but in effect, can make a world of (catastrophically harmful) difference. A street\textsuperscript{13} may well become the frontier between access to homeownership, a school, a playground or the denial thereof (Connolly, 2014). A fence may spell starvation or violent death for some while protecting the private property of others (Caldeira, 2000).

\textsuperscript{13} The racial politics or redlining (Connolly, 2014) will be explored later in more detail.
1.2.1. Infrastructure as Bridgehead for Occupation by Capital

In the current capitalist world-economy\textsuperscript{14}, non-state actors, often foreign in nature (i.e. transnational corporations), hold large stakes in the socio-economic and geopolitical interests of other nations. In times of peace, this is as close as foreign agents can get to exerting unwarranted\textsuperscript{15} influence in other nations’ affairs. The methods for accomplishing this type of surreptitious occupation are directly lifted from wartime logistics operations, an exceptional example of which are global logistic hubs, which functions in terms of what military strategy describes as bridgeheads (Bacevich in Barr, 2003). Military campaigns, such as the infamous invasion of Normandy on D-day, give preference to the label ‘world-economic system’ over the term ‘globalization’, the use of which comes from the theories of Fernand Braudel (2009), Immanuel Wallerstein (2004) and Giovanni Arrighi (1994), all of whom analyze economic systems in terms of structural time—the long durée (Braudel & Wallerstein, 2009). Wallerstein refutes the notion of world-systems analyses as a “theory” but rather as an analytical framework. World-systems analysts believe that multiple economic systems co-exist in any given period, which builds on the concept of core-periphery economic relationships rather than “First” and “Third World” distinctions. Long-term structural rather than social analyses of capital put our current economic volatility into perspective. The cyclical turn from investment-rich industrial production phases to those defined more by financial speculation, according to Arrighi (1994), points to threshold moments in which momentous shifts in capitalism’s operations take place. The current moment has been identified as one such moment (Arrighi, 1994). Francis Fukuyama’s phrase “The End of History” (1992) falls into the category of asserting major shifts and rifts in capital by economists. For him, the collapse of the Soviet Union was the final blow to any other social system than the capitalistic, liberal and democratic one. He has since revised much of this confidence.

\textsuperscript{14} This term is borrowed from Eisenhower’s (1961) presidential farewell address, in which he warned of the democratically unwarranted influence by the military-industrial complex. In the globalized world economy, such influence can come from many sites, private, public, domestic and foreign.
require an initial territorial foothold from which further military progression can be planned and executed. Bridgeheads are such secured footholds. In terms of the economic prying open of new market opportunities, which is a central feature of neoliberal capital of the late 20th and early 21st century, maritime ports, airports, railway stations and superhighway must be seen as economic bridgeheads. The operational regimes that empower economic bridgeheads are correlated with historic military operations.

Not only do the functional aspects of military and economic bridgeheads overlap, but their infrastructural and visual characteristics are also stunningly similar. The “architecture of battle” (Beltramini, 2009, p.198) of Roman encampments of military campaigns in Europe (Figure 14) bear a striking resemblance to strictly standardized modern logistics hubs (Figure 15). The shipment, storage and handling of large amounts of military gear appear to require very similar formal and organizational logics. Logistics by definition is a term lifted from the military idiom and in its function

16 The similarity of war encampments and modern refugee camps are also remarkable (Figure 7) and will be discussed further.
17 Napoleon’s generals defined logistics as the art of supplying troops in the field. In modern terms logistics operations are management flows that include tracking (RFID tags), transportation, warehousing, packaging, assembling and increasingly securing commodities. For Cowen (2014), quoting Nigel Thrift, logistics is “the military art of moving stuff gradually became not only the “umbrella science” of business management but, in Nigel Thrift’s (2007, p. 95) words, ‘perhaps the central discipline of the contemporary world’.”
as an organizational principle of modern capital operations remains loyal to its origins.

What has been a veritable logistics revolution leading to the modern intermodal container freight industries originally took place during the Vietnam War and was triggered by a U.S. military operation bottleneck (Levinson, 2006). Previously, several different container systems existed, but the demands of America’s war mobilized the political desire for standardization. The modern intermodal logistics system required the reinvention of harbors, trucks and trains as well as the transformation of existing social networks (i.e. longshoremen) and their dependent communities (Cowen, 2014).

Aside from the openly visible infrastructure of logistics ports, airports, and so on, much of the required high-tech telecommunication infrastructure is hidden from sight (Starosielski, 2015). The network of global cities (Sassen, 1991, 2002) as leading economic and productive powerhouses owes much of its influence and efficacy to electronic communication networks. The “Internet” (Morozov, 2013) enables highly complex cybernetic management practices and modes of production that depend on outsourcing.

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18 Political economist Harold Innis (2007), spearheaded media archeological thinking and the intertwined relationship between empire and means of communication. The ruggedness of media formats—from stone, papyrus, print, and finally digital— influenced the geopolitical projection of imperial powers through time or space. The current digital information revolution in epitomized by UAV’s, the autonomously flying military weapon systems that allow power to be projected worldwide from anywhere at any time.

19 In her research project The Undersea Network, Nicole Starosielski (2015) traces the material physicality of the information age. Vast underground and undersea networks and not so much the geo stationary satellites provide the predominant infrastructure of the digital revolution.
on-demand-delivery, just-in-time manufacturing, and above all, global logistics operations (Cowen, 2014; Sassen, 2014; Levinson, 2006). The globally distributed production of consumer goods feeds back in to the network of nationally and locally distributed retailers. Large surface storage facilities, online shopping fulfillment centers, like the global networks of huge Amazon fulfillment centers20 (Figure 16), parking lots, and fast-food franchises, plus their access roads and freeways are merely the visible back-end of a highly complex, global circulation production matrix. It should therefore come as no surprise that activists and artists who seek to disrupt the domination of global finance capital try to do so in sites where flows of finance capital, logistic and production meet (Badger, 2016; Weizman, 2016).

Spanish minimalist artist Santiago Sierra stages many of his works in infrastructure domains. In at least two of his works, Sierra (1998, 2009) temporarily disrupts the global capital flows by blocking the path of container trucks exiting the logistics port, on in Stockholm, Sweden (Figure 17) and a major throughway in Mexico City (Figure 18). In his book, Roundabout Revolutions, architect and critical theorist Eyal Weizman (2016) describes how traffic roundabouts are frequent sites for political

20 The British Photographer Ben Robertson has managed to take stunning photographs of infrastructure space, including the multiple football-field large Amazon fulfilment centers, which are spread strategically across the national territory to service consumer demands. Today, much of Amazon’s warehousing logistics is done my robots, which lift the storage shelves and transports them directly to the quasi immobile human handlers.
struggles. Blocking roundabouts generally causes widespread disruption, which is the goal of any social protest movement against neoliberal capital:

Urban roundabouts are the intersection points of large axes, which also puts them at the start or end of processions. Occupying a roundabout demonstrates the power of tactical acupuncture: it blocks off all routes going in and out. Congestion moves outward like a wave, flowing down avenues and streets through large parts of the city. By pressuring a single pivotal point within a networked infrastructure an entire city can be put, under siege (a contemporary contradistinction to the medieval technique of surrounding the entire perimeter of a city wall). (Weizman, 2016, p. 8)

Violent repression is the worst-case retaliation, but inciting the authorities to flex their repressive muscle ultimately serves the struggle’s goals by showing a global public just how far a political system is willing to go to defend its vital infrastructure. For instance, in the case of the massive protests at Tahrir Square, Cairo, the roundabout revolution lead to the overthrow of Egypt’s dictator of three decades, Hosni Mubarak.

Not all protest against global capital has to take on the flows of commodities and labor in the public sphere. The artist Michael Landy (2001) is best remembered for his spectacular performance, entitled Breakdown (Figure 19). In a meticulously prepared skit that mimicked the infrastructural sophistication of something like an Amazon fulfillment centers or UPS facility, Landy first catalogued and then shredded all of his

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21 It goes almost without saying that media representations of police and military violence against unarmed and peaceful protesters are a key feature of any contemporary protest movement. Live-streaming from counter-occupied public spaces is the modern version of the peaceful activism of historic figures like Gandhi.
personal belongings. Nothing was spared, including irretrievable biographical memorabilia, such as old family photos or his favorite teenage jacket. Landy even dismantled his beloved car. The message of the entire process couldn’t be clearer. By destroying all external belongings, which supposedly define a person’s biographical identity, Landy sought to produce a (capitalist) identity tabula rasa. The work is part protest against consumer culture, part media spectacle, and part new-age purification gesture. However unintentional, the destruction of Landy’s personal belonging relates to many truly troubling aspects of the modern human conditions, which cannot be reduced to a simplistic notion of mindless consumer culture. Today, there is a very real and tangible burden that goes along with the destruction of home, biographical identity and personal belongings. Any Syrian refugee, who was involuntarily forced to leave the homeland and give up all biographically meaningful relationships, not only in terms of material things but also family, friends, and the larger social community, will not have the option of retrieving any of the lost pieces of self. Landy’s spectacular yet gimmicky act is undermined by the fact that he had to go to a store to buy new things right after he had finished the shredding-as-art project. Furthermore, his cultural and financial status were significantly improved after the (successful) performance. Even if only for a moment, Landy gained global fame. The refugee’s most likely prospect after the loss of his/her personal belongings is social ostracization in his/her new host country.
1.2.2. Intermodality and Mobility’s Liminal Spaces

Many media forms and modalities come together in the world of modern logistics operations. In transposing McLuhan’s (1964) “the medium is the message” meme, Easterling alternatively suggests “the action is the form” (2016, p. 14), viz. she assigns relevance to processes over concrete embodiments. In fact, the paradigm of intermodality lies at the very heart of logistics and its pertinent infrastructure space. It entails the conjunction of what previously were separate media spheres. Cowen (2014) calls these points of intersection “seams”. It is precisely at these “seams” that the ‘media savvy’ artist can find a point of friction or weakness and then, like a blood clot, disrupt the system’s flow, i.e. the functioning of vital organs. The current capitalist world-economy depends on the incessant and seamless exchange of commodities, money, data, and people, among other things. The mobility of each of these items depends on a specific media ‘format’. For instance, shipping containers seamlessly traverse various geographical media (Ho, 2004). Oceans, rivers, tarmac, air, and even outer space form the substrate of intermodal transportation and communication networks, and standardization effectively perpetuates and reinforces its own intermodality. For instance, post-Panama22 size container ships require post-Panama size cranes (Figure 20)

22 The logistics-specific lingo of freight size, weight and dimension is dictated by the infrastructure bottle necks. The locks of the original Panama Canal, completed in the early 20th century, were too short, shallow and narrow to allow for the gargantuan new container ships.
and a vastly expanded Panama Canal. Hence, this standardized intermodality format, which drives the global economy, ultimately unfolds in the ecology of small countries like Panama (Carse, 2014), allowing the global and local to coalesce in liminal spaces. By contrast, digital information packets travel either through the air (i.e. radio waves, satellite signals) or through copper and fiber optic cables. These cables cut through urban, technical and geographical media (Starosielski, 2015). And in order to make money off miniscule price fluctuations, so-called micro trading and program trading, the difference of a split-second is critical—put bluntly, the shorter the data cable the greater the profit (Slavin, 2011).

Money may have as many forms or states as water but most monetary or economic transactions today are simply information packets transmitted via electronic signals from one account to the next. The technology-focused stock exchange NASDAQ is an exclusively electronic marketplace without a physical trading floor or actual human interaction. Automatic teller machines (ATM), online banking and even retail shopping are increasingly the domain of mobile, ‘virtual’ money. Money, as Marx (1990) pointed out, can also be “stuck” in its commodity form\(^\text{23}\) (C-M-C versus M-C-M) or as

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The infrastructure update involved massive ‘terraforming’ operations to provide the necessary water to flood the six gates along the 77km long canal. The social and environmental impact on Panama’s natural habitat and culture is enormous.

\(^{23}\) Marx’s (1990) analyses of the various states and transformations money/capital undergoes, seeks to illustrate basic functions of capital circulation. Use value (which would be money in the
architect Keller Easterling (2014) suggests, as durable goods in the form of single-family houses. What all these media substrates share is that they enable such mobility with the goal of generating economic value and wealth.

Unaccounted for in the capital valuation chain (Wertschöpfungskette) are the excesses and wreckages: the stock-piles of unused containers that form multistory architectures (Figure 21) at the fringes of urban space (Rivera, 2003), foreclosed or boarded-up inner city homes, obsolete airplane and ship cemeteries, garbage—both literally and figuratively, not to mention the multitude of disposable bodies (Bauman, 2004)—the refugees and migrants, the urban poor and unemployed, the prisoners and drug addicts. They are all are the systemic detritus of capital. All of these media formats, media representations and their multifarious real-world embodiments must remain mobile in order to register or catch people’s distracted attention (Benjamin, 2007).

Following Cowen’s biological metaphor of animal migration, the new slogan for the new millennium could be “Move or die” (Cowen, 2014, p. 197). In his book, Wasted Lives, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2004) summarizes the ephemerality of modern culture as follows:

commodity from) is irretrievable as goods wear out; the monetary form of capital can be re-invested and exchanged multiple times. The process is cyclical and ultimately boils down to the extractable surplus value of labor which translates into profit. And this is the ultimate goal of capital. (Das Kapital, Chapter 4: The general formula of capital)
All things, born or made, human or not, are until-further-notice and dispensable. A spectre hovers over the denizens of the liquid modern world and all their labours and creations: the spectre of redundancy. Liquid modernity is a civilization of excess, redundancy, waste and waste disposal. (p. 97)

Mobility can therefore mutate into a form of power projection and occupation that traverses the geographical media of liminal space.

The shipping container is the choice media for commodity capital because it perfectly integrates and unifies infrastructure space. However, capital’s principles of modularity, commensurability and scalability apply to goods better than to people. Anthropologist Ajun Appadurai (1996) uses the landscape metaphor to break distinct media domains into five intersecting “scapes”: ethno-, techno-, finance-, ideo- and mediascapes. Each of Appadurai’s five “scapes” defines an area in which particular cultural, economic, technical, ideological and media practices and relations are more clearly articulated. Appadurai (1996) is aware of the uncertainty of his neologisms, but nevertheless proposes them as an intellectual tool. For instance, in reference to ethnoscapes, he writes that

this neologism has certain ambiguities deliberately built into it. It refers, first, to the dilemmas of perspective and representation that all ethnographers must confront, and it admits that (as with landscapes in visual art) traditions of perception and perspective, as well as variations in the situation of the observer, may affect the process and product of representation. (p. 48)

The conceptual limitation of this neologism is therefore also its practical strength. Because marriage, for instance, is highly culture-specific and can easily clash with local customs, it is useful to think of it in terms of the ethnoscape of migrant and refugee
flows, which are structured by conflicting ethnic and cultural parameters. In Germany, mixed German-Turkish couples are highly unusual for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that Turkish honor-kilings (Biehl, 2005) of tradition-defying female family members is still an accepted and frequent occurrence.

In considering the global flows of integrated technology systems in the “technoscape”, the global “body shopping” (Biao, 2007) practices in the IT sector come to mind. Indian-run consultancies—so-called “body shopping” agencies—offer the services of well-trained Indian IT professionals on the global information technology market. Body shopping practices are couched in social networks that remain ethnically homogenous (Indian) but that reflect a complete assimilation of Western ideas (“ideoscape”) about ‘professional success’ and the most desirable career paths. Ironic, then that the West would be so up in arms about the rise in fascist demagoguery, religious fundamentalisms and ballooning national security efforts.

Appadurai’s “mediascapes” are the domain of the collective visual representation and the spectacle (Debord, 1994) and as such, tower over the other social “scapes”. Global Hollywood’s (Miller, 2005) cultural hegemony (some critics go so far as to call it cultural imperialism) clearly sets the tone for a vast infrastructure of consumable enter- and infotainment products. Hollywood’s science fiction and urban terrorism genre of the late 1980s and 1990s has provided real world organized crime and terrorism with spectacularly realistic visual cues how an imaginary attack could be
pulled off. Such highly negative feedback loops triggered by Hollywood blockbusters will be further discussed in chapter 4. As expansive and inclusive as these scopes are, the utility of a landscape metaphor that isolates the component parts of a dynamic, systemic whole is questionable, to say the least. The earlier analysis of mobility’s liminality and the preponderance of intermodality in modern society suggest the inverse of Appadurai’s framework—i.e. that a blurring of previously separate domains has become the order of the day. Modern individuals constantly navigate complex, globally structured and often ambiguously-defined liminal spaces.

1.2.3. Modernization Ideology as Spatial Occupation

Large scale infrastructure projects always touch on the core tenets of neoliberalism and Cold-War era modernization ideology\(^\text{24}\) (Latham, 2000). For instance, countries like Guatemala and Chile (see prologue), which lack modern infrastructure or have only its rudiments, are forcefully \textit{brought up to speed} no matter what. Hence, international know-how and technology are superimposed on the “Third World”

\(^{24}\) For U.S. foreign policy historian, Michael Latham (2000), modernization ideology was the brainchild of America’s Cold War communist containment strategies. The U.S. National Security branch was afraid that Communist breaching of the Cold War truce lines would eventually align “underdeveloped” and “inherently instable” areas such as Cuba, the Congo, Laos, and Vietnam with the Soviet Union’s revolutionary expansion (pp. 2-3).
(Stiglitz, 2000) to jumpstart their supposedly lagging economic development. Josef Stiglitz (2002), former chief economist at the World Bank and Nobel laureate, provides a very succinct definition: “globalization” is “the removal of barriers to free trade and the close integration of national economies” (p. IX). The Bretton Woods System, which was lead by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other invested NGOs, was created in the wake of the destruction from the Second World War with the good intention of preventing future instances of economic destabilization25, which could sour the relations between sovereign nations (and fuel another war). However, speaking directly from the belly of the beast, Stieglitz has been highly critical of the System and its poster child, the Washington Consensus. He argues that “the net effect of the policies set by the Washington Consensus has all too often been to benefit the few at the expense of the many, the well-off at the expense of the poor” (2002, p. 20). That is, despite the superficially well-intentioned concept, the impact of its concrete policies mostly had devastatingly counterproductive effects on developing economies, creating a “growing divide between the haves and the have-nots” (Stiglitz, 2002, p. 5) and converting much of the “Third World” (Stiglitz, 2002, p. 5) into death-worlds (Mbembe, 2003). World-

25 Central were the monetary policies to prevent hyperinflation to destroy national economies, like in the case of the Weimarer Republic. The removal of the gold standard in 1917 however also removed the key tools for monetary policies under Bretton Woods.
wide poverty under the Washington Consensus increased “by almost a 100 million” (Stiglitz, 2002, p. 5) while the world income “actually increased by an average of 2.5 percent annually” (Stiglitz, 2002, p. 5).

Before the World Bank subsidized Guatemala’s hydroelectric power plant projects began, Guatemala had an insignificant foreign debt. After the project’s completion, which included year-long delays and skyrocketing additional costs, Guatemala suddenly owed more than 2 billion dollars to foreign creditors. With this big works modernization project, the snare of foreign debt obligations snapped and quite literally, occupied the nation’s economic well-being from that day forward. Today, some 30 years after the Chixoy Dam inauguration, the World Bank is confronted with a class-action lawsuit for the murder of close to 376 indigenous local residents:

A recent report from Witness for Peace reveals that between 1980 and 1982 some 376 people, mostly women and children, were brutally murdered in a series of massacres when they resisted eviction from their village of Rio Negro to make way for the Chixoy Reservoir. […] If the [World] Bank knew about the massacres, then giving an additional loan to the project was at best a calculated cover up, and at worst an act of complicity in the violence. If the Bank did not know about the slaughter, then it was guilty of gross negligence. Either way, the

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26 In an original copy of the World Bank (1978) project proposal, the costs of the hydro electric power plant were estimated in the 2-300 hundred million dollars. At completion the costs exceeded the billion-dollar mark. Low pre-bid estimates are mostly if not always exceeded by factor 2 – 3 in international construction bidding procedures. The World Bank’s good intentions to propel this project were based in the exploding costs of crude oil at the time of the original assessment of the nations economy (1973-1974). According to their analyses, Guatemala’s financial position was “unsatisfactory”, in part due to the energy sector’s under performance:
Bank is implicated in the horrors perpetrated against the village of Rio Negro in 1982. (McCully & Witness for Peace, 1996)

The World Bank’s own internal assessment of the success of the project is equally incriminating:

Chixoy was not only a human rights disaster. Construction was beset with geological problems which - together with corruption - caused the dam’s total cost to soar to some $1.2 billion, 521 per cent higher than forecast in 1974. The dam began official operation in 1983, but after only five months had to be shut down for repairs. It did not restart operation for two years. Since then it has been plagued with technical problems and a shortage of water in its reservoir. The World Bank’s Project Completion Report says that ‘With hindsight [Chixoy Dam] has proved to be an unwise and uneconomic disaster’ (McCully, 1996).

The Chixoy Dam (Figure 22) is but one in an endless list of World Bank initiated, funded, and ultimately, abandoned infrastructure modernization projects. Such systemic failures to provide truly useful technological enhancements to less industrialized nations can only be understood in terms of willful political, economic and social occupations formulated by the Washington Consensus and its neoliberal doctrines.

In today’s election-cycle political discourse, discussions about infrastructure investments tends to focus on existing structures that have been deemed essential for modern life. Modern cities depend on well-developed, well-maintained transportation networks to allow for the circulation of workers, goods and services. Any so-called “First World” (Stiglitz, 2002) nation takes safe drinking water and an adequate sewage system for granted, to say nothing of the massive power grids and cell-phone towers that keep us plugged in. Politicians routinely promise infrastructural repairs and upgrades that will also spell new job creation. In other words, infrastructure restauration
is a political punchline offering a blanket solution and placeholder for the systemic
problems of modern capitalist society that is sold and bought via mass and social media.

And yet, the idea of ‘fixing’ social problems by fixing old and crumbling
infrastructure or building entirely new ones is nothing new. One of Hitler’s greatest
political successes during and leading out of the tumultuous Weimarer Republic was his
giving armies of unemployed workers a sense of purpose and the means to provide a
livelihood by putting them back to work. Under the leadership of engineer Fritz Todt,
the first General Inspector of German Roadways (Generalinspektor für das deutsche
Straßenwesen) and who later became the first Reich Minister for Armaments and
Ammunition (Reichsminister für Bewaffnung und Munition), an extensive new national
highway system (Autobahn) was built from scratch (Figure 23). The successes of this new
transportation network marvel—the very first of its kind worldwide—was so great that
it even caught the attention of political leaders across the Atlantic. The U.S.
administration immediately recognized the potential of a transportation network that
would span the entire nation and could absorb the burgeoning car industries in Detroit.
The Great Depression’s unemployed needed a similar re-imagining of labor practices,
making Hitler’s Autobahn infrastructure a fantastic role model for America.
1.2.4. Public Works as Occupation of Collective Representations

In his book, *Three New Deals*, German historian and cultural studies scholar Wolfgang Schivelbusch (2006), develops a compelling comparative analysis of the showcase public works projects under Italian Fascism, German National Socialism and America’s New Deal. A propos, modern architecture historian, Siegfried Gideon delivered a lecture in 1946 entitled, “The Need for a New Monumentality” in which he claimed that “[t]he people want buildings representing their social, ceremonial, and community life. [...] They seek the expression of their aspiration for joy, for luxury, and for excitement” (Schivelbusch, 2006, p. 1). For Gideon, what people really wanted were monumental buildings that symbolized their deepest collective beliefs. This is essentially a more pompous expression of Durkeim’s (1995) description of totemic symbols, which the latter characterized as existing precisely to represent a culture and its deepest seated (religious) beliefs. The built environment then can articulate in all its monumentality the people’s collective representations of power and authority, quite independently of an underlying socio-political ideology—to wit, formal symbolism can be independent of underlying propaganda functions.

Schivelbusch also argues that all three New Deals were competing with their socialist Soviet foe, whom they nevertheless shamelessly copied. As early as 1927, Stalin began to realize Lenin’s promise to bring electricity to the people. Stalin’s hydroelectric power plant on the Dnieper river was not only meant to speed up Soviet
industrialization, which significantly lagged behind that of the Western nations, but was also a propaganda tool meant to unite the people behind Soviet revolutionary ideals and his socio-political transformation project. In short, the power plant project was designed to strengthen social cohesion by stimulating what Durkheim called “collective representations” and “social effervescence” (1995). Stalin’s propaganda machine, dubbed “Communism’s dream factory”, forcefully branded the work efforts necessary to complete such large scale public works as “heroic” contributors to a “golden age of Communism to come” (Schivelbusch, 2006, p. 140). The dam was therefore much more than a gigantic infrastructural undertaking; it became a moral imperative for becoming a better society. For Durkheim (1995), the primary function of religion—in Stalin’s case, the worship of the dam as a symbolic (totemic) representation of the secular, communist state—is “to act upon moral life” (p. 422); electricity would bring moral, social, economic enlightenment to the people, both literally and figuratively.

Under the auspices of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Roosevelt’s Great Depression America also threw itself on the promise of providing the people with cutting edge technology and jobs by pushing the construction of the Tennessee Valley dams. Indeed, although urban areas in the U.S. already had electricity, only 20% of rural America had access to this modern convenience (Schivelbusch, 2006, p, 162). In a culture in which bigger is better, the monumentality of Roosevelt’s big works project encompassed not only the energy sector, which tried to piggyback on Henry Ford’s idea
of saturating the market with cars for everyone, but also those of transportation, agriculture, and industry. The TVA was a typical American legal construct—a so-called public corporation—invented to deflect legal action against the government’s intervention into private entrepreneurship. The transformation of the Tennessee river into a succession of dammed lakes transformed the natural, national landscape. An aestheticizing narrative that spoke of enjoyable and lovely new landscape that would allow for thriving businesses and happy lives was being applied for political ends. “It is a story of how waters once wasted and destructive have been controlled and now work, night and day, creating electric energy to lighten the burden of human drudgery” (Schivelbush, 2006, p. 159). The project of the monumental 1970’s World Trade Center buildings, which included the construction of the Port Authority of New Jersey and New York (PATH) and which will be discussed later, provides an even more dramatic example.

Mussolini was the first political leader to pick up the ball pitched by Stalin by kick starting his own prestige public works. And as would be the case with the Futurist socio-artistic movement, the socio-political fascists were obsessed with speed, machines, and war. Accordingly, Mussolini framed the wetland reclamation and cultivation of the Pontine Marshes as “a kind of war” made up of “battles against” and “victories over water” (Schivelbusch, 2006, pp.148-152). “The Fascists’ obsession with movement” and its most heroic articulation as ‘battle’ was staged by ‘armies of workers’ (Schivelbusch,
In art, the proto-fascist Futurists emulated and echoed much of Mussolini’s propaganda. The Futurist Manifesto, written by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1909), is the best illustration of what Walter Benjamin later labeled as “the aesthetization of politics”, which inevitably culminates in fascism and war (Benjamin, 2007, p. 242). The reclaiming of wetlands by manual labor, though technologically not comparable to the more sophisticated prestige projects launched by the German National Socialists and the Bolsheviks, nevertheless functioned as socially exhilarating project. Schivelbusch writes (2006) that “[t]he true significance of the Agro Pontino for Mussolini and his regime was as an epic tale, a mixture of reality and symbolism, in which they could reenact the earlier political struggler of their rise to power” (p. 153). The symbolic power of public works and its relationship to early 20th century military, imperial, and capitalist projects cannot be underestimated.

The larger value and purpose of such big works projects lay in their success in disciplining the civil society and reorienting a predominately civil industry into military production hubs. The processes of civil engineering required to convert wetlands into inhabitable territories were expressed in succinct military lingo. Indeed, Europe was ratcheting up for war, and whether or not they realized it, Europe’s people were being subconsciously prepped. The infrastructure projects and the indoctrination of the people complemented each another seamlessly, and art and architecture played a crucial part. Monumental propaganda events such as the 1934 Nürnberg National Socialist Party
Rally (Nürnberger Reichsparteitag) were staged in vast neo-classical architectural settings, designed by Reich’s architect, Albert Speer\textsuperscript{27}. His “Cathedral of Light” (Figure 24) on the Zeppelin Feld in Nürnberg was considered by many to be his masterpiece (Kitchen, 2015, p. 231). Aside from stone, brick and mortar, all of Nazi Germany’s anti-aircraft floodlights were used to create an awe-inspiring, magical light architecture that connected the party grounds with the sky above. It was a design and propaganda marvel that impressed the assembly of party members, workers and soldiers alike. The acclaimed Nazi master filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl (1935), piggybacked on Speer’s architectural designs by using them as the setting for her own masterpiece, “Triumph of the Will” (Triumph des Willens), in which she used innovative cinematography techniques to woo and wow a burgeoning movie-going population.

In Germany, the Organization Todt\textsuperscript{28} emerged to transform the nation’s built environment in preparation for war (Seidler, 1986). The Autobahn was at the heart of

\textsuperscript{27} Speer’s role as a close adviser to Hitler cannot be underestimated (Kitchen, 2015). It is well known that Hitler had frustrated artistic inclinations. Above all else, Hitler saw himself as a master-builder, and Albert Speer was the chosen one for realizing Hitler’s ambitions. In the early years of his ascent to power, no expense was spared for the construction of Hitler’s monumental dreams (or better, delusions).

\textsuperscript{28} The organization was named after its first leader, Fritz Todt. That Tod in German means ‘death’ made Todt an ominous name for an organization that turned out to be the main exploiter of death-labor. What began as a conscripted labor organization rapidly morphed into an actual labor death factory in which enslaved laborers, mostly Jewish but also regime critics and other groups who had been classified as sub-human according to Hitler’s ‘master race’ ideology (Herrenrasse), were literally worked to death.
Fritz Todt’s plans. His was a project of epic proportions that would create new landscapes. The construction of the Autobahn followed an aesthetic imperative that sought to connect people with nature—that is, the goal was not to connect two geographical locations the fastest way possible but rather by “the most sublime connection between two points” (Schivelbusch, 2006, p. 175). This sublime connection of the people with their natural environment was a central theme of Nazi ideology, and it was used as a blueprint for many of public works. The Autobahn was considered to be the “crown of the surrounding landscape”, which highlighted the notion of “naturalized technology and technologized nature” (Schivelbusch, 2006, p. 176). Driving on the Autobahn was supposed to mimic the American parkway experience, which Gideon euphorically described in 1941 as follows: “Freedom was given to both driver and car. Riding up and down the long sweeping grades produced exhilarating dual feeling, one of being connected with the soil and yet hovering just above it […]]” (Schivelbusch, 2006, p. 176).

Post-World War critics of the pompous fascist and totalitarian neo-classical architecture of the 1930s realized just how great the desire for such building was when they saw their own cities—Washington, Paris, London, and Geneva—filled up with the same types of buildings as Berlin, Moscow and Rome (Schivelbusch, 2006). Moreover, both sides of the ideological spectrum—German National Socialism and Western
capitalism—made similar aesthetic and conceptual appeals via social infrastructure projects. Both the desires for monumentality and the connection to nature and soil were successfully used to capture the collective imagination of the people. The fact that organization Todt became a sort of mass labor provider, including enslaved and death labor, which primarily served the military strategies laid out by Hitler’s devastating plans for Europe, mattered little to a Germany at the cusp of a new, modern era. The forceful occupation by each nation’s respective propaganda machines—Nazi, fascist, capitalist, or Communist—of their collective representations would become one of the darkest chapters in human history.

1.3. Zones of Occupation

When the victorious Allied Forces occupied the vanquished territories of Nazi Germany, they created four separate zones of occupation (Besatzungszonen). This occupation signified several things for Germany, post-war Europe and indeed, the world in general. First and foremost, the occupation came with the acquisition of German national sovereignty by the Allied victors while also tacitly acknowledging distinct zones of socio-economic and politico-ideological influence. To the East, the

29 21st century Hochtief rebranded many of their public works construction projects as “social infrastructure”, to appeal to a more modern, cultural capital feel instead of and brick and mortar.
Oder-Neisse rivers became the geographical delimitation between a capitalist West and a communist East zone (*West- und Ostzone*). Two competing world economic systems were effectively pitched against each other. Second, the Oder-Neisse line became the border between the two newly established, separate nation-states—West and East German—thus setting the geopolitical stage for a decades long Cold-War. Third, Germany’s border expansions to the east, west and south under the National Socialist regime were reversed and Germany’s newly divided national territories were significantly reduced. The construction of the Berlin Wall, an iconic, highly militarized dividing wall between East and West Germany, followed shortly thereafter. Fourth, a process of de-militarization, de-Nazification and above all, democratization of West Germany and in East Germany, the process of communist reformulation and re-socialization began. The Allies’ early intentions of deindustrializing West Germany were stopped and reversed under the Marshall Plan provisions. Germany was to build the most cutting-edge industry in the world as a bulwark and containment against the expansionist, communist threat of the East.

From the military and geopolitical perspective of the U.S., the occupation of West Germany signaled the dawn of a new age as well. Through the establishment of a vast network of permanent military bases across Germany’s national territory and indeed,
the rest of the world, America became the “accidental Empire” (Johnson, 2000, p. 218).

Author and former CIA consultant Chalmers Johnson (2000) writes:

A decade after the end of the Cold War, hundreds of thousands of American troops, supplied with the world’s most advanced weaponry, sometimes including nuclear arms, are stationed on over sixty-one base complexes in nineteen countries worldwide, using the Department of Defense’s narrowest definition of a “major installation”; if one included every kind of installation that houses representatives of the American military, the number would rise to over eight hundred. (p. 4)

War times bleed into peace times. It appears to be an historic constant that “states of exception” (Agamben, 2005) imposed during times of war, civil unrest or natural calamity are normalized in a seamless transition into civil peacetime society. Is this what Walter Benjamin (2007) was referring to in his essay On the Concept of History when he described the angel of history as unable to contain or resist destruction and rubble, i.e. the forces of progress?

Poetic license aside, the macroeconomic implications of maintaining close to a thousand military bases worldwide are (logically) hugely burdensome to the U.S. economy. America’s domestic socio-economic progression in the post-war years stalled for all but the growing—but now dwindling—middle class (Johnson, 2000). For America’s economic elites, the prioritization of National Security expenditures favored

\[\text{30 The U.S. filled in the void left behind by the collapse of Europe’s, and in particular, the British Empire’s colonial rule.}\]
their investments in bloated defense sector industries. Even die-hard president and former general Eisenhower felt compelled to sternly warn the American public about the “unwarranted influence” of the “military-industrial complex” (1961) in government affairs. Johnson (2000) openly questions Imperial America’s ability to survive as a nation so thinly spread abroad and at home:

They [the economically dependent satellite or client states maintained by the U.S. in East Asia] hollowed out our domestic manufacturing and bred a military establishment that is today close to being beyond civilian control. Given that the government only attempts to shore up, not change, these anachronistic arrangements, one must ask when, not whether, our accidental empire will start to unravel. (p. 218)

What are the international and domestic implications resulting from regimes of occupation by military infrastructure for (here, American) civil society? Just as the U.S. foreign military footprint matters to the people of occupied sovereign territories abroad, so too should it matter to domestic communities at home. The fact that the Pentagon is the world’s largest employer is just one signpost; another is that despite the abrupt end of the Cold-War, “it was incumbent upon the Pentagon to maintain the capacity ‘to intervene decisively in every critical region’ of the world (Bacevich, 2005, p. 86).

Domestically, the perimeters of the U.S. military’s innumerable military bases are secured fortifications with highly controlled access points and a plethora of security clearance protocols. The geographic footprint of military bases, simulated battle training sites, military weapon system manufacturing facilities, and so on, are veritable zones of occupation, not unlike the American bases in Germany and other parts of the world.
Over the years, photographer Chris Sims has built strong relationships with military personnel all across the country in order to get an inside view of U.S. military facilities. Despite his best efforts, he was mostly only granted access to declassified facilities (Figure 25) and with the restriction of not being allowed to photograph any individuals. Certain zones in Guantanamo Bay, for instance, remained closed to him, even thought he was traveling under the auspices of military supervision. In 2016, I attempted to physically come as close as possible to the Norfolk Naval Base in Virginia, where the world’s mightiest aircraft carriers (Figure 26) are built. I too encountered an impenetrable military security perimeter (Figure 27), consisting of reinforced concrete road blocks, concertina fencing (Brown, 2010), high-security military and police checkpoints, and the more hidden but ubiquitous CCTV surveillance systems. I made similar attempts in the intermodal logistics ports of New Jersey, and Port Elizabeth, freight handling facilities that operate exclusively for civilian and commercial shipping, unlike the Norfolk site, which is clearly a hybrid civil and military infrastructure. The fact that the Norfolk site was patrolled by a joint military-police force was a strong

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31 It is not surprising that a vast connection with ‘civil’ logistics infrastructure would be required at the world’s foremost military naval construction site. Much more than on foot, cyber-meandering on Google Maps allows for a far greater appreciation of this civil/military overlap, further questioning the secrecy efforts at the security perimeter around the facility. The business of “security theater” (Levenson, 2014), which takes place at U.S. airports, is on full display at these sites.
indication and testament to the overlapping operational zones between the military and civil sphere in America. My first hand experiences highlights the highest Homeland Security interest of U.S. military industrial production facilities, which make them constitutionally worthy of protections by regular civil service institutions like a local police force. Not unlike myself, who ultimately found himself sandwiched between a heavily armed soldier in front of his car and a heavily armed police officer at his back, American society is stuck between an autonomous military-industrial complex and an increasingly militarized police force. The separation of executive power offices has been effectively nullified. The military branch, supposedly in charge of “states of exception” (Agamben, 2005), and the (albeit militarized) regular, civil police force have together been made responsible for boosting the nation’s defense capabilities. A “seamless” (Cowen, 2014) Homeland Security complex has converted the national territory into a zone of occupation.

Indeed, the accelerated militarization of U.S. society — “the New American Militarism” (Bacevich, 2005)— is visible on many levels: domestic police forces are increasingly equipped and trained like military special forces; military maneuver simulation and training bases are spread across the nation’s territory; the outsourcing of military affairs to private contractors, which boils down to public-private military enterprises that profit from international armed conflicts, to name just a few. For Bacevich (2005), the connection of militarism in the U.S. with domestic economic
injustices is obvious: “Money buys access and influence, the rich and famous get served, and those lacking wealth or celebrity status get screwed—truths not at all unrelated to the rise of militarism in America” (p. xi). The access Bacevich (2005) refers to also includes the privilege of not accessing at all, which is a crucial aspect for the children of “upper class” parents, who ensure “that it’s someone else’s kid who is getting shot at in Iraq or Afghanistan” (p. 97). Again, the tipping point for the conceptual framework of occupation is access—the boxing in or shutting out of people in relation to opportunities and resources.

1.3.1. Controlling Access as Spatial Occupation

In times of globalization ‘we’ means a club of individuals that solves the problems of collective action on the basis of common preferences with voluntary loyalty instead of coercive regulated identities such as geographical boundaries. (Geyer & Straubhaar in Miller, 2005, p. 295)

The ideology proposed in the above quote by pro-globalization advocates Geyer and Straubhaar (2005) formulates a politics of privileged access in terms of popular will and free choice. The “club” is a conceptual container based on exclusive membership. Typical for clubs is that they dictate their own rules of governance32 (Lasner, 2012; Low & Smith, 2006) independently of any coercive government imposition. The ‘we’ of the

32 Gated communities also define their very own statutes of governance, as do malls, and other private property communities like country clubs.
club’s member (and the inevitable guest) clause can always be reduced to ‘we’ are in and you not. Without a membership, entry will be denied. The “club” is a simple concept that all people have been socialized to comfortably accept but is certainly not the “imagined community” envisioned by Anderson (1991). Anderson saw such communities as being bound by an inclusive sense of solidarity within a nation-state. By contrast, globalization advocates like Geyer and Straubhaar favor “clubs” over imagined communities because the former blend seamlessly into the space of the Empire\(^{33}\) (Hardt & Nergi, 2004). The notion of subjectivities as sovereign agents who choose their loyalties and affiliation according to what best suits their interests clearly aligns with “club” mentality, which is governed in part by a meritocratic morality that underwrites free agency and free choice by legitimizing any potential critique by the less free.

In the light of this “globalized” (Stiglitz, 2002)—that is, positivistic, limited access—system, the free choice paradigm is an unexpected counterpart to freedom. Freedom of choice is integral to the ‘American way of life’. The shelves of department stores and malls are filled with innumerable brands, each offering a slightly different

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\(^{33}\) Hardt and Negri (2000) define Empire as a complex new world economic system that transcends traditional notions of bound nation states. Assemblages between private corporations, the Bretton Woods System and new military doctrines are projected across the entire planet and can no longer be controlled by local governments. A globalized world economic system of this sort depends on multi-scalar affiliations of limited access, including “clubs”, boards, foundations, NGOs, and others.
product. Shopping is the embodiment of this freedom of choice cultural model. In the U.S., choice and shopping have evolved into a pseudo-moral imperative: “Our desire to shop derives from the biological drive of hunting for food, the modern ideology of individual choice, and the social drive—which has accelerated since the sixties—to get ‘the best’” (Zukin, 2004, p. 62). To help Americans cope with their collective trauma after the 9/11 terror attacks, G.W. Bush encouraged Americans to go shopping and enjoy themselves: “‘Get down to Disney World in Florida,’ he urged just over two weeks after 9/11. ‘Take your families and enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed’” (Bacevich, 2008). In other words, spending time together is spending money together, and expensive leisure is therapeutic.

Of course, shopping as therapy, though encouraged for all is clearly frowned upon if the shopper is a social welfare recipient. Indeed, differences in socio-economic class are often framed in terms of good or bad choices, particularly in relation to the behaviors of the less well-to-do. Conservatives claim that the welfare state precludes the freedom of choice and insist on limiting the reach of welfare programs in order to activate people’s ‘natural’ (read: moral) choice mechanisms, even in children. The meritocratic ideals of American society are closely linked to the concept of free choice making choice oddly burdensome. According to a conservative politician at the 2014 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), government-subsidized free meal programs are rightfully designed to give poor public school children “a full stomach and
an empty soul” (Dockterman, 2014). In other words, free choice—that is, access to benefits—must be earned.

Access—particularly, limited access—may well be the most treasured and contested commodity of the 21st century. Access can only be granted or denied after an initial occupation of space, making an original act of occupation constitutive of all politics of access that follow. Indeed, the causal value chain derived from the power of granting or denying access is negative, such that the power of denying access outweighs the value of granting access. Occupation by power is therefore an ontologically negative spatial practice. For instance, the Berlin Wall denied access to both the West and the East; it was mutually exclusive. Only clandestine activities were able to breach the barricaded access point between these two geographically and ideologically separated territories. Occupation and its product, access, derive their productive force from scarcity, not abundance. Most people are denied access to the most cherished spaces, which is why they are designated VIP zones. Viewed from this perspective, access becomes a function of social and ideological distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). The dialectic between access and exclusion becomes the productive site for social distinction by shaping subjectivities, who have internalized the fact that there exist spaces from which they will most likely be barred or into which they will only rarely be welcome.

It follows then that permanent dispositions or “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1984), like knowing where one can gain or should not ask for access, are imprinted in people’s
minds. Boudieu’s (1984) notion of habitus does not rely on disciplinary or physically violent power in the same way as Foucault’s. In Foucault’s (1978) book *Discipline and Punish*, he writes that discourse functions “by solemnly inscribing offences in the field of objects susceptible of scientific knowledge, they provide the mechanisms of legal punishment with a justifiable hold not only on offences, but on individuals; not only on what they do, but also on what they are, will be, may be” (p. 18). Discipline and punishment do ultimately lead to a certain concept of the self but for Foucault, only via a violent infrastructure as opposed to the ‘softer’ dispositions Bourdieu describes.

Nevertheless, Bourdieu develops a new category of coercive power, symbolic violence, which functions equally as a formative force in the concept of self in society. The symbolic violence of limited access plays an important role in the formation of national identities (Anderson, 1991; Appadurai, 2006). Behind the act of refusing refugees’ and migrants’ access to national territories lies the political and collective desire to define and limit citizenship along ethnic, religious, and ideological lines. A fear of ethnic impurities (Appadurai, 2006) or even, “contagion” (*Seuche*) (Hitler, 1943), as in the case of Nazi demagoguery, can make the act of limiting access transform national identities into predatory ones. “[P]redatory [identities are] those […] whose social construction and mobilization require the extinction of other, proximate social categories, defined as threats to the very existence of some group, defined as a we” (Appadurai, 2006, p. 51). The classical distinction of an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ or a ‘we’
versus an ‘Other’ are based on notions of restricted access to a zone that is considered to be resource-rich, valuable, or even, sacrosanct.

The act of laying claim to valuable territories, resources or ideas is at the heart of all occupations. The concept of occupation should be understood as a multifarious assault of capital on the common or what was once publically shared and readily accessible. The production, reproduction, circulation, and commodification of fear frequently serves as a guiding or legitimizing principle behind acts of spatial occupation. In these so-called zones of occupation, heterogeneous strategies are deployed, practiced and multiplied in everyday life in order to safeguard and maintain a status quo of limited access. These practices are spatial, and they are reified in concrete infrastructure. If legal and political architectures are conceptualized as social infrastructure and the enforcement of law and order as the ideological indoctrination of society’s habits, dispositions and discipline, then a bigger picture of the workings of occupation begins to take shape. Spaces, architectures and their content merge into ideological zones of occupation.
1.3.2. Counter-Occupation of Limited Access Zones

In sculpture, art historians and critics talk of positive and negative space. Positive space is occupied by the sculptural object itself, i.e. its material structure; whereas negative space is the empty space that surrounds it. The silhouette of the object is the threshold at which the sculptural object ends and the surrounding space takes over the audience's visual field. This threshold between the sculptural object and the surrounding negative space is an important part of what defines the meaning of the artwork and its social context. Artist Richard Serra pays so much attention to the enveloping negative space of his massive COR-TEN steel sculptures that he sometimes appears to have lost sight of the social function and impact of his works. The legal rejection of Richard Serra’s *Tilted Arc* (Figure 28) exemplifies like no other American public art court case the potential for public art to be experienced as a form of occupation. Creative Insider writer Alex Fialho (2015) described the situation:

Richard Serra’s Titled Arc (1981) was one of the most polarizing public artworks in history. The enormous, site-specific sculpture sloped across Federal Plaza throughout the 1980s, measuring 12 feet high x 112 feet long x 2 ½ inches wide. […] Immediately upon its installation in the Federal Plaza, there was an outraged outpouring of complaints from those who lived and worked in proximity to Titled Arc that it divided the vast plaza in half, obstructing a linear route through the previously open space. Catalyzing debates around the nature and purpose of public art as well as artistic freedom of speech, the work was eventually removed in 1989.

34 In terms of audience reception of a work of art, vernacular labels such as positive and negative refer more to public acceptance of the artistic proposition.
Granted, the way public art is perceived can vary greatly. In commenting on *Tilted Arc*, art historian W. J. T. Mitchell (2012) argues that Serra wanted to “free that [public] space from its obsession with monumental representations of sovereignty and the exploitation of the masses as ornament of state power” (p. 121). Ironically, Mitchell seems to have overlooked the monumentality of the work. Is it because Serra’s work is Minimalist and features no ornamentation? The sheer scale (12 feet high x 112 feet long x 2 ½ inches wide) of the “arc” makes it a huge barrier—an unmistakable wall. Such structures incontrovertibly symbolize autocratic rule—power that cuts off the sovereignty of the people by literally barring them from crossing the plaza. The grandiosity of Serra’s work in the public sphere in almost violent. The fact that much of his work is erected in global hubs of finance capital confirms his deep alliance to global capital, which is epitomized by outrageously exclusive price tags for celebrity artworks. Like many other public art works, the moment art steps out of the privileged and protected space of white box museums and blue chip galleries, the acceptance or rejection of the public becomes a central concern. The image of the aloof or elitist artists who seeks to impose his/her artistic vision on an encumbered public seems to be more the norm than the exception.35

35 A close examination of many public art works shows that the larger public is a much more difficult “committee” than that of a board of trustees or as in the case of Serra’s *Tilted Arc*, the team of art experts put together by the National Endowment for the Arts.
Democratic deliberation should certainly be articulated in the public sphere as Arendt (1998) so vehemently affirmed. But just how this process of public deliberation—the assembly and staging of “the public” or “demos”—should be carried out in the public sphere is obviously highly contested. In the U.S., much of what was once public has been made private, and the takeover of the public spaces, even if only temporarily, by powerful companies (corporate-sponsored events), by the government (presidential visits), and increasingly, by high-profile artists underlines the death of any imagined or real inclusive community and the growth instead in the primacy of communities of exclusivity and the club culture.

Serra’s fame comes largely from his status as cultural capital; his works and those of other similarly esteemed artists (Jeff Koons, Anish Kapoor, Damian Hirst) allow the privileged few to stage their wealth (and their exclusive access to such cultural capital) via celebrity artworks that occupy public spaces. It should be noted that the price tags that ‘old master’ artworks fetch at Sotheby auctions are truly mind boggling. Anonymous buyers happily pay over one hundred million dollars for a painting by big-name artist like Munch, Van Gogh or Picasso. Indeed, there is no object on earth that is both materially and culturally more highly valued—not even gold—than such works of art. The art market and global capital have thus become an echo chamber in which one party elevates the other in a mutual dance of recognition and praise.
Taken as a fantastic case in point, the curiously inflated responses to, above all else, the grandiosity and ambition of Serra’s works underlines the lasting principle that sold the big promises of Hitler and Pinochet and Roosevelt. The pure monumentality of Serra’s work are its main asset. The sheer mass of steel he uses makes shipping, storing, and exhibiting his works a domain only the most influential financial institutions, including their affiliated art galleries, can afford. It becomes a ritual of privileged access. In a Wall Street Journal article praising Serra’s life work, art critic Kelly Crow (2015) writes, “[t]he more logistically hairy they are to install [Serra’s sculptures], the more status they seem to convey. Serra’s tilting and curved sculptures require days and huge cranes to arrange in place, which is usually done under the artist’s watchful eye”. Blue chip galleries such as Gagosian, tell tales of how their gallery floors collapsed under the weight of Serra’s sculptures, as if weight and an anecdote were statements of quality. Serra’s latest sculpture installation (Figure 29) at the famous David Zwirner gallery in New York entitled Equal, was made up of “a group of eight car-size blocks stacked into four towers. Because they weigh 320 tons in all, the artist had to position the pairs over four weight-bearing pylons beneath the gallery floor. Otherwise, they might have sunk through” (Crow, 2015). To that end, art curator Carson Chan (2011) argues that Serra’s primary material is the exhibition space itself and not the art, “[c]urators, beyond selecting exhibitors and administrating the logistics of display, are the mediators between the artwork and its audience” (p. 32). Serra’s works fit neatly into this modern
world of art curation, capital circulation and a mode of cultural capital production that relies on heavy metallurgical industry only as a nostalgic wink.

Art is now tied into a sophisticated ritual of cultural capital circulation in which fine art is the very pinnacle of the capital food chain. One exception is the work of Krzysztof Wodiczko, most of whose artworks are critical of the link between art and Empire (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Many of his public artworks feature video projections onto the surfaces of existing public art monuments (i.e. equestrian statues, or fountains, etc.). In The Venice Projections (*Figure 30*) from 1986, Wodiczko (1999) critiques what he considered to be the global empire of tourism:

> The new world empire of tourism (travel, entertainment, art, and leisure) has turned the ruins of the old world financial-military empire of Venice into an art-Disneyland and shopping-for-the-past-plaza. [...] This new empire has converted (renovated) the once lavish and decadent capital of capital—that inglorious, floating pioneer of the multinational corporate World Trade Center—into a tourist playground, an imaginary ‘refuge’ from the politically and economically troubled world of today. (p. 53)

Nonetheless, Wodiczko’s critical works represent the exception, not the norm. And the rewards of monetary recompense, fame and the honor of being commissioned go to those whose works reflect and reinforce the established cultural capital ritual.

Refinement and taste are important means of keeping uninitiated, working-class publics at arm’s length and to create an exclusive, socio-economically restricted access zone.

Bourdieu (1984) famously reflected on social groups’ desire for social distinction, which the aristocracy and in mimicry, the “petit bourgeois” (p. 95) derive from having and displaying artistic refinement. The key distinction is the aristocracy’s “detachment,
disinterestedness, and indifference towards art” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 34), which does not seek to downplay art’s symbolic ‘value’. Bourdieu (1984) notes that “formal refinement […] is part of the paraphernalia which always announces the sacred character, separate and separating, of high culture—the icy solemnity of the great museums, the grandiose luxury of the opera-houses and major theatres, the decor and decorum of concert-halls” (p. 34). The art market can therefore be conceptualized as a zone occupied by cultural capital, i.e. the shiny sibling of economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). It follows then that occupation precedes and activates movements that seek to resist, contest or reverse it like, famously, the French Revolution in which the poor literally cut down the aristocracy, cancelling the latter’s symbolic and actual occupation.

The severe fracturing of our modern imagined communities prevents the analogous class of U.S. Americans—the so-called Other 99%--from enacting such a dramatic and violent reprisal, but in infinitely tamer terms that still adhere to the club’s non-member rules of etiquette, the 2011 Occupy Wall Street protesters set up camp at downtown New York City’s Zuccotti Park, a privately owned public space. Not entirely unlike their 18th century predecessors, these protesters did so with the intention of taking back what they believed to be rightfully theirs: the right to a more sustainable, equitable and fair society and the right to meet in peaceful, democratic assembly in order to deliberate about and voice heterogeneous struggles. One of the original
initiators of the movement, Micah White (2016) states how Occupy had external and internal enemies from the very outset:

Occupy faced adversaries inside and outside. Half wanted to destroy the movement, and the other half wanted to control it. Occupy never developed a way to vet participants. Anyone (worthy or unworthy) could claim to be an equal spokesperson of the movement. Thus the movement faced both police infiltrators who disrupted our assemblies with belligerence and the 99% Spring, an initiative financed by the progressive Left, that mimicked Occupy in a successful bid to dissipate the movement’s revolutionary momentum into a re-election campaign for President Obama. (p. 113)

Nonetheless, the protesters’ project hinged on two assumptions. First, that they were acting within a reliable legal framework to express political dissent in the public realm, which, in theory at least, is protected by the 4th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This belief was complicated from the very start by the fact that Zuccotti Park is lawful private property, though publicly accessible. Second—as compensation for the shortcomings of the former—the protesters had the tactical advantage the characterizes any new conflict: the element of surprise. In hindsight, both assumptions proved erroneous. Despite the legal Jersey barriers, as it were, the protesters believed they

36 De Certeau (1984) distinguishes between two concepts: “tactic” and “strategy”. “Tactics” are the method used by subversive agents to contest power. Power is the dialectical opponent of such movements that uses “strategies” to dominate citizens.
37 The term Jersey barriers is used typically for construction and road works and is meant figuratively. This analysis develops a vocabulary that is rich in metaphors taken from construction, logistics, urbanism, military and corporate management idioms. Jersey barriers are modular, reinforced concrete traffic lane dividers. Ever since the 9/11 terror attacks, they have also been used to shield city centers and so-called high-value targets (i.e. administrative buildings such as embassies, city halls etc.) from potential suicide vehicle bomb attacks.
were righteously enacting a conceptual and practical reversal of the *de facto* capital occupation of the public sphere, a historically rooted dispossession of the common. This notion of capital occupation\(^{38}\) was immortalized by the catchy “We are the 99%” (Mitchell, Harcourt, & Taussig, 2013), which skillfully summarizes the ongoing process of economic disenfranchisement of the majority of U.S. citizens by an ultra rich economic elite, the 1%. Spawning global Occupy movements rapidly picked up on the catchphrase and connected their own versions of disenfranchisement via neoliberalism and globalization (Stiglitz, 2002), both of which are felt as uncontrollable forces that drastically transform democracy itself and start with the very legal and infrastructural frameworks allegedly meant to facilitate and protect democratic deliberation in the public sphere.

Urban geographer David Harvey (2014) famously described the facet of contemporary capitalism against which the Occupy movement is poised as “accumulation through dispossession” (p, 141). This particular dispossession has occurred more or less surreptitiously over the course of the past 30 years as lawmakers, developers and financiers have laid claim to ever greater parcels of the public sphere. This process was accelerated by the 9/11 terror attacks thanks to the economic, legal and

\(^{38}\)Occupation by capital is a core concept within the larger framework of this analyses. It seeks to expand the genealogy of contemporary Marxist theories and political economy.
material support of new Homeland and National Security initiatives. Safety or rather, fear dictated curtailing public usage of (now increasingly) privately owned public spaces like Zuccotti Park, creating an emergent economy of fear. The places where most people congregate today, shopping centers and strip malls and public parks, are legally off limits for public speech and increasingly packaged, monitored and understood as publically accessible private spaces. Free choice and indeed, free speech—that is, access to benefits—must be earned.

Needless to say, the Occupy movement did not lead to the formation of a viable political organization, nor were the deleteriously heterogeneous struggles assimilated into the cause of an existing political party. If measured with the yardstick of more enduring political movements like that of the Tea Party, the Occupy movement can, without reservation, be called an utter failure. Ironically, the Tea Party initially shared some of the Occupy movement’s core grievances, similarly decrying social and economic inequality and the unethical bank bailout of 2008. To its credit, however, the Tea Party movement was absorbed into the much more ideologically radical arm of the U.S. Republican Party, which has since enjoyed mainstream popularity, unlike the still

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39 For W.J.T. Mitchell, the revolutionary iconography of the Tea Party preceded Occupy Wall Street. It sought to “stage a populist and nationalist revival around images of the original American Revolution.
splintered, sputtering Occupy movement. If anything, future protesters can learn important lessons from Occupy’s undeniable merits and many failures. For one, their original occupation was unequivocally set up on the wrong sites40. Media appeal aside, Zuccotti Park is the belly of the beast; it is the high-rise, high finance temple-like home to Manhattan’s oligarchs, and the protesters’ ongoing, critical, vocal presence there was illegal. Micah White (2016) states that protest movements are an important expression of dissent against the current socio-political status quo; the fewer protests society sees, the more oppressive it will become. And yet, White doubts their effectiveness at this particularly historic juncture. He writes:

Activism is in crisis. Occupy was the strongest, most sophisticated and broadly based social movement in fifty years - and yet we were completely unable to sway the balance of power. [...] The deeper lesson of the defeat of Occupy is that Western governments are not required to comply with their people's demands, even if those demands are articulated by a historic social movement backed by millions of people in the streets. We have been acting as if the people have sovereignty over their governments when they act collectively. Now it is clear that the people's sovereignty has been lost. We were wrong to believe that bigger and bigger street protests could force prime ministers and presidents to heed the wishes of the people. Activism, it turns out, has been chasing an illusion. (p. 35)

40 The Occupy organizers had a shortlist of 8 sites to erect the encampment and decided on Zuccotti Park precisely because it is a privately owned public space, required by law to stay open 24/7. Excerpts from the Tactical Committees notes: “Location 2 (Zuccotti Park): Pro: Large P.O.P.S. two blocks from Wall Street; many exits; almost empty on September 17th with few police nearby; required to be open twenty-four hours a day. Con: Trees could interfere with sightlines during large meetings” (Schwartz, 2011).
Indeed, if Occupy managed to accomplish at least one enduring thing, it was to galvanize and delineate a clear political front – an us versus them – around globally perceived issues of social, economic and environmental injustices associated with the transformation of the modern hegemonic world-economic system. A shared awareness that Western democracies and their principles are under a state of occupation has emerged (and been named) and with it a Durkheimian understanding of the importance of social solidarity among an emerging global community of shared grievances and hopes. Will this suffice to bring forth a more sustainable, global counter-occupation movement, or is public protest truly dead, as Micah White believes? Only time will tell.

1.3.3. Staging Place as Tactic Against Occupation

For Occupy protesters, the looming threat of eviction, police violence and unwarranted arrests was present at all times, so it made sense not to offer up an identifiable leader (Rädelsführer⁴¹), whom the authorities could single out and immobilize. Mitchell (2013) proposes that the tactic of biographical anonymity highlighted a crucial aspect of the entire protest movement. The “face” of an identifiable leader, organizer, or spokesperson receded and was replaced by the specificity of the

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⁴¹ This is a term often used in Germany in the context of identifying a leader figure for illegal protests.
occupied space. Space was made iconic. In the case of Occupy Wall Street, this space was Zuccotti Park. The name will continue to resonate in the collective memory not only of protesters but also in that of the opposition and casual and/or distant onlookers as in the cases of Tahrir Square, Tiananmen Square, Gezi Park, and many others. Their iconic power illustrates the fact that Mitchell’s assessment of the face-less fight underestimates the iconic face-value of the widely recognizable yet anonymous Guy Fawkes facemask. Mitchell (2013) admits being slightly disenchanted by this “singularly awkward and inappropriate icon of a nonviolent revolution” (p.101), but he still misses the importance of internet memes that are bound to this mask. For democratic deliberation to be effective, complete anonymity is counterproductive, for it removes personal accountability from the process. And the Anons, i.e. anonymous or unknown persons, have made the Guy Fawkes mask their ‘corporate identity’ icon. They are a heterogeneous group of hackers and Internet trolls who spread memes and internet hate campaigns on highly offensive bulletin boards such as 4chan.org.

However, in today’s “mediascape” (Appadurai, 1996), an icon can stand for many things, depending on who first appropriated the iconography and to what end. Anonymity can send confusing signals about the true intentions of a movement, which, as the Occupy movement has demonstrated, can ultimately undermine its larger goals. The mere mention of Ghandi, Mandela, or King brings to mind their now iconic faces and a set (and fairly universally known) socio-political narrative. The Guy Fawkes mask
accomplishes the opposite. It waters down and debilitates the would-be ideals-specific narrative of any movement. Still, the deeply entrenched, dangerously debilitating systemic punishment of any members of an opposition movement calls for an alternative to the iconic face. Ironically, perhaps, implicit in the very name, Occupy movement, is the answer: a revival of a focus on “space” versus “face”. To go a step further, “space” would do well to be replaced by “place”\(^\text{42}\) in order to give a sense of true personal attachment to what might otherwise be reduced to a mere geolocation on a random GPS map. Moving through and acting in spaces\(^\text{43}\), then, has the power to transform them into place, making such transformations not only spacio-temporal but also necessarily tied to intentionality. In his book, *Space and Place*, geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) posits that “[t]he intention to go to a place creates historical time: the place is a goal in the future. The future cannot, however, be left open and undefined” (p. 123). Time is experienced in direct relation to the surrounding space, just like sculpture is defined by the threshold of its enveloping negative space.

\(^{42}\) Yi-Fu Tuan clarifies the difference between space and place: “Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other. There is no place like home. What is home? It is the old homestead, the old neighborhood, hometown, or motherland. Geographers study places. Planners would like to evoke “a sense of place.” These are unexceptional ways of speaking. Space and place are basic components of the lived world; we take them for granted” (1977, p. 3).

\(^{43}\) Chapters 2 and 4 will discuss anthropologist Johannes Fabian’s (1983) concept of travel as a temporalizing practice.
Moreover, a new political project could be developed simply by defining a “place” of destination. If Tuan’s understanding of the spatiotemporal structures of personal historic time is combined with a common vision or concept of a “place” worth reaching, the creation of this “place” is the simultaneous creation of a political vector. Put in more poetic terms, he describes such a project as follows:

When we look at a country scene we almost automatically arrange its components so that they are disposed around the road that disappears into the distant horizon. Again, almost automatically we imagine ourselves traveling down that road; its converging borders are like an arrow pointing to the horizon, which is our destination and future. (Tuan, 1977, p. 123)

Artist Joseph Beuys practiced and preached staging place in advocating for social sculpture. His social sculpture project, 7000 Oaks (1982 and ongoing) (Figure 31), is a collective representation and embodied enactment of political ideals: planting trees together in a predetermined place. What then is his collectively imagined place? It is one that is sustainable and collectively protected and enjoyed. The message seems simple but the more powerful given that neoliberalism advocates for and rewards selfish, meritocratic achievement over all.

44 The idea of utopian or mythical space most commonly associated with the imaginary space is not part of what this investigation proposes.
1.3.4. From Place to Junk Space to Outer Space

If “globalization” (Stiglitz, 2002) has accomplished one thing, it is the annihilation of the deeper meaning and relevance of place. Global capital requires that space be modular and mobile; it must circulate freely and remain exchangeable. For example, the intermodal, global transportation network is only interested in the plug-and-play capability of discreet technical and geographical media, i.e. one module or one million modules need to depart from location A and arrive at location B by time X. Those are the parameters that dictate global flows. If location A is off-line, then it is replaced by location C, which is online. The modular and networked qualities and capabilities of the logistical grid allow for maximum flexibility and minimum accountability. Place is only relevant as long as it promises profit, which transforms place into useful economic space. Once the condition of profitability expires, the site is abandoned, and business operations are relocated. In logistics operations, place becomes anonymous space, not only because all infrastructure hubs look exactly the same and feature exactly the same machinery and couplings (Figures 15 & 20), but also because it is abstracted to its bare functionality. How many square meters does a place have and how much storage space can legally be built on top? This logic holds true as much for new retail mall site prospecting by big mall developers like the Pyramid Management Group (Aronow & Grange, 2009) as it does for international shipping ports, airports, convention centers, and so on.
For Dutch architecture laureate Rem Koolhaas (2002), much of America’s building stock, which includes mega malls and strips, interstate highways and suburban tract housing, airports and gas station, parking lots, and theme parks, falls into the category of “Junkspace”. For Koolhaas, “Junkspace is what remains after modernization has run its course, or, more precisely, what coagulates while modernization is in progress, its fallout” (2002, p. 175). Koolhaas’s concern with the multifarious, largely negative legacies of modern urban planning projects points to the disruptive and even violent social and environment impact of the progress and modernization ideology—of the skewed meaning of “civilized” and first-world society. Modern human settlements are rarely harmonious with the natural environment. In fact, they are mostly hostile to any sustainable concept of the biosphere. Koolhaas draws this parallel with stratospheric pollution: “[i]f space-junk is the human debris that litters the universe, Junkspace is the residue mankind leaves on the planet” (2002, p. 175). And indeed, the infrastructure of modern telecommunications technology occupies more and more of our stratosphere. President Eisenhower’s 1957 “Sputnik moment” (Mieczkowski, 2013) began the furious arms race that followed criticism of the president’s lagging response to Soviet technological advancement. Military historian Mieczkowski (2013) describes how the

space race “intensified questions about Eisenhower’s presidency, economic strength, national security, science, education, and American ideals” (p. 2). And so it was that Eisenhower inaugurated the nation’s space program, which was spearheaded by NASA and ARPA—later to become DARPA.

In an art project entitled, The Last Pictures (Figure 32), Trevor Paglen (2012) created what he calls an “artifact” or “time capsule”. A collection of 100 images, curated

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A lesser discussed legacy of Eisenhower’s presidential tenure is the impact his national security policies had on the educational sector and the private sector spinoffs that developed in its wake. It was during his presidency that the Advanced Research Research Agency ARPA, currently known as DARPA was created in reaction to the Soviet Union’s successful launch of the first geosynchronous orbiting satellite, the Sputnik 1. When the news broke it became a clear watershed moment for collective fear in America. The image of superiority and exceptionalism that America’s national identity and also its version of capitalism rested upon and, as it turned out the erroneously propagated image of backwardness and underdevelopment of Soviet Communism, was a serious blow to the American collective identity and belief system. All stops where pulled by the administration to rectify the image. The logical starting point for targeted innovation was the higher-education sectors. Many of America’s leading research institutions and above all Stanford and MIT—sarcastically dubbed Pentagon West and Pentagon East by its critics—were suddenly flush with military contract money and mobilized to propel the US into the space age. Science and technology historian Stuart Leslie (1993) writes that “[i]n the decade following the Second World War, the Department of Defense (DoD) became the biggest single patron of American Science”, climbing to “dizzying heights after Sputnik” (p. 1). He points out that postwar spending on defense research and development surpassed its wartime peak (already fifty times higher than prewar levels), effectively starting the transformation of the US into the National Security State it is today. Once direct government funding of classified research at the beacons of higher education had become unsustainably unpopular and increasingly met with student protests, privately owned and run spinoffs as well as think tanks were formed to keep the mission alive. Although academia was temporarily removed from the crosshair of peace movements, it simply continued its applied and classified military research off-campus. MIT spinoff Lincoln Laboratory is a case in point. Its Research and Development (R&D) brought forth ARPANET, which was the foundation of today’s Internet.
in a collaborative effort between the artist, various scientists, and graduate students, was then engraved on a small golden data storage unit\textsuperscript{47} in an archival format that is designed to withstand deep space time\textsuperscript{48}. The unit was then attached to the side of a commercial satellite and launched into space. The satellite with the data unit will potentially orbit the earth for billions of years to come. This is a work of public art, but it occupies a very different space than what is generally expected or understood as the public realm: outer space. As both geographer and visual artist, Paglen focuses on the clandestine and often invisible infrastructure of modern military and civilian communication networks. In past works, he has used specialized night vision cameras or cameras equipped with custom-made extreme focal length lenses to track, monitor and bring the viewer’s attention closer to the otherwise undetectable infrastructure and geolocations of these networks. He has also captured the dense satellite traffic in geostationary orbit around the earth, which is otherwise imperceptible to the naked eye. The trajectories of these satellites in the meanwhile count in the thousands, and the debris of obsolete or damaged units cannot be accurately quantified but are numerous.

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\textsuperscript{47}The famous Golden Records attached to the Voyager 1 and 2 deep space missions are the precursors and inspiration for Paglen’s own disc.

\textsuperscript{48}The images are nano-etched onto a silicon image-disc wafer which can potentially endure millions of years even under heavy ionizing radiation bombardment in outer space (Paglen, 2012).
enough to pose a significant risk to manned spacecraft. His works make human space junk visible and show them for what they are, extraterrestrial imperialist junk-spaces.

In the catalogue description of Paglen’s *The Last Pictures*, Nato Thompson, artistic director of Creative Time, an organization that focuses of art in the public realm, writes that the project raises “essential questions about the very colonialist desire that space has so often represented” (Paglen, 2012, p. iix). Although this commentary is right to mention colonialist desires, it misses the central point of his re-presentation. Paglen extends the time horizon of his work to that of cosmic archeology—in his own words “deep space time”—as a means of excavating in an incommensurably deep future. Paglen’s concern is to communicate to unknown future civilizations his diagnosis of the conflicted present moment. His ‘diagnosis’, culled from innumerable interviews with scientists and various graduate student seminars in which the most pressing questions regarding the sustainability of human culture were posed, is the collection of 100 images, which in sharp contrast to those stored on the Golden Records of the Voyager\(^49\) (Figure 33), represent the notion of ruin architecture, to be discussed in chapter 2 and 4.

\(^49\) The content of the original Golden Records was curated by a committee chaired by Carl Sagan and consisted of “115 images and a variety of natural sounds, such as those made by surf, wind and thunder, birds, whales, and other animals. To this they added musical selections from different cultures and eras, and spoken greetings from Earth-people in fifty-five languages, and printed messages from President Carter and U.N. Secretary General Waldheim”. Information retrieved from the NSAS homepage: http://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/spacecraft/goldenrec.html.
They do not attempt to transport an idealized and largely white-washed description of human civilization through space and time. Rather, they are a set of controversial images that problematize the human condition and culture, social and technological progress and that reverberate as a tacit warning for alien civilizations about “the dangers of highly capable and creative society unchecked” (Paglen, p. ix).

It should be noted that many of Paglan’s images represent the very same infrastructure that is discussed in this analysis: naval dockyards; the Suez Canal; an airborne Predator Drone in the Middle East; the passport of a Palestinian refugee; America’s Japanese internment camp at Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Wyoming, USA; Levittown tract housing, and so on. A clear reading of the current state of human culture is visible to all those who are willing to see beyond the surface appearance of things, as the thematic overlap suggests. Indeed, the humans’ built environment is not so much symptomatic but rather constitutive of human culture. It follows then that the pathologies of urban living point to pathologies of larger social structures and organizational forms.

1.4. Urban Space Destroyed

Whatever the pleasure and prodigious efforts associated with erecting architecture, the art of causing it to disappear can be equally compelling or satisfying. (Easterling, 2014, p. 1)

This epigraph, composed by American architect and urbanist Keller Easterling, touches on themes that are central to this study. In the context of urban planning,
Easterling’s allegorical use of (the mathematical operation of) subtraction points to some of urbanisms’ and contemporary capitals’ paradigms and major risks. First, urbanism as a crucial part of capital operations, is indelibly linked to financial operations, most of which are currently based on computer algorithms, automated cost-benefit analyses, electronic balance sheets, and big-data science—in short, economic and mathematical models that serve a strict business logic. This reduces urbanism to being yet another financial instrument rather than a larger project for positive social and urban transformation. Second, operating within the logic of finance and business, ideas about social, environmental and economic sustainability are mostly dismissed because they register as unproductive and unprofitable in the short temporal horizon of flexible accumulation (Harvey, 1990)—Geographer David Harvey (1990) describes volatility and accelerated turnover times as key features of time-space compression (p. 147) under capital—. This means that the healthy temporal horizons of human biology are literally left behind, which in turn, leads to the inherent risk (Beck, 2009) of Easterling’s two urban planning paradigms. In the long run, the risk of time-space compression will disavow the soundness and viability of urbanism as the object of financial speculation.

50 Marx (1993), in his Grundrisse: Notebook V, describes the annihilation of space by time through capital due to the logics of exchange and circulation. He writes, “capital by its nature drives beyond every spatial barrier. Thus the creation of the physical conditions of exchange – of the means of communication and transport – the annihilation of space by time – becomes an extraordinary necessity for it” (Marx, 1993, p. 459).
Building on Easterling’s mathematical (2014) concept then, if we subtract the human and environmental stakes from urban planning and allow the logics of business and financial speculation to dominate urban planning discourse, zoning legislation, and subsequent law enforcement practices, the human condition (Arendt, 1998) is at stake.

Recent examples of this causal chain abound. Take, for instance, the 2008 implosion of the U.S. real-estate bubble, which was followed by a cascading global credit freeze. This global financial catastrophe resulted in a massive public bailout for financial, lending and insurance corporations and the subsequence foreclosure of millions of low-income single-family homes. The political fallout of the crisis is still being felt today. Another example is the ongoing, institutionalized racial segregation of U.S. cities and between the inner city and suburbia (Chudacoff & Baldwin, 2005; Duneier, 2016). Critical architect Eyal Weizman (Weizman in Dufour, et al., 2015) has noticed the new trend of “object oriented” (p. 188) evidence collection and interpretation in Israel’s occupied territories. In Gaza, Israel meticulously documents its deliberate and violent architectural destruction—in Easterling’s (2014) terms, the “subtraction” of specific urban structures (Figure 34). Israel’s Minister of Public Works and the director of urban planning document51 this “evidence” in their “book of destruction “(Weizman

51 The original impetus for this undertaking by the Ministry of Public Works was to document the devastation caused by Israel’s attack of Gaza between 2008 and 2009, in which “some 1400 people
in Dufour, et al. 2016, p. 189). The book is used to assess required reconstruction costs, which are, practically-speaking, completely irrelevant since Israel refuses to provide construction material for Gaza (thereby, undermining its own authority—quite literally, in the form of clandestine tunnels). More importantly however, this “book of destruction” can be used to “restructure ‘refugeeness’—that feature of Palestinian political identity” (Weizman in Dufour, et al., 2016, p. 199). As such, the destruction of refugee architecture can be politically complimented by the reconstruction of “proper housing” and urbanization. Here, subtraction is only a means to an end, which ultimately serves to add urban space—the urban space of occupation, the fact of which displays the weakness of the subtraction concept.

As an architectural metaphor, Easterling’s subtraction model is good at describing cycles of construction and demolition, of allowing citizens to reimagine their relationship with buildings and entire blocks in the post-industrial age, where it often makes more sense to remove structures than to erect new ones; to open up a model of participant agency, in which citizens are invited to shape their urban surroundings. The problem is, subtraction says very little about the actual people who live their daily lives

were killed, 50,000 displaced and 15,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged (Weizman in Dufour, et al., 2016, p. 189). Such visual and technical documentation of the destruction of the built environment is what Weizman calls “forensic architecture” (p. 189).
in these urban spaces, and the character of the people involved cannot, in fact, be taken out of the equation, no matter how useful to financial speculators and occupying forces like Israel in Gaza. Easterling’s (2014) use of this concept shows a degree of intellectual detachment from the underlying subject matter because it largely ignores the violence and the human cost of such subtractive acts, which are typical for modernist urban development and urban renewal ideologies. Subtraction as architectural high-concept actually provides an aesthetic theory that underwrites violent urban planning legislation. It even provides urban renewal policies with the air of being ethically and morally value-neutral or objective similar to the scientific airs of Israel’s forensic “book of destruction”. In the end, buildings are still supposed to serve the complex social needs of its inhabitant populations and not the economic interests of developers, banks or the aesthetic ideals of architects and designers. Decent housing, schools, factories, retail stores, office buildings, etc., all have social functions that clearly exceed the purview of mathematical models such as subtraction, addition or multiplication. People are not numbers; neither can the urban spaces they inhabit be summarized or represented merely by mathematical cost-benefit models.

The strength of Easterling’s (2014) use of the concept “subtraction” lies in its critical description of the dehumanized modularity and mathematical accuracy of the formal, legal and financial technicalities and politics of urbanism. According to Easterling (2014), the 1934 creation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) lead to
long-term policies that changed the role of single-family homes in America by becoming a “kind of currency” (p. 19). A new mortgage formula designed to facilitate home ownership was connected with the Depression-era need to create jobs and transform “the house into a commercial multiplier” (Easterling, 2014, p. 19). This set the stage for a highly streamlined mode of housing production, directly inspired by advances in industrial assembly line production. The Ford Model T provided serialized mass mobility and the production model for serialized mass housing. Brothers William and Alfred Levitt, both college dropouts (Low & Smith, 2006, p. 38) were the first housing developers to implement industrial scale serial building practices by erecting tens of thousands of standardized houses on standardized plots. Houses became a repeatable commodity like any other mass product, as well as a form of currency versus the durable goods they had been for owners in the past. For the business world, the skies darkened when housing began to “behave” more like the durable goods they in fact were.

1.4.1. Economies of Scale and Financialization as Spatial Occupation

The early 20th century financialization (Martin, 2002) of the housing sector set the stage for the Great Recession of 2008. The explosive growth of highly complex, synthetic financial instruments, dangerous derivatives—essentially mathematical equations that calculated and projected the probabilities and likelihoods of debt/mortgage failure of
sub-prime mortgages—called by a slew of different names, led to this global financial disaster. Once numeric values had been produced, hundreds of thousands of sub-prime mortgages were bundled into qualitative categories, prompting highly respected ratings agencies to offer stamps of approval. Those packaged and re-packaged financial instruments were then allowed free passage, including a certificate of quality, into the flow of global financial networks, where they were bought and sold, blissfully unaware of their inherent toxicity. Banks’ concrete data subtraction successfully lured unsuspecting investors, which displays the subtraction model at its best. Trillions of dollars in leveraged mortgage derivatives were rapidly evaporated. The scale of capital erasure, which far exceeded even the devastating effects of Robert Moses’s urban (demolition/subtraction) planning style, was unmatched.

52 The sub-prime housing market was a high-risk mortgage market with little to now down-payments, directed towards the poorest population market. It was often along racial lines—black or other minority groups— that such sub-prime mortgages were dealt (Duneir, 2016).
53 In 1930s America, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) stepped in to back mortgage risks and make home-ownership affordable even to the less affluent. “At its founding, though, the FHA had the specific responsibility of improving buyers’ access to credit while providing lenders with much-needed legal and financial protection from potential mortgage default. Prior to the establishment of the FHA, banks regularly expected home buyers to make down payments as high as 50 percent and to meet the terms of a five- or ten-year mortgage” (Conolly, 2014 p. 94). Neoliberal policies de-regulated banks, thereby removing this safeguard from the American housing market to devastating effect.
54 Moses’s infamous “Meat Ax” (Caro, 1975) metaphor describes well his approach to effective urban transformation projects for it left some of New York’s boroughs gutted to the core. His Cross Bronx Expressway cut right through the very heart of the Bronx, crippling it for decades to come (Caro, 1975, p. 837).
The work of artist Gordon Matta-Clarke perfectly illustrates the dehumanizing effects of the financialization of urban planning. In a series of works (1974) entitled *Splitting* (Figure 35), small houses are literally cut in half by the artist—not a difficult task given the flimsiness of much of America’s housing stock. This causes the house to appear to be falling apart at the point of incision, visually representing the effect of Moses’s “Meat Ax” (see footnote) and the inherent transitoriness of America’s housing market, the low-quality of housing construction and the fragility of the private sphere. Inspired by a similar theme, in *A Fleeting Moment*, I used the implicit obsolescence of media formats to represent that of the housing sector\(^{55}\) (Figure 36). My artwork (2014) comprises digitized 16mm film stock footage, which was later converted into a GIF, the preferred media format for transient social media memes. Just as memes come and go, so too does the value of the housing market, which swells and ebbs or even loses all worth till it disappears, as in the case of the 2008’s burst housing bubble.

\(^{55}\) A house acts like a protective shell for human bodies not unlike the naturally grown ‘house’ of a snail. Most people live in such a protective shelter—a house, an apartment or any similar physical enclosure to be shielded from capricious weather fronts, strangers and dangers—unless a person has been deprived of such mundane comforts and forced to live on the street. The psychological and physical importance of having a protective shelter that one can call “home” was grossly underestimated in the latest (2008) financial crisis. The popular adage *my home is my castle* has major implications for the sense of self-worth and self-realization of Americans, for home ownership is marketed almost as a (human) right. Many U.S. families are financially overextended and are therefore vulnerable to predatory lending agencies. My internet-based work expresses the fleeting quality of home-ownership ideals.
Put into practice, the principle of economies of scale swallowed up the socio-economic dreams and futures of millions of homeowners. According to the idealized playout of the principle, the more cars a factory is able to produce per day, the cheaper they can be sold to consumers; the more shipping containers a freight ship can carry, the more negligible the costs for outsourcing of manufacturing to far away, low-income nations become; the more sub-prime mortgages can be bundled into one financial package, the smaller the impact and risk (Martin, 2002, pp. 138-140) of individual mortgage failure becomes. The so-called common sense logic of economies of scale is therefore quite simple, only there is a crucial, oft ignored flaw that is responsible for the most common outcome of its implementation, of which the 2008 financial crisis and global credit freeze are the most illustrative. All ‘economies of scale’ share a common risk: the larger, more complex and more intertwined corporate structures and their modes of production become, the greater the risk for unforeseeable systemic failure—e.g. the ‘to big to fail’ banks, the 2016 bankruptcy of South Korean logistics titan Hanjin

56 A large variety of synthetically engineered financial products under the rubric of credit derivatives exist, including credit default swaps and collateralized debt obligations, all of which are manufactured to limit risk exposure. These highly complex securitization products have proven to defy their ontological purpose of risk avoidance by potentially snowballing into their extreme opposite in the form of risk catalyzers and exposure multipliers. It is also worth noting that financial speculation lingo resorts to mechanical, industrial and infrastructure engineering terminology in an attempt to make largely fictitious, electronic and disembodied products appear more solid and structurally sound than they actually are.
Shipping, and even Bernie Madoff’s fraudulent investment Ponzi scheme. The line separating what is legal if opportunistic and what is cronyistic, nepotistic and fraudulent is often a fine one (Krugman, 2016).

There are, however, aspects of the economies of scale concept that can provide useful insights outside of its investment and business home realm. Applied to everyday life, economies of scale can provide a useful analytical framework for exploring social, corporate and individual interdependencies and scalar relationships. As in the case of the sub-prime mortgage crises, economies of scale can help uncover much viler and socially destructive economies. Given that homeownership is the cornerstone of the American Dream and essential for achieving upward social mobility (Watson & Rohe, 2007, p. 43), the sub-prime mortgage market was allegedly created to allow the U.S.’s perpetually poor partake in the American Dream by facilitating homeownership. For political economist Mehrdad Vahabi (2016), the political economy of predation has not been sufficiently investigated in mainstream economics discourse. For Vahabi (2016), predation is a violent relationship between agents, typically encountered between prey and predator (p. 8). Although Vahabi’s investigation is mostly concerned with military conflict, his economic analyses of violent infrastructures have notable parallels with this analysis. Thanks then to the unintentional didactic fallout of the principle of economies of scale, it is now common knowledge that this financial act of good faith was in fact
designed to further cripple the essentially immutably, mostly black and Latino structural poor.

Close to four centuries of slavery (Baucom, 2005), barbaric lynching, cruel Jim Crow laws (Alexander, 2012), highly restrictive and racially determined urban zoning and redlining practices (Chudacoff, & Baldwin, 2005), racial profiling (Meeks, 2000), mass incarceration (Davis, 2012), decaying infrastructure (Connolly, 2014), underfunded schools, contaminated drinking water, leaded wall paint and children’s toys (Duneir, 2016; Desmond 2016) have ensured that poor non-rural black and other racial minority Americans remain forever ghettoized and financially insecure. The American Dream is built from a legal infrastructure that enables the socio-economic benefactors of economies of scale to profit from structural socio-economic inequality by selling predatory mortgage products (Vahabi 2016, Sassen, 2014) to people who most likely cannot afford to own their own home and who will inevitably suffer under the burden of regular monthly mortgage payments. Unbeknownst its consumers, the sub-prime housing mortgages were bundled together into complex financial derivatives and sold with a triple A rating on the global investment and hedge fund markets, which meant that local risks were transformed into global ones. Sociologist Randy Martin (2002) claims that the democratized access to investment and mortgage products via complex mechanisms of financial securitization equals “the new millennium’s version of eighteenth-century Enclosure Act” (p. 141). The momentous difference today is that the
dispossessed no longer need to be removed from formerly common lands: “[p]ossession has been rendered liquid so it can be revalued daily” (Martin, 2002, p. 142).

The most remarkable aspect of the economic production of these economies of scale is the fact that the smallest, microeconomic units or nodes within such multi-scalar financial transaction networks are intrinsically bound to the largest macroeconomic network structures in the world, finance capital itself. This means that finance capital can produce or rather, extract wealth from abject poverty. It also means that failures on the smallest scale can easily topple the towering superstructures that have been erected precariously on top of unstable foundations. The ontological dependence of the sub-prime mortgage economy on the pre-existing infrastructure of racial discrimination and racial urban segregation is indisputable. In his groundbreaking study of racial discrimination and Jim Crow reified in the built environment, historian N.D.B. Conolly (2014) describes how painted red lines were used as demarcations between white and black neighborhoods. Actual cement walls were erected with New Deal money and then marked with red paint streaks. Conolly (2014) writes, “[i]n Brownsville’s wall, the redlining ‘Security Maps’ of New Deal housing agencies took vivid, concrete form. The wall also buttressed earlier practices within local government that helped keep Brownsville white” (p. 134). Redlining is therefore nothing but the legally enabled and
enforceable\textsuperscript{57} social practice of racial segregation and the cutting up of the urban fabric along racial lines. Restrictive mortgage and urban zoning laws, plus actual physical barriers—cement walls, interstate highways, railway tracks, malls—are clearly legible as violent infrastructures meant to keep certain parts of the nation’s population spatially and legally segregated from more affluent, mostly white neighborhoods. In his famous book on crowd behavior, anthropologist Elias Canetti’s (1998) writes, “\[t\]here is nothing that man fears more than the touch of the unknown” (p. 15), in this case, white America’s culturally entrenched fear of the racial and cultural Other. The image of the black male as an aggressive, sexual predator, “the black male is genital” (Fanon, 2008, p. 157) and a natural criminal\textsuperscript{58} (Lane, 2014), Latinos as “rapists” (Trump, 2015), and the Muslim as terrorist, are inclusive, specific frameworks for imagining the Other and lending force to a definition of exclusive social solidarity. Here again, the economies of scale concept reveals that the principle itself and its successful practice are

\textsuperscript{57} The history of violent police action against black inner-city residents is extensive. Formerly, executive powers were used to barricade the urban poor in their neighborhoods; more recently, within the framework of the U.S. administration’s WOD, an increasingly militarized police force has put military-style counter-insurgency tactics into practice in order to actively oppress ‘slum’ residents. There is a growing body of academic work investigating the connection between the lucrative private prison industries and ‘inner city’ mass surveillance and legal persecution of minutia (Davis, 2012).

\textsuperscript{58} The “racial threat hypothesis” poisons race relations in America, and is “one of the ways that Whites prevent Blacks from achieving equality [] by promoting fear of crime” (Lane & Rader & Fisher & May, 2014, p. 11). According to this hypothesis, Blacks pose a threat to Whites, who take steps to legally, politically and socially protect themselves from Blacks.
fundamentally dependent on deeply entrenched, pre-existing, structural economies of fear\textsuperscript{59}.

The analysis of the subprime mortgage crisis from the conceptual perspective of economies of fear can help extrapolate or scale its implications for more global scenarios by uncovering the stench of America’s domestic redlining practices in transnational trade agreements, bilateral contracts\textsuperscript{60} and even large scale geopolitical projects such as the European Union. Fortress Europe (Lehne, 2016, Carr, 2015, Feldmann, 2012) is a negatively charge descriptor, originating in Hitler’s defense perimeter against attacking Allied Forces (Forty, 2002), of the essence of the European Union’s policies: the geographic, cultural and geopolitical exclusion of incoming refugees and migrant populations, who seek a better future and safety. Eurocentrism and its dominant political project is blind to the historic memory of colonialism’s economically stifling legacies. The modern incarnation of foreign policy, cast as the “soft power” (Brown, 2014) of neoliberal economic influencing via the Bretton Woods system, i.e. the World Bank, the IMF and NGO think tanks, is actually invested in infrastructure that excludes rather than provides access to the allegedly free global market economy by design. The

\textsuperscript{59} As the title of this dissertation suggests, ‘economies of fear’ is core concept of this analysis and will be explored from multiple angles throughout this study.

\textsuperscript{60} Europe’s shameful ‘deal’ with Turkey to prevent refugees and migrants to reach Central Europe in exchange for turning the blind eye on president Erdogan’s fascist-style oppression of democracy in Turkey.
notion of the free market itself becomes untenable, exposing itself as an inside game, a rigged affair with predetermined or hedged outcomes. Economies of scale and economies of fear affect and simultaneously suffuse society on multiple scales and sites. They deeply embedded in an individual, collective, corporate, and national vision that is increasingly controlled by a supra-national, globally interconnected infrastructure.

1.4.2. The Seeds of Fear and Anger in Urban Space

In her book, The Battle for Home, Marwa al-Sabouni (2015), an architect living and working in the largely destroyed city of Homs, Syria, makes a damning case for the foundational role architecture and flawed urbanism played in the current Syrian civil war. Sabouni contends that over the past 100 years, urban planners have repeatedly made egregious mistakes in Syrian cities such as Aleppo and her hometown Homs. Traditional Islamic cities boasted of multi-functional, multi-use spaces that simultaneously allowed for commerce, exchange, living, learning, leisure, play and communication. This gave Islamic cities and their multicultural populations a strong sense of belonging, promoting strong social bonds that transcended religious, economic, political or cultural differences. Sabouni (2015) writes:

Old Homs contained a living museum of ancient architecture, but its treasures were jumbled and neglected, like dusty jewels at the bottom of an abandoned drawer. Among the many precious buildings, two stood out because of their sentimental value for both Muslims and Christians: the Ottoman mosque of Khalid Ibn Al-Walid, and the holy church of St. Mary. The two monuments have much in common: both of them are important to every Homsi, both suffered the
same horrific destruction in the recent conflict, and most importantly, both contained something venerated as of the highest holiness. (p. 32)

The built environment not only engendered social cohesion and a sense of place (Tuan, 1977), it also created the architectural space for healing acts like the construction of a church and a mosque set back-to-back and the enabling of trade in the souk – the traditional communal market places in which food stuffs from all over the world are sold.

This seamless and peaceful, lucrative and socially enriching state of multiplicities abruptly changed with the arrival of modernist urban planners during the French colonial period, which replaced the previously established delicate balance of humanistic and harmonic urban principles with Haussmann-style modernization principles. European urban centers like Paris, Rome, Berlin, all know the drill: a tightly woven urban fabric, organically grown over centuries were shredded to make way for wide, open pathways, boulevards, and plazas (Figure 37). Monuments were moved, the ancient rendered worthless and the modern, idealized. In Syria, these so-called urban improvements gradually unraveled the social structures that had developed from within the urban fabric. A sense of belonging, of social shelter and cohesion was dissolved and replaced by new structures of difference and suspicion: architectural divisions were drawn along economic class, creed, and affluence lines. Multiculturalism was trampled.
In the wake of French colonial occupation\textsuperscript{61}, informal settlements sprang up to house the increasingly isolated poor. Before the 2011 civil war, roughly 40\% of the Syrian population lived in these “ghettos” (Sabouni, 2015). The rest lived in soulless, brutalist, freestanding concrete housing developments that were plagued by neglect and aesthetic degradation—the parallels with St. Louise’s Pruitt Igoe housing project (Figure 38) are stunning. The effects of such urban housing are visible worldwide. The loss of place and discreet local identity promotes the loss of biographical identity and self-respect; it also promotes the the breakdown of social solidarity and collective representations, the inevitable result of which is, as with Syria, civil war.

According to Sabouni (2015), the spatial reconfigurations created by modernist urban zoning helped jumpstart sectarian division and hatred. Formerly integrated cities were transformed into generic high-performance, high-income urban centers bordered by slums. Coherence is replaced by distinction, harmony with strife; informal housing developments become containers for populations. Urbanism is replaced by logistics and utilitarian infrastructure, which include hive-like housing for the “masses”, i.e. the

\textsuperscript{61} The inhumane French colonial crackdown on the insurgent movement in Algiers is the subject of the film \textit{The Battle for Algiers} by director Gillo Pontecorvo (1966). In the wake of the GWOT and other counter insurgent warfare, sites located predominantly in Muslim nations, the seminal film has become required screening for both counterinsurgent experts and insurgents. The director Pontecorvo managed the difficult task of showing both sides of the conflict in a mostly unbiased and neutral way. Terror and anti-terror organization use the film as a didactic tool. It is yet another testament to the power of art.
disenfranchised poor. For Sabouni, ghettoized urbanism is the precursor of war, for the pre-categorization of urban space and with it, the system of classification for the Other is the perfect recipe for conflict. Sabouni’s analysis does not stop with Syria, however. She also comments on what she sees as the early stages of such fracturing among the urban fabric of Europe’s cities. Cities across France, Britain, Spain and Belgium have all become sites of explosive, fearful, angry energy, and social instability, most notably in blighted, urban peripheral neighborhoods defined by “social infrastructure” (Hochtief, 2016). Such zones of occupation develop as the collateral damage of “generic urbanism” (Böck & Koolhaas, 2015). London’s council estates, Paris’s troubled banlieues, and Brussel’s uneasy Schaarbeek and Molenbeek neighborhoods have figured prominently in the media as hotbeds for radicalization and incubators of terrorism. The outer beltway developments of all global cities (Sassen, 1991) lack identity and idiosyncratic character (Figure 39). This lack of a formal, local symbolism as collective representations severely undermines the social cohesion of communities in these zones. It is not surprising that extreme reactions within are fomented as generic cities produce generic responses—often violent—which, unfortunately, today are suicide missions with the goal of maximizing body count. The massive displacement of the civil war-battered Syrian population is a foreboding sign of worse things to come, if one trusts Sabouni’s pessimistic but frighteningly well-supported judgment.
If imposed on foreign cultures, such as Syria, as “gargantuan structures and Corbusian plans, and then encrusting the result with ‘Islamic’ icons”, then it becomes an extension of “foreign occupation” (Sabouni, 2015, p. 176). Sabouni’s observations and reflections beg the question: how can the urban planning mistakes that have resulted in the dissolution of previously existing social bonds, senses of community and belonging to a place, the overall breakdown of social solidarity across a wide spectrum of social life in Syria, be avoided or reversed? Clearly, this and other, similar situations call for a new kind of urbanism that takes its cues from traditional built environments. As an ambitious but sensitive architect, she even asks for less ostentatiousness in recognition of a trend in architecture to favor elitist, high-profile prestige architectures that speak of wealth, not of social bonds or the healing spaces architecture can create. Sabouni calls for a return to a human scale and an approachable architecture that respects, integrates and offers moral values and a sense of belonging, generosity and acceptance of difference. Her call hearkens back to Durkheim’s (1984) organic society with its restitutive governing principles for a more humane modernity. Law must not be retributive, as it is currently; rather, it must seek cohesion. For Sabouni (2015), architecture may not be the central axis of the human condition, but it most certainly directs and is suggestive of human activity and even, possible futures. Utopias are expressed and made visible in new urban structures, which are more tangible and stimulating to our imagination than any political manifesto, which remains theory until
it is reified. The grand utopias of the modern era have proven inconsistent, at best and catastrophically unsuccessful, at worst.

1.4.3. Counter-Occupation of Liminal Space

Decaying urban centers and downtrodden, disenfranchised communities provide the backdrop for Chicago-based artist, Theaster Gates. In his (2009) *Dorchester Projects* ([Figure 40](#)), Gates acts like a real-estate developer first by buying properties from the city and then converting them into cultural capital centers. In so doing, he overidentifies with a role typically exercised by capitalists and then reconfigures (and thereby, questions) it. Somewhat like Joseph Beuys’s social sculpture projects, Gates stages his projects as social practice and art-as-activism, the latter of which is a movement that seeks to improve society with concrete interventions in the public sphere. Gates walks a very fine line between cultural capital production, real estate speculation, art-world hype and effective social work. Writing for artnet news, Ben Davis (2015) states that “Theaster Gates is of this ‘social practice’ tradition but also something else again. He rose to fame via the *Dorchester Projects*, an artsy renovation of a

Gates capitalizes on his personal acquaintance with Chicago’s mayor, Rahm Emanuel, who sold him properties for the symbolic price of 1$, with the requirement to renovate the spaces and transforming them into cultural hubs (Davis, 2015). This type of monetary alliance with politics at the highest level is problematic to say the least.
South Side house into a cool event space, and has steadily expanded the scope of his ambitions to encompass movie theaters, housing developments, and vast public art commissions.” Chicago’s South Side has long been a site where all the ills of discriminatory urban planning practices come together. In their ominously titled book, *Major Problems in American Urban and Suburban History*, Chudacoff and Baldwin (2005) describe the systematic planning of black ghettos in Chicago:

Government urban redevelopment and renewal policies, as well as a massive public housing program, had a direct and enormous impact on the evolution of the ghetto. In Chicago, such programs reshaped, enlarged, and transformed the South Side Black Belt. Decaying neighborhoods were torn down, their inhabitants were shunted off to other quarters, and the land upon which they stood was used for middle-class housing and institutions expansion. High-rise public housing projects, created in large part, to rehouse fugitives from ‘renewed’ areas, literally lined State Street for miles as a new, vertical ghetto supplemented the old. (2005, p. 416)

But Gates is no squatting hippie; he is a keen entrepreneur who knows how to shake things up in the high-stake game of neoliberal politics and urban renewal projects. He does not shy away from coming across like an exploitative capitalist who also happens to be a cultural activist. Only those who deeply understand the system can play it at such a high level, and Gates is one such individual.

The *Dochester Projects* became a vibrant gathering point and place of work for many individuals from the neighborhood. The success of the project led to the acquisition of a third building across the street, which became Black Cinema House, a site for regular film programs, after-school video workshops and soul-food dinners. [...] The continuous occupation of the sites never ends. (Doherty, 2015, p. 167)

The communities affected by his projects benefit from his efforts, and of course, so does he, both personally and financially. His cultural capital “value” has been benchmarked
against other publically sponsored efforts to improve the blight and violence that rules
the South Side of Chicago. And the responses of affected communities have been largely
very positive.

Liminality and social instability lie at the heart of and are the direct result of
large scale, mostly failed modernist urban planning projects like those in Syria and in
Chicago and in the Parisian banlieues. In this study, such housing developments are
defined as violent infrastructures. They are often presented to affected populations—the
global poor or otherwise marginalized populations—as urban renewal and
modernization projects in the context of the globally enforced modernization and
development ideology. The work of French artist Cyprien Gaillard focuses on precisely
the kind of liminality (Turner, 1966) and social instability that Sabouni decries and
Gates’ projects seek to combat. Much of Gaillard’s artistic oeuvre and in particular, his
video projection work, Desniansky Raion (2007) including the work’s iteration, which was
shown in Gaillard’s (2013) first solo show at MoMa PS1’s The Crystal World (Johnson,
2013), have as a central theme the physical ruins of modernity and their productive and
pathological effects on social life. The video Desniansky Raion shows two large groups of
men slowly walking towards each other on a concrete parking lot in front of a
depressing, brutalist public housing tower complex in Kiev, Ukraine (Figure 41). Like
members of sports teams, the antagonists are dressed according to a color code that
distinguishes the two factions. When the parties finally clash head on, an extremely
violent collective fist fight ensues as smoke grenades fly overhead. Beaten unconscious, bodies collapse. The battle moves rhythmically back and forth in waves of interweaving bodies and fists. The fighting mass finally pushes in one direction of the screen, signaling the victory of one party over the other. The losers try to continue the flight but are chased away by the victors until they reach a pedestrian bridge, which seems to mark a territorial boundary. An equally dismal concrete tower housing complex looms in the background.

The overall effect of Gaillard’s video work is curiously invigorating and not particularly shocking. This is due in part to the catchiness of the video’s soundtrack, composed by French composer Koudlam. The music is a kind of pulsating, rhythmically energizing mix that forcefully clashes with the violence of the footage. But even more than the sound, it is the aesthetic and socio-political energy conveyed by the raw and pure bodily violence of the battle scene, which feels like a version of a flash-mob organized via social media platforms, that gives the whole piece a terrifying and thrilling improvised choreographic mirror-of-life quality. Still, the spectator is repeatedly made to wonder why such organized beatings take place at all? For Gaillard, modernist public housing structures evoke medieval or even prehistoric structures like Stonehenge, in which mysterious social rituals were once practiced. Gaillard’s fistfight in a public space recalls 18th century battlefield paintings in that like much historic military
art, it depicts an iconic social moment. Organized fight clubs are also reminiscent of the violent spectacle perpetrated by British soccer hooligans, the latest instances of which took place during the UEFA Euro 2016, the international men’s soccer championship of Europe. The main differences between the two battles scenes in the public sphere were their scale and scope, as the British crowd of hooligans vandalized entire city centers in France, the game’s host country. In his seminal text on ritual, anthropologist Victor Turner (1977) offers a means of interpreting such a modern, public display of organized physical violence.

Central to Turner’s concept is the idea that “[l]iminal entities are neither here not there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (1977, p. 95). Certainly, the Gaillard’s warriors and the British hooligans are neither behaving according to (social) convention nor is their behavior within the realm of what is considered reasonable or lawful. One of the main functions of Turner’s rites of passage, a specially choreographed series of ordered rituals, of which entry into and exit from a state of liminality are two, is to create a sense

63 Earlier, the argument was made that clubs are grounded on the we/Them principle of access. Whereas such distinctions could once ritualistically defined along the lines of physical prowess and invincibility on the battlefield, modern (Western) rites of passage tend to fall exclusively along economic lines.

64 The behavior of the British hooligans was widely condemned as contradicting the unifying message the sport’s event sought to embody.
of “communitas”, a special sort of social communion. Turner might describe Gaillard’s warriors as “liminal personae, ‘threshold people’” (1977, p. 95). Characteristic of this liminality is its ambiguous nature, “since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space” (Turner, 1977, p. 95). The fist fighter’s violent clash is a highly symbolic gesture that points to a transformational in-between state. Certainly, the people of the post-Cold War era of former Warsaw Pact nations still experience the effects of social upheaval, which occurred when their familiar social structures and rituals were burned to the ground overnight. A vacuum of ideological meaning, the breakdown of traditional social relationships and the dominant mode of production, the centrally planned economy, all changed radically. Catapulted into unemployed, the younger generation living in these violent urban project enclaves has little to lose and a lot of repressed anger to release.

In an act of self-preservation, the self directs ubiquitous socio-economic and political hostility and violence against outward targets (Turner, 2007). Lacking concrete victims in the blighted suburbs of the Ukraine drives aggressive males to organize violence amongst themselves. As a substitute for war, another form of organized violence (Bataille, 1986) except against an outward target, these young men organize their own war as a playful prelude to things and times to come. For Huizinga (1980), the duel is a precursor for war and as form of play a preparation for battle. Clearly these
young street fighting men are readying themselves for eventualities. The 2014 Crimean Crisis is a historic event that Gaillard could not have foreseen, but it confirms the ritualistic interpretation this study proposes. Characteristic of liminal entities is the lack of “status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role, […] nothing that distinguishes them from their fellow neophytes or initiands” (Turner, 1977, p. 95), all of which can be observed in the Ukrainian fight-club. This ritualistic erasure of individual identity refashions the participants and “endows them with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life” (Turner, 1977, p. 95). Comradery and egalitarianism are the reward and the light at the end of the tunnel. It allows the “initiands” (Turner, 1977) to release their inner fears, isolation, darkness and boiling anger towards the socio-economic structure that they see as the reason for their plight. Further, the violence of the built environment is the tangible embodiment of this damning structure, making the symbolic milieu from which the participants emerge both grave and womb. These moments “in and out of time, in and out of secular social structure” (Turner, 1977, p. 96) provide fleeting moments of social communion that have yet to be made enduring in the form of concrete social ties. These liminal forms of “human interrelatedness” are known as communitas (Turner, p. 132), which in their

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65 Turner prefers the Latin term communitas to community because it is set apart from the meaning of “area of common living” in community. The notion of community has been trivialized and
unstructured and undifferentiated form are the binary opposition of established social structures, typically hierarchically organized and couched in a socio-political and legal order that upholds the social distinction between the have and have-nots.

Turner’s liminality and *communitas* can be used to explain the rise of fundamentalist Islamic terror, specifically its more radical outgrowth, most visibly represented by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Turner writes “[t]he neophyte in liminality must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, of which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status” (p. 103). Indeed, ISIS’s territories of origin could have been made into *tabula rasas*: housing and urban infrastructure have been completely decimated, as have the preexisting political and economic frameworks, belief system, and social structures. As Sabouni described, most of what was once familiar has been razed by over a decade of civil war and unimaginable violence from inside and outside forces. The invasion of Iraq by the Coalition of the Willing, lead by the U.S. military machine, can only be described as shortsighted and naïve, for it destabilized the entire Greater Middle East (Bacevich, 2016). Contrary to statements by Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld and his generals, cannot be bombed into democracy. Shock and Awe created whole nations of *tabula rasa* emptied of meaning in the age of gated communities and high-rise fortification, both of which are based on the principle of exclusion and which is contrary to the humanistic ideals of communitas.
and in so doing, made a growing liminal population, hungry for some sense of *communitas* through rites of passage.

According to Turner, violent initiation rituals are a necessary threshold for the formation of new, more mature biographical identities. The atrocities committed by ISIS speak for themselves, but the initiation of young children as ISIS warriors via the execution of adult prisoners stand out in terms of the dehumanization of both the victims and the executioners. And indeed, Turner (1977) finds that

> [t]he ordeals and humiliations, often of a grossly physiological character, to which the neophytes are submitted represent partly a destruction of previous status and partly a tempering of their essence in order to prepare them to cope with their new responsibilities and restrain them in advance from abusing their new privileges. (p.103)

The violent oppression enforced by ISIS falls in line with what is expected of proper rites of passage, not the least of which is the way in which it cleverly, directly competes with the fictional yet hyper-realistic, “Global Hollywood”-style (Miller, 2005). Like the Western representations of violence that are broadcast each and every day on TV, ISIS has an entire film industry made up of professional specialists in the field who produce their instructional and propaganda YouTube films (Figure 42). The workings of this

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66 Media theorist Richard Grusin (2000), explaining the conceptual framework of immediacy, hypermediacy and premediation, writes, “Where immediacy suggests a unified visual space, contemporary hypermediacy offers a heterogeneous space, in which representation is conceived of not as a window on to the world, but rather as ‘windowed’ itself-with windows that open on to other representations or other media” (p. 34).
veritable war of media representations will be discussed in great detail in the chapter 4. For now, this much can be said: ISIS ritual killings of defenseless victims are clearly also rites of passage for their recruits. Religion is by no means a necessary unifying object or belief system but rather an abstract idealized vision of Turner’s *communitas*, very similar to what Gaillard documented in his video of Ukrainian fist fighters. The many ISIS recruits who flock from Europe to the Middle East for insurgency training often have very little interest in or more than a basic knowledge of Islam. ISIS offers an outlet for the accumulated anger of unhappy people with heterogeneous grievances in the form of civil war and ultra-violence. There appears to be a growing demand for a sort of *communitas* that rallies around the shared desire to inflict unimaginable pain on other human beings. It is a *communitas* for death-worlds (Mbembe, 2003). ISIS happens to be the most atrocious and utterly reprehensible in a wide spectrum of globally distributed *communitas*-seeking movements based on death-world desires. This points to the larger issue, which Fredric Jameson (1991) called the “waning of affect” (p. 10), viz. the growing desire for death-worlds, real or imagined, which is symptomatic of a global

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67 Several cases of intercepted ISIS recruit from Europe have been reported who were carrying a “Islam for Dummies” copies in their luggage. This confirms the lack of religious motives for the young ISIS recruits from Europe (Tarm, 2016).

68 In chapter 4, the ultra violent death worlds of block buster movies and TV series will be examined. The increasingly ambiguous relationship between reality and fiction plays an important part in this study.
degradation of social solidarity, human sense of purpose, and any moral compass in populations.

It is possible to look at Gaillard’s Desniansky Raion in a slightly different, if related light. According to Dutch cultural historian Huizinga (1980), fighting and its logical extension, war, are forms of play insomuch as they adhere to a set of pre-established rules. There is a “cultural function” (Huizinga, 1980, p.89) to fighting if the “play-quality” is mutually recognized. War too, can be considered to have a cultural function, thought not that of Clausewitz’s (2007) famous dictum: war is an extension of politics by other means. For Huizinga, war plays its part as a form of cultural exchange only if the antagonistic parties see each other as equals with equal rights. The moment one side dehumanizes the other, takes away its status as equal and war is waged against “barbarians, devils, heathens, heretics and lesser breeds without the law” (Huizinga, 1980, p. 90), then war loses its play-quality and falls outside “the bounds of civilization” (Huizinga, 1980, p. 90). Nazi Germany’s total war and genocide is one example; the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and the resulting ISIS insurgency is another. Huizinga (1980) writes,

Until recently the "law of nations” was generally held to constitute such a system of limitation, recognizing as it did the ideal of a community of mankind with rights and claims for all, and expressly separating the state of war—by declaring it—from peace on the one hand and criminal violence on the other. It remained for the theory of "total war” to banish war’s cultural function and extinguish the last vestige of the play-element. (p. 90)
That the recent U.S. military campaigns in the Greater Middle East (Bacevich, 2016) are devoid of any play-function can be explained first by the fact that war was never declared against any of the sworn enemies of U.S. interests in the region. Nation-states were preemptively attacked following the Bush doctrine’s preemptive strike strategy.

Although it was clear to the public that war was coming in 2003, the element of surprise, i.e. not officially declaring war, was certainly an advantage to the U.S. attacker. Second, the U.S. Commander in Chief cannot (constitutionally) wage war without previous Congressional approval, but no such proposal was ever officially formulated. Furthermore, many of the U.S. weapon systems that were deployed, like cluster bombs, were on the list of those banned by the Geneva conventions. The U.S.’s preemptive military campaign was therefore a breach of the rule of law and of Huizinga’s cultural functionalist war game. Third, the predominantly Muslim nations of Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Libya, Somalia, and so on are considered to be culturally and technologically inferior according to the standards of modern, liberal Western democratic nations. Eurocentric stereotyping includes but is not limited to these Muslim nations’ being considered lagging in socioeconomic and political development, oppressively patriarchal and discriminatory towards homosexuals, barbaric owing to their following Sharia law, and so on. As misplaced and bigoted as these characterizations may be, that they are widely (and in fact, officially) held precludes the possibility of rightfully declaring war because the West does not consider the Muslim
East to at all be its equal. The false logic behind U.S. preemptive strikes is the benevolent desire to keep America and indeed, all of the civilized West safe from low-life terrorist machinations is not only the mainstream public and political American narrative, it also reads like the American version of unadulterated Realpolitik. How much of these narratives is informed by Hollywood’s high-concept (Jaramillo, 2009) and how much of Hollywood is inspired by U.S. military operations(69) will be discussed in chapter 4.

1.4.4. American Highways as Infrastructure of Fear

In this new logistical imperialism, the occupation of the city remains a question of not only which "citizens" (human, commodity, or corporate) occupy but whether indeed acts of urban citizenship can produce a city after occupation. (Cowen, 2014, p. 195)

Caro’s (1975) Pulitzer Prize winning biography of NYC’s public works tycoon Robert Moses is a gripping account of a man who single-handedly transformed the material infrastructure of the city and its environs like no other before or after. It also describes a man who evolved from an idealistic visionary capable of making urban

69 Fiction and reality are like revolving doors in U.S. culture. For instance, the 2011 Navy Seal raid on bin Laden’s Pakistani compound was watched closely by the White House in the Situation Room via live stream. Some video fragments were later ‘leaked’ to YouTube. Then, a few years later, several blockbuster movies came out featuring the raid. Books were published by soldiers involved in the assassination mission. On the other hand, the cinematographic quality of the 9/11 terror attacks has been noted by leading film makers, and how similar the images were to the existing blockbuster movies such as Die Hard (McTiernan, 1988).
space a better place to live, work, and play into a corrupt power broker who sacrificed the wellbeing of the less fortunate on the altar of his indomitable ambition. His slow decent into darkness—its traces eternally imprinted on the face of NYC—had a transformative effect on the lives of hundreds and thousands of city dwellers. His signature project is the “Meat Ax” destruction of the Bronx. Both Caro and former Bronx resident Marshall Berman (1982) describe how Moses’s ambitious throughway project was wholly unconcerned about the local residents or their decades-old communities. Quoting Paul De Man, Berman (1982) writes that “‘the full power of the idea of modernity’ lay in a ‘desire to wipe out whatever came earlier,’ so as to achieve ‘a radically new departure, a point that could be a true present’” (p. 331). Unfortunately, what Moses left behind—the expressway was built between 1948 and 1972—is what has become the stuff of popular entertainment: the utter social unraveling and misery of the Bronx and its decline into the seat of violent crime and depravity. A huge number of movies and TV shows have been set in the Bronx because the latter has become

70 Moses was great admirer of Haussmann with whom he shared many personality traits. Haussmann remodeled 19th century Paris into the first panoptic city by following Bentham’s blueprint for a highly effective diagram of power. This made Paris the symbol for a new, military inspired, organizational model that effectively catered to emerging flows of industrial production and consumption. The straight, connected lines of light-filled Parisian Boulevards cut through and thereby control formerly obscure quarters dominated by revolutionary-minded citizens, just like today’s new container freight harbors disenfranchised the revolutionary-minded longshoremen communities of the past.
synonymous with the free reign of crime and murder. Tom Wolf’s famous 1984 book, Bonfire of the Vanities, develops a criminal story-line in which the rich, white protagonists take the wrong turn on their way to Kennedy Airport and end up in the middle of the Bronx, the decaying and dark borough of New York. Ultimately, their response to what they perceive to be a threat, which is the product of their imagination and stereotypes, leads to the death of an innocent black youth. What then is the cost of modernity?

The connection between “progress”, the inexorable push towards the future and the figures like Moses who act like the modern-day angel Gabriel, bringing the message of modernity to all corners of the earth is one that has been repeated in vibrant urban centers like the Bronx, NY, and Homs, Syria, and in rural areas like the outskirts of Guatemala City, Guatemala, where I spent part of my childhood. And the path of the messenger must always be paved. Modern life is all about mobility, and traffic is its emblem. Berman (1988) writes that Moses was hacking his expressway world through the cities, obliterating every trace of life that was there before; Robert McNamara, paving over the jungles of Vietnam for instant cities and airports, and bringing millions of villagers into the modern world — Samuel Huntington’s strategy of ‘forced modernization’ — by bombing their traditional world into rubble[.](p. 331)

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\[71\] The link between the transformation of domestic civil society and wartime efforts abroad is an outstanding feature of modernity for Berman, as it is for this study.
For architect and urban planner Robert Fishman (2000), the most significant influence for America’s urban fabric was the 1956 Interstate Highway Act (p. 199). In conjunction with housing and urban renewal policies, it radically transformed life in America. The ever expanding network of highways, expressways, interstate connectors allowed Americans to roam freely across their vast national territory, but it also hollowed out its metropolises. Interstate highways provided the infrastructure for white flight, with racial fear as ideological base, happily jumped on the first chance to abandon the allegedly dangerous urban centers.

Fishman offers a chronological list of the most important factors in the irreversible transformation of American cities: the aforementioned Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage financing and subdivision regulation (allowing less affluent citizens to become homeowners), the deindustrialization of central cities (removing the economic base of inner city inhabitants); urban renewal including downtown redevelopment and public housing projects enforced under the 1949 Housing Act (the disastrous effect of which was embodied by the iconic failure of the St. Louis public housing development Pruitt-Igoe (Figure 38); the Levittown mass-produced suburban tract houses (Trevor Paglen’s The Last Pictures project contains an image of this first of its kind generic mass housing development); racial segregation and job discrimination in cities and suburbs (#BlackLivesMatter is the contemporary articulation and continuation of past struggles against institutionalized racism); enclosed
shopping malls (leading to the modern megamall and big box phenomenon (Zukin, 2004) that vacuum up all local retail business opportunity); sunbelt-style sprawl (including exponential grows of prisons), air conditioning, and finally, the urban riots of the 1960s. What each item on Fishman’s list has in common is that their success (and appeal) was thanks to the mobility made possible by America’s highway network, which had been inspired by Hitler’s Autobahn system (Figure 43) and revamped to meet the textures of the American landscape and the peculiarities of the American national character (if such a thing can be said to exist). According to Grady Clay (1996), a journalist who specializes in landscape architecture and urban planning, the one inalienable right we all have is not so much that listed in the founding documents of the United States, but rather, access. Clay explains:

Deeply embedded within the highway scene lies a myriad of access points, ramps, roads, routes, each providing circulation, which is the essence of all exchange. Without access, there are no arrivals, no departures, no movement, no flow. Access, its rules and its locales, are key elements in a common abstract system in which all places may be observes, studied, quantified, and compared. Access keeps geographic systems alive. Access generated ‘the hidden network that determines the way they [i.e. places] confront one another.’ Access embodies the assumption—even though it is widely violated—that is is a universal good, not to be denied or restricted. (Raitz, 1996, p. 351).

Of course, the problem with access as a common good in the U.S. is that it is the pivot for restrictive and even, oppressive policies that define all variety of socio-economic, geo-cultural, and even psycho-ideological practices, belief systems, building and governing conventions, etc. A freeway may just as well provide as it may deny an exit
ramp to certain neighborhoods, thus boxing it in or cutting it off from public services like schools or hospitals.

The highway system has been used over and over again as a type of fortification, physical barrier, wall, and inhibitor of equal opportunity leading to effective segregation along socio-economic, racial, and ethnic lines. Whereas the economically subsidized suburbs, exurbs, or outskirts are afforded great opportunities thanks to their inalienable right to access, the inner city is left to rot simply by denial or feigned non-existence of such said right. Fishman (2000) also documents other urban planning side effects, which policy makers almost certainly never imagined:

Proclaimed the "largest public works program since the Pyramids," the 41,000-mile [...] interstate highway system [...] was supposed to save central cities by rescuing them from automobile congestion. [...] Meanwhile, the new peripheral "beltways," originally designed to enable long-distance travelers to bypass crowded central cities, turned into the "Main Streets" of postwar suburbia. Cheap rural land along the beltways became the favored sites for new suburban housing, shopping malls, industrial parks, and office parks that drew people and businesses out of the central cities. [...] More than any other measure, the 1956 Interstate Highway Act created the decentralized, automobile-dependent metropolis we know today. (p. 202)

Fishman’s assertions are significant, for they demonstrate how America’s ideologically biased and racially suffused policy making processes have literally transformed the face of the nation.
1.4.5. Malls and Other Privatized Public Spaces

With the mall, a private store became a public landmark, pointing to the direction that real estate would soon take across the country. (Low & Smith, 2006, p. 41)

Financial industries surround seemingly static and durable structures—from small houses to massive sport stadiums or four-thousand room casinos—with a volatile balloon of inflating and deflating value. Development encourages migrations into and away from cities, causing rapid growth and rapid decline. Buildings themselves even cause destruction not only because they replace previous buildings, but also because they can, by their often toxic presence, destroy their surroundings. (Easterling, 2014, p. 1)

American malls exemplify the act of “concentrated decentralization” (Chudacoff & Baldwin, 2005, p. 508), which was such an important part of white urban flight.

Pyramid Management Group, one of the United States’ leading mall developers, consistently chooses toxic waste dumps as the sites for its new mega-malls (Aronow & Grange, 2009). Aside from being (quite literally, dirt) cheap, these sites are financially incentivized by city planners and local administrations, further drawing down the purchase price. Add to this the irresistible promises mall developers make to the community, cleaning up local environmental hazards, job creation and a lasting boost to the local economy, and the arrangement looks like an unmediated recipe for success for all involved. The initial financial investments necessary to build malls are astronomical.

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72 The documentary Megamalls, by Vera Aronow (2009), gives viewers an opportunity to learn more about the business practices of large-surface mall development in the U.S. and how they (negatively) transform local communities both in their social and urban structure.
But financing is made easy for the developer thanks to the outspoken support of local government partisans; any potential resistance by local communities against the project is simply outgunned by armies of legal advisors flown in by the developer. If necessary, legal action threats against uncooperative or hesitant local administrations are made. Once all obstacles have been forcefully removed and the mall built, the entire complex is re-appraised by a financial lender. What was once categorized as a cheap toxic waste dump has been transformed into prime retail space, multiplying its value a hundredfold. Refinancing the original debt allows the prospector to easily pay off the entire sum and walk away with a remainder sum, i.e. pure profit, which often numbers in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

This local face lift and massive capital exchange take place before the retail anchors and smaller retail entrepreneurs have earned a single retail dollar. The jobs available to members of the local community are often minimum wage and number far fewer than the total originally promised. But worst of this sort of financial and infrastructural occupation is that it ruins the sense of place of the local site. Towns and city centers see their locally embedded, traditional retail economies vanish overnight. Mega-malls attract millions of non-locals not only cross-regionally and nationally but even, internationally. The roughly standardized style turns formerly distinct local communities into clones of hundreds of other commercial sites across the nation, all screaming short-term appeal whilst annihilating the efficacy and collective attraction of
lasting communal sites—commercial or otherwise. Malls are built extremely cheaply, with an expected life of no more than thirty to forty years (Figure 44). Furthermore, the lasting success of malls, the small print developers and local advocates never talk about, is even shorter-term and less guaranteed, more often leaving a host of decommissioned, abandoned retail spaces scattered across the national landscape like (economic) war ruins.

New and abandoned malls are of great interest to critical artists as sites for enacting passive resistance or inviting public authorities to stage violent oppressions. In 1992, the Critical Art Ensemble created a series of performative public space interventions entitled Exit Culture. In his keynote speech for the Access/Trespass conference at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Ricardo Dominguez (2013), one the group’s founders, explained the idea behind such performances. The act of “mallling” was the experimental form of “breaking into the matrix” of “having fun” in the spaces of power; Dominguez (2013) and his group want to shake up the status quo at these malls—what he calls, “concrete bunkers”. In the case of the Exit Culture project (1992), the Critical Art Ensemble would buy commodities like children’s toys and then go to the exit areas of the mall and unpack and play with them. Guards regarded such unusual behavior as deranged and therefore, disruptive, dangerous and requiring forceful quelling. According to Erving Goffman’s (1974) “Frame Analyses” mall shoppers perceive behavior like that of Dominguez’s troupe as offensive, i.e. an “out of
frame” performance. In the theatrical frame, which describes daily life, everybody “collaborates in the unreality” (1974, p. 130); the “guided doings” that inform people navigating the mall to shop is a sort of make-believe world. A break in this “primary frame” and the theatrical frame “wipes the make-believe away” (Goffman, 1974, p. 131). This leads to a feeling of unease which needs to be suppressed in order to re-establish the frame of a comfortable shopping experience in a theatrical setting, which all malls are. The Critical Art Ensemble’s “performances”, which can be reenacted in many other sites: bars, disco clubs, etc., provide a platform for “critical consumption” (Domínguez, 2013), i.e. a way of staging ‘public'/consumer power potentialities. Their “disturbances” are grounded in the idea of poesis—of creating a poetic and aesthetic overtone to the oppressive drumbeat of power.

Working under a pseudonym, photojournalist Seth Lawless has been documenting the decay of America’s malls for years now (Figure 45). Because they are classified as private spaces, it is illegal to enter malls, even when they are abandoned and dilapidated (hence the necessity that Lawless exhibit under a pseudonym). The fact that documenting the decay of America’s favorite retail infrastructure is considered a crime is telling. Much of the public sphere in U.S. suburbs has been boxed in by commercial real estate, transforming formerly public lands into limited access zones. With the help of the Supreme Court, ‘the commons’ in the U.S. are officially off limits, conceptual relics:
The Supreme Court advanced its public forum doctrine further, practicable space weakened, particularly in contest over free speech in contemporary environments. Seemingly convinced that expressive activity would have a zero-sum effect on the value of public property, the Court constructed and increasingly formalistic typology that included the nonpublic forum, where open political discourse and association could be excluded despite the First Amendment. (Maniscalco, 2015, p. 121)

In urban centers such as Manhattan, public spaces are run by private corporations, which provide the communal services the cash-depleted, local administration can sadly no longer afford to provide. Sociologist Sharon Zukin (2010), author of Naked City, The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places, describes how “elite public parks […] operate by the same rules of private management, public ownership, and public access” (p.128). Within such legal entanglements, the articulation of public dissent becomes highly problematic and controversial. Local communities welcome so-called Business Improvement District (BID) (Zukin, 2010) efforts to maintain infrastructure and keep out unwelcome individuals like the homeless and other ‘shady’-looking folk, which are generally run by “private organizations of commercial property owners that carry out public functions of financing, maintaining, and governing public space” (Zukin, 2010, p. 127). For the “demos” (Brown, 2015), this confusing assemblage of commercial, public, private and state interests lead to a generalized disenfranchisement of political agency. Where can political dissent be articulated nowadays? Increasingly, the answer is nowhere.

In the case of Occupy Wall Street’s Zuccotti Park, the boundary between public and private property is significantly complicated by the fact that the park is a privately
owned public space. Such spaces are generally the product of a deal between cities and private real estate developers in which cities grant valuable zoning concessions to developers, and developers in turn provide privately owned ‘public’ spaces in or near their buildings. Privately owned public spaces commonly include plazas, arcades, through block arcades, small parks, and atriums (Wikipedia, 2016). For political scientist Wendy Brown (2015), these “public-private partnerships”73 (2015, p. 49) pertain to the paradox of neoliberalism, which seeks to privatize all that is public enterprise, and in so doing, creates a

dappled, striated, and flickering complexion [that] is also the face of an order replete with contradiction and disavowal, structuring markets it claims to liberate from structure, intensely governing subjects it claims to free from government, strengthening and re-tasking states it claims to abjure. (pp. 48-49)

Constitutional concepts such as the public, public space, and even, the ‘we, the people’—concepts of a collectivity united by a shared vested interest that goes beyond transactional metrics—has proven to be more idealistic and fanciful than anything else. The public comprises free citizens who are welcome to shop at malls, but on the condition that they not interrupt the commercial flows provided them by such public-private hybrid spaces. As such, the public is boxed into the role of consumer and shut out of that of being vocal, socially active citizens; the agreement is classic, if tacit carrot

73 Hochtief is an excellent example of this new business model, which seeks to profit from public hand contracts and tax money financed public works projects.
and stick. Commercial spaces such as malls and private public spaces are indeed occupied territories in which the occupying force is capital itself.

Famous mall critic James Howard Kunstler (Kunstler & Crary, 2011) takes the argument even further by classifying malls, in general and mega-malls, in particular as aesthetic nightmares that intoxicate and occupy the surrounding not only with their acres and acres of parking lots but as an architectural pox. Kunstler calls these consumer spaces “Geographies of Nowhere” (Kunstler & Crary, 2011), generic (Koolhaas, 2014) in their formal language and corrosive in their symbolic and social meanings. Buildings, infrastructure, and monuments occupy a much more pervasive psycho-social space than their strict use-value would imply. All impact the way a neighborhood and the larger society are socially and spatially structured, how well or poorly it is organized and run, with what conviction people consider a place their home. Bulldozers and dynamite can plow through well-established, thriving communities like the Bronx in New York City with crushing indifference. Once Moses’ Cross Bronx Expressway project was complete, the violently atomized neighborhoods of the Bronx spiraled out of control.

The violence of such urban transformations translates into the violence of a battlefield, which tellingly, is no longer as far removed from urban centers as used to be the agreed upon convention of “civilized” warfare. Contemporary military operations in the Greater Middle East (Bacevich, 2016) and elsewhere are all waged in and around urban centers. Modern warfare, which is characterized by insurgency and
counterinsurgency operations, is now carried out in the very heart of cities in which modern urban planning efforts were violently enacted. After all, insurgent warfare is the quintessential 21st century style of war, in which combatants use the generic topography of modernist building stock to entrench and fortify their own fragile positions (Weizman, 2012). Indeed, the Pentagon’s counterinsurgent doctrine is simply an adaptation to the demands of 21st century total wars unleashed on civil societies across the globe. It should come as no surprise then that not a few U.S. shootings, rumbles and other acts of gross social impropriety occur in and around malls. And so the “duty of civil disobedience” (Thoreau, 1849) has been replaced by violent, oft erroneously targeted outbursts of repressed energies and frustrations against an organically atomized, violently restructured society of supra-occupation.

1.4.6. Fortified Spaces

To tear down the walls of the state is not to create a world without walls, but rather to create a thousand petty fortresses. One might argue that this is precisely what we observe today with the spread of gated communities – ‘fortified enclaves’ that recall the walled cities of post-Carolingian Europe – across the United States, in Latin America, and elsewhere. (Torpey, 2000, p. 157)

Revolutionary and civil war-time preparations extends deep into the civil society of the United States. The highly controversial 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the right the bear arms, was passed in the 300-year-old context of a very different socio-cultural reality, making its legal provisions wholly irrelevant and mismatched to the
present day. They are nevertheless forcefully defended by the National Rifle Association and other national fundamentalist organizations, all of which ignore (or do not understand) the ideological and practical core and implied logical application of the Amendment. In sharp contrast to 18th century numbers (and the relative lethal potency) of civilian munitions—and early American wealth owners had surprisingly high gun ownership (Lindgren & Heather, 2002)—today, it is estimated that there are as many as 300-400 million privately owned firearms in American households. The implications of these numbers will be discussed later, but suffice it to say that the violence that so long defined urban (and suburban) planning and infrastructure has come to define the actuated desire of Americans to protect, fortify, and surveille the threshold between privately owned, governed and public owned and governed space.

In the suburban context of gated communities, a great diversity of legal frameworks has been legislated to adapt to the particular needs, wants and fear-levels of its inhabitants. Some gated communities even have fake guard houses to trick potential criminals and loiterers into thinking the premises are secured. Other gated communities are literally, substantially boxed in and surveilled with 24/7 CCTV and civilian

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74 A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.
vigilantes\textsuperscript{75}. The more affluent the gated community, the more communal money is
invested in private security and fortification infrastructure. If race riots in the 1960s America were the key incentive for white urbanites to seek refuge in their suburban strongholds, then the increased militarized police presence today in urban centers is the legacy of the three domestic wars America continues to wage against its own people: the War on Poverty, the War on Drugs (WOD) and the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

Zukin (2010) argues that the desire for security has dramatically changed the structure of feeling in society. Nowadays, the public realm is experienced quite differently from the way it was as recently as the early 1990’s when a widespread euphoria, triggered by the implosion of America’s old Cold War enemy, the Soviet Union, temporarily obscured the driving socio-economic forces of potential enemy encroachments.

For Francis Fukuyama the collapse of Soviet Union vindicated the ideals of liberal democracy. He (1992) famously labelled this moment “The End of History” by assuming (as it turns out prematurely) that liberal democracy “may constitute ‘the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution’ and the ‘final form of human government’” (p. xi). The void of fear left by the Soviet dissolution was filled in the wake of the 9/11

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\textsuperscript{75}The case of 28 year-old George Zimmerman, a vigilante who, on February 26, 2012, murdered 17-year-old African-American teen Trayvon Martin who was walking to a family friend’s home in a Hispanic gated community, shook America’s structure of feeling profoundly, particularly because Zimmerman was later not found guilty of any crime (Lane, 2014, p. 163).
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terror attacks, and the well established National Security State was handily revamped into the Homeland Security apparatus. The new and improved enemy was unidentifiable and eternally evasive; it could be anywhere, anytime. This switch from a visible, named to an invisible, unnamed enemy ushered in a new craving for dramatically revised domestic and international security perimeters. The global front in the GWOT is also a domestic front in civil society in which dangers are perceived to be lurking outside the enclosed safe-spaces of gated and high-security enclaves. Zukin (2010) admits that

we pay a steep price for the comforts [of securitized public spaces], for they depend on forces that we cannot control—private business associations, the police bureaucracy, and security guard companies—signaling that we are ready to give up on our unruly democracy. This is another way the city loses its soul. (p. xi)

The fear of the unknown (Canetti, 1998) and the urge to contain or shut out any threat has therefore literally boxed in the freedoms American citizens so vocally defended once upon a time.

Anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (1992) questions the hypocrisy of bureaucrats and citizens who use a pervasive and systematic idiom of belonging and exclusion [whereby] officials hasten to assure the public that they are not ‘bureaucrats’, and that ‘the system’ forces them to do things that good people would rather avoid—disingenuous but extremely common ways of reifying and demonizing the unseen sources of authority as a common enemy. (p. 70)

The ideological foundation of France’s Atlantic Wall points to the historic legacy of Nazi Germany’s “Fortress Europe” ideology (Forty, 2002; Carr, 2015). The idea of a fortified
Europe that is boxed in behind a rock-solid, reinforced concrete perimeter, both literally and figuratively, has become a new socio-political reality for many millions of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant labor forces. Sociologist and historian John Torpey’s (2005) genealogy of the passport has shown how national and international documents like the passport effectively regulate human flows, despite all the demagoguery to the contrary. He writes that

In global perspective, the very institution of citizenship, tying particular persons to particular states by virtue of the morally arbitrary accidents of birth, serves as a powerful instrument of social closure and a profoundly illiberal determinant of life chances. True, states are open at the margins to citizens of other states - but only at the margins. Seen from the outside, the prosperous and peaceful states of the world remain powerfully exclusionary. (p. 156)

Political anthropologist Gregory Feldman theorizes that “the vast inequalities that the migration apparatus sustains today perhaps result more from the violence of social indifference than the targeted, tangible brutality of collective hatred. In this age of right versus right, it takes its toll through the benign neglect of liberalism as much as through the sting of nationalism” (2013, p. 198).

In her Atlantic Wall series, Czech artist Magdalena Jetelova created a photo-documented artwork entitled Area of Violence (Figure 46) in which she used a laser projector to visually carve text fragments taken from Paul Virilio’s (1994) famous book, Bunker Archeology, onto the surface of Hitler’s Atlantic Wall fragments on the Normandy sea shore. The Normandy coast was not only the site of violent battles between Allied Forces and the Nazi defense lines entrenched in reinforced concrete bunkers built buy
corporations like Hochtief, but its ruins, which lay scattered across the beach, protected and collectively claimed (if not necessarily appreciated as a physical ever-presence) by the French, also symbolize their national humiliation about the Vichy government’s collaboration with Nazi Germany (Seidler, 1986). Journalist Hugh Schofield (2011) describes how the French have grown to accept the Atlantic Wall as part of their collective identity. “[T]he French people have themselves now taken the initiative, safeguarding what for them is less a mark of shame, more part of the collective memory” (Schofield, 2011). Still, Jetelova’s work is a reminder of a dark historic legacy that resonates with Feldman’s (2013) research on the “migration apparatus” and the current restructuring of the European Union’s legal frameworks in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in America.

Visible public and private security and fortification infrastructures are but the tip of a visual, conceptual, and legislative iceberg. All such infrastructures—walls, concertina fences, and security perimeters—are built as much from legal codes and bureaucratic practices as from reinforced concrete and steel. The situation in which bureaucratic structures and administrative practices reduce individual human beings into matters of professional procedure and protocol is what Herzfeld (1992) calls the “social production of indifference” (1992). Indifference, once socially normalized, makes the social Other appear less valuable, even less human. The pressing question arises what sort of future can be built from such a qualitative, and ultimately quantitative,
selection of certain social groups. This sort of socio-political pre-selection or screening process can easily become the bureaucratic predecessor or the much more nefarious instantiations: racial segregation, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.
2. Occupation of Time: Temporal Fear

For a participatory art installation entitled Quarantine (2012), I built a full-sized shipping container in a dimly-lit, roughly restored freight storage building a block from a seaport in Providence, RI. (Figure 47). The inner structure of the container was made from thin, low-quality framing lumber and was covered with an exterior ‘skin’ of translucent plastic sheeting. This plastic skin functioned as a projection screen onto which I projected a prerecorded shadow play that created the illusion of people walking back and forth inside the container. Audience-participants walked around inside the cramped, sterile container. At some point, each audience-participant inevitably walked through the light beams of the video projector, causing his/her own shadow to be cast onto the container, thereby eerily blending the own live ‘shadow’ moment with that of the ‘fake’, prerecorded shadow play. Exiting the container created a similar event in that when audience-participants walked along the outside of the container, they created (yet another) shadow (for audience-participants still inside the container) that mingled with those of the moving prerecorded projections—the ‘trapped’ container people—and the ‘live’ ones being cast from inside. Adding to the visual disorientation created by this setup, when pressed, an interactive button inside the container released ‘gas’ (steam), which filled the entire container. The gas functioned like a three dimensional projection screen, psychologically and visually confusing the audience even more. All this occurred
against the aural backdrop of a train rattling across iron railways, arousing the feeling of actual movement. Most audience-participants experienced a spatio-temporal disruption that was both emotional and sensory. The sensation of being trapped inside the container often evoked vicarious imaginings of the horrors suffered by Jews during the Holocaust. The spatio-temporal rift experienced inside contrasted with the non-descript experience on the outside, where the audience-participants felt like passively-guilty, detached spectators in an unmarked space. Although only a thin membrane separated the claustrophobic, boxed in interior from the spacious and free outside environment, the blending of the shadow play with real-world shadows highlighted the fact that access and denial are often defined by a very fine line.

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If we suppose with Marx that in bourgeois society labour power has become a commodity in which labour is consequently reified, then the expression ‘hobby’ amounts to a paradox: that human condition which sees itself as the opposite of reification, the oasis of unmediated life within a completely mediated total system, has itself been reified just like the rigid distinction between labour and free time. The latter is a continuation of the forms of profit-oriented social life. (Adorno, 1992, p. 164)

This chapter will investigate the temporal dimension of occupation: how it underwrites economies of fear and how it is indelibly linked to spatial forms of occupation. Spatial boxing in and shutting out are always accompanied by the
dichotomous play between temporal inclusions and exclusions. The Oxford Dictionary (2016) defines the term occupation and its relationship to time as: “a. The state of having one’s time or attention occupied; what a person is engaged in; employment, business; work, toil. b. A particular action or course of action in which a person is engaged, esp. habitually; a particular job or profession; a particular pursuit or activity”. A seemingly mundane example of the spatiotemporal relationship in which concrete power structures restrict behavior are ‘time-outs’ for misbehaving children and their analogous adult expression, time-outs from life, i.e. prison. History is typically written by the victor, and an epoch’s structure of feeling is shaped by its ideological spatial and temporal frameworks, which means that the study of socio-politically defined spaces is necessarily the study of temporally defined histories. That is,

> the expansive, aggressive, and oppressive societies which we collectively and inaccurately call the West needed Space to occupy. More profoundly and problematically, they required Time to accommodate the schemes of a one-way history: progress, development, modernity (and their negative mirror images: stagnation, underdevelopment, tradition). In short, geopolitics has its ideological foundations in chronopolitics. (Fabian, 1983, p. 144)

And it is precisely this “chronopolitics” that historical materialism analyzes.

Marx was one of the foremost students of the material transformations of society under the capital mode of production, including the social effects of circulation, distribution and the consumption of products in space and time. Marx argued that capitalists were forced by the relentless competition with other capitalists to endlessly
expand operations both spatially and temporally. Marx’s predictions have proven to be largely accurate with regard to the current capitalist world-economy and the driving force of “globalization” (Stiglitz, 2002), a newly imagined concept. In his Grundrisse (1993), he famously stated that “capital by its nature drives beyond every spatial barrier. Thus the creation of the physical conditions of exchange—of the means of communication and transport—the annihilation of space by time1—becomes an extraordinary necessity for it” (p. 459). In other words, capital, space, and time have an iron bond that is increasingly dense and heavy, much like an interstellar black hole: the denser the mass of the singularity, the more gravitational pull the singularity exerts. Capital distorts the human perception of space and absorbs an ever increasing portion of human life. In commenting on the financialization of daily life Martin writes that “financialization reorients our sense of time to beckon the future in the present,” and “[c]apital dispossesses labor of private life in order to expand unpaid labor in what amounts to a combination of expanded demand and realization of value” (2002, pp. 196-197). Not surprisingly, sociologist and historian Lewis Mumford (1934) found the clock

1 David Harvey (1990) updated Marx with his famous “time-space compression” slogan.
to be the most momentous machine of the industrial era. Mumford argues that the clock was the ontological basis for industrial production, and in so doing, paved the way for the capital occupation of time to redefine the shape and purpose of the biological. This paradigmatic fixation of capital with time measurement changed the world like no other and is epitomized by Protestant work ethicist Benjamin Franklin’s slogan, “time is money” (Weber, 1992, p. 14). Mumford (1934) writes, “[t]he clock, not the steam-engine, is the key-machine of the modern industrial age, [...] it marks a perfection toward which other machines aspire” (p. 14). The clock made industrial production possible by providing a rigid framework in which productivity could be measured and controlled. Mumford (1934) describes how clerical time-keeping “helped to give human enterprise

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2 Interestingly, Mumford (1934) associates the origins of the clock with the demands of regular life patterns in monasteries. This notion supports Benjamin’s claim that capitalism is a form of religion (1921). “capitalism is a pure religious cult, perhaps the most extreme there ever was. Within it everything only has meaning in direct relation to the cult: it knows no special dogma, no theology. From this standpoint, utilitarianism gains its religious coloring. This concretization of the cult connects with a second characteristic of capitalism: the permanent duration of the cult” (1921, p. 259). The durational—time based—aspect of regular worship and timed labor are fetishized in both religion and industrial production.

3 Max Weber’s (1992) groundbreaking analysis of the origins of capitalism, assigns Protestant virtues and work ethic decisive roles. Weber carefully weighs Franklin’s words and finds that “[t]ruly what is here preached is not simply a means of making one’s way in the world, but a peculiar ethic. The infraction of its rules is treated not as foolishness but as forgetfulness of duty. That is the essence of the matter. It is not mere business astuteness, that sort of thing is common enough, it is an ethos. This is the quality which interests us” (p. 17).
the regular collective beat and rhythm of the machine; for the clock is not merely a means of keeping track of the hours, but of synchronizing the actions of men” (p. 13).

Standardized time-keeping via the modern clock is also the very basis of advanced division of labor practices. Taylorism took this aspect of industrial production to the next level by integrating scientific management principles into the organizational processes of labor and production. The analytical breakdown and division of labor processes allowed factories to streamline the human-machine interface and thereby get the most out of both systemic components. Timing was a crucial part of these new and highly synthetic work arrangements, compared to traditional manufacturing operations. Taylorism is responsible for increased workers’ alienation through a loss of contact with (and indeed, awareness of) the final outcome of their labor, the finished product. Fordism’s conveyor belt production method, then was considered the pinnacle of mass production. In today’s post-industrial information economy, Fordism seems outdated, for it has been replaced by logistics-driven just-in-time production⁴, sophisticated supply chain management and workflow securitization (Cowen, 2014).

⁴ On demand and just-in-time production workflows have transformed the local factory into a “global assembly line” (Lynn, 2005). This mode of production, enabled for instance by the FedEx model, synergizes logistics and production in such a way that maximum flexibility is achieved.
Just what constitutes modern time consciousness, then, and how does it provide a framework for better understanding human cultures? Fabian (1983) argues that “[p]refigured in the Christian tradition, but crucially transformed in the Age of Enlightenment, [is] the idea of a knowledge of Time which is a superior knowledge that has become an integral part of anthropology’s intellectual equipment” (p. 10). Travel, for instance, is not merely a traversal of geographical and philosophical space but also a temporalizing practice whereby travel becomes a vehicle for man’s self-realization and achieves the “secularization of Time” (Fabian, 1983, p. 7). Travel can be conceptualized as science, which he correlates with “philosophical travel” (p. 7), because travel is temporalizing. In his analysis of railway travel, which required synchronization between different time zones and the implementation of standardized time—Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or “railway time” (Schivelbusch, 1989), Schivelbusch (1989) arrives at a very similar conclusion with the additional point that this secularization also led to the transformation of human psychology. The space-time compression of railway travel created psychopathologies that were similar to the ‘shell-shock’ trauma experienced by First World War soldiers (Schivelbusch, 1986, p. 165). A new industrial psyche was born

5 “Secularization” refers to scientific and evolutionary temporalizing (versus biblical chronology) (Fabian, 1983).
in which collective fears needed to be balanced with a sense of security in order to
guarantee the continued public acceptance of industrial development. The similarity of
symptoms between First World War shell shock victims and railway accident victims
convinced Freud to rectify his initial diagnostic of sexually caused ‘industrial’ neurosis
in favor of physically grounded trauma explanations. Freud’s theory of a psychological
“stimulus shield” that is destroyed by violent physical impact (an exploding shell or a
train accident) tied together the industrialization of both military and civilian spheres
(Schivelbusch, 1986). Today’s PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) research shows
that a physical energy transfer is not prerequisite to cause trauma in soldiers or civilians.
For instance, the drone operator engaged in combat is 10,000 miles removed from the
actual death delivered by his laser-guided Hellfire Missile. Yet, he may still suffer
psychological trauma comparable to that of a soldier engaged in WWI trench/artillery
warfare. Trauma seems to be equally related to a profound psychological disruption.

Spatial dispersal (i.e. the drone pilot stationed in the U.S) is also always an
expression of a temporal relation, one that is sequential in nature (i.e. the kill order
triggers the launch of the laser guides missile in Afghanistan). “Dispersal” and
“sequence” were central to one of the earliest masters of photography, Eadweard
Muybridge. His work ‘froze’ time artistically and scientifically, thus sequentializing and
isolating the micro-movements of bodies in space. Muybridge’s innovative, custom-
made photographic stop-motion set-ups allowed him to make freeze-frames of humans and animals⁶ in the midst of a variety of physical acts (Figure 48). Viewers were thus able to explore and analyze as never before time-based movements unfolding in space. This novel kind of forensic vision—of a surveilling and analytic gaze—of humans executing industrial labor tasks had the potential for industrial applications. The studies could be used to simulate and improve anthropometric assessment of labor motions and sequences, which was to become integral part of Taylorism’s synthetic workflow management.

According to political economist Harry Braverman’s (1998) systematic critique of Taylorism, it was the ultimate goal of scientific management of labor “to articulate a full-scale managerial imperative for increased job control, to be implemented primarily through deskilling” (p. xvii). The more detailed a complex and highly-skilled labor process could be studied, the easier it could be broken down into separate, less-skilled work fragments. The greater the level of deskilling, the lower the labor costs for the industrialist and the larger the extracted surplus value. Muybridge’s work was a true

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⁶ Muybridge became famous with his iconic collection of images showing a horse galloping in different stages to prove that there existed a moment in time in which all four limbs of the animal were in mid air. This was in fact a result of a bet with financial speculation tycoon Stanford, the founder of Stanford University. Muybridge’s science proved Stanford’s speculation wrong.
testament to secularized time not only from the labor perspective but also for the fact that more than anything, it was an early instance of science and technology representing and occupying (organizationally) human biological life/time. The occupation of time by science and technology became the crucible for all time-based media to come. Muybridge’s work was not only an extension of the cinematic perception of railway travel, it was also the beginning of cinematic representations via the soon-to-be movie industry.

My interactive installation Interrogatory (2011) is a video projection artwork that uses software-based time delay technology to engage the participant-audience in a spatiotemporal feedback loop (Figure 4). The installation comprises two spaces that are separated from one another by a projection screen. The first space is darkened and functions like a movie theater, and those who are in the room act like passive spectators watching the spectacle unfold on a projection screen. The second space can only be accessed via two very narrow openings on each side. This space is completely mirrored and well-lit, which allows a video camera to record all of the audience’s movements. Software processes the video from the video camera and projects the same images onto the screen with a three second delay. This allows the audience to observe itself and more importantly, interact with movements they themselves made three seconds ago. This creates a new structure of feeling and an ontological moment in which the audience’s
biographical time and space no longer correspond, creating a visual disjuncture between time and space.

Thanks to selfie culture, audiences are accustomed to seeing their own mirror images. But today’s “techno-” and “mediascapes” have not accustomed them to playing visual mimicry games with their own time-delayed mirror images. For the purposes of this study, the fact that the artwork, Interrogatory, has rendered time observable and analyzable in a live-feedback environment that estranges the audience from its very own embodied presence in space is most notable for its re-representing the analogous situation among industrial workers seeing themselves executing menial tasks while simultaneously experiencing themselves as alienated and consciously removed from the task at hand. For instance, in modern meat factories, individual meat processing ‘stations’ are visually and logistically separated. The kill floor, where incoming cattle are slaughtered, is completely isolated; ‘executioner’ workers are shunned by their colleagues (Pachirat, 2011). It follows then that the secularization and industrial mechanization of time is a form of occupation by capital, which artificially and violently manipulates the spatiotemporal horizons of industrial laborers. The functioning of this principle can best be observed when the synchronization of machine and laborers breaks down. This generally leads to horrific workplace injuries, but in the case of comedian
Charley Chaplin (1936) and his film *Modern Times*, it provides audiences with a laugh, just as the artwork *Interrogatory* ended up doing.

### 2.1. Labor and Time: Organizational Occupation

Behind Fordism was economist John Maynard Keynes’s concept of the welfare state. A well paid workforce was able to afford the cars produced in Ford’s factories, which led to a socioeconomic boom and the unprecedented growth of the American middle class. But Keynes’ government intervention theory, which would counteract the negative effects of a cyclical economic slump on workers, was torn down by Chicago School theorist Milton Friedman, father of neoliberalism, in the 1970s. Friedman argued against Keynes’s macro-economic fiscal policy approach, favoring free-market monetary policies. His neo-liberalism sought to radically dismantle government intervention into private enterprise, thus triggering a global trend towards economic de-regulation. Friedman was able to convince political leaders across the world to change their nation’s fiscal policies with devastating effect for workers. But before Fordism and Keynianism began to unravel in the mid-1960s (Harvey, 1990, p. 141), occupation was understood to imply a spatial relation in addition to the social and temporal one. Before Fordism and Keynianism began to unravel in the mid-1960s (Harvey, 1990, p. 141), occupation implied a spatial relation aside from a social and temporal one. Typical for the vertically
integrated, Fordist regime of production, then, the term occupation came to be used synonymously with profession, job, or career. Adults pursued a certain occupation inside a particular predetermined space, say a factory or office building. Nowadays, however, modern financial capital has dissolved the spatial and temporal practices associated with the skill-based occupations of early industrialization, and the promise of full-time, life-long employment has all but vanished (Stiglitz, 2002). The separation, in other words, of the temporal, spatial and social relations that made up the concept, acts, and structures of occupation, i.e. work, has created a global undercurrent of Schivelbusch’s “shell shock” trauma that is the ongoing fear of and anxiety about socioeconomic (occupational) wellbeing and life prospects.

2.1.1. Microjobs—The Capture and Occupation of Microtemporalities

Temporary employment agencies have been around for decades. For the armies of free labor under global capital’s flexible accumulation model who are excluded from the capital’s core tenet and by now exclusive privilege of full employment, ‘temping’ is

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7 For Harvey (1990), “flexible accumulation” is the hallmark of modern day capitalism. Most momentously, it has radically transformed Fordist labor relations due to “strong market volatility, heightened competition, and narrowing profit margins, employers have taken advantage of weakened union power and the pools of surplus (unemployed or underemployed) labourers to push for much more flexible work regimes and labour contracts. It is hard to get a clear overall picture because the very purpose of such flexibility is to satisfy the often highly specific needs of each firm.” (p. 150)
one way of staying financially afloat. According to former World Bank Chief, Joseph Stiglitz (2002), capitalism failed in its social contract promise of guaranteeing full time employment. The IMF was supposed to guarantee in case of market downturn (2002, p. 38). The reasons for this failure are too complex to name here, but automatization, rationalization and offshoring most certainly play a growing role today. Instead of guiding policies toward job creation, the IMF has instead “taken on the pre-Keynesian position of fiscal austerity in the face of a downturn doling out funds only if the borrowing country conforms to the IMF’s views about appropriate economic policy, which almost always entails contractionary policies leading to recessions or worse” (Stiglitz, 2002, p. 38). Anthropologist Xiang Biao’s (2007) wrote a multi-sited ethnography on Indian IT workers and their highly specialized and precarious transnational labor market. These Indian run “body shopping” consultancies provide flexible labor services to the globally distributed high-tech market. Short-term and mid-term contracts or informal ‘gigs’ are often offset by phases of unemployment called “benching” (Biao, 2007, p. 5). The parasitic nature of these placing agencies, which extract a portion of the worker’s salaries, is compounded by the “tedious, unrelentingly monotonous, and low-paying ‘donkey work’” (Biao, 2007, p. 5). Hence the name, body shopping; work assignments rarely require actual brain activity.
This new kind of labor exploitation, which Biao describes as typical for the Indian IT sector, is a product of the information technology revolution. It is typical for an integrated world-economy, in which nation-states are increasingly reluctant to invest in the Keynesian welfare system model, and corporations avoid offering basic job benefits to their ‘workers’. Flexible and increasingly precarious transnational labor markets fit the bill for both agents—state and corporate—leaving the workers shut out from the system’s successes and profits. For journalist Barry C. Lynn (2006), the business models of high-tech companies such as Dell and Cisco are entirely built on the precision management of their global supply chains. This allows them to cut inventories to a bare minimum and even give up in-house production and assembly altogether, as in the case of Cisco. Lynn points out that the success of Dell, aside from extending its assembly lines to far away places thanks to groundbreaking logistic management software, is also the political freedom of being able to globally extend business operations almost entirely unhampered by government regulation while simultaneously relinquishing any responsibility for local communities and individuals.

The division of labor, which, once occurred within the confines of the vertically integrated Fordist factory or office building, are now horizontally distributed, outsourced, offshored, in short “fissured” (Weil, 2014). Economist David Weil (2014) identifies novel types of “fissured workplaces”, which “entail a lead company focusing
on a core area of competency and shedding activities (manufacturing and assembly) to other businesses, all the while ensuring that technical, quality, and delivery standards are rigorously adhered to by those subordinate suppliers” (p. 168). Body shopping consultancies⁸ fare even worse, as they tend to be small with little bargaining power compared to the multinational corporations that Weil has in mind. Indeed, the temporal and economic precariousness of IT based businesses and employment opportunities, comes closer to on-the-fly improvisation than to traditional career planning strategies. The atomization of the global labor market has cast worker’s livelihoods into deep uncertainty. Anxiety about and fear of what the future holds have become the new normal for millions workers worldwide.

Artist Clement Valla’s observations on the proliferation, scalability and anonymity of IT-based contractual labor have been integrated into his own art practice.

⁸ The global IT body shopping business is a complex system built on individualization—the non-collective, non-solidarising and meritocratic attitudes by individual players; ethnicization—the dependence of the global body shopping business on complex (rural/urban), interactive ethnic (Indian) networks; and transnationalization—capitals dependence on and management of a global supply chain of a free, cheap and hypermobile Indian IT laborers reserve army (Biao, 2007). It is a highly versatile and adaptive model for any emerging economy (i.e. India, China) to gain a foothold in a neoliberal world system that is dominated by the U.S. and other ‘developed’, western nations (i.e. Australia, Canada, European Community nations etc.). Body shopping businesses often morph into leading software development business with global market reach, making them what business angels would call incubators.
For the ongoing project *Seed Drawings* (2016), he uses Amazon’s Mechanical Turk, the largest online microjob marketplace. In reference to the famous 18th century chess computer in which a chess master of small stature hid underneath the board and controlled the moves for the mechanical puppet above as if an automaton, the Amazon Mechanical Turk offers a platform for crowdsourcing work that has no limits in terms of contract size. Valla drew his original seed drawing with specified dimensions and the workers were given the menial task of copying the seed drawing to the best of their abilities. The final work is an assemblage of thousand such tiny copies, which began developing abstract patterns (Figure 50). Valla (2016) describes the project as follows:

The workers are culled through the online service of Amazon.com’s Mechanical Turk, a pre-existing system that offers workers pay in reward for specified tasks. For the Seed Drawings, each worker is paid 5¢ to copy the previous worker’s drawing—a paltry sum for a menial task. The Seed Drawings explore two aspects of contemporary networks: the online proliferation of copies and repeated memes, and the spread of cheap, crowdsourced micro-labor.

Amazon’s metaphor of “the Turk” is meaningful insofar as it reflects the same modus operandi as in the fake chess computer. A human agent directs a machine (puppet) to complete tasks it is not capable of doing autonomously. The formal employer-worker relationship in Amazon Mechanical Turk requires a new language⁹ to capture its non-

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⁹ A visit to Amazon’s Mechanical Turk landing site is illustrative of this new business relation language: https://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome.
social dimension. The employer is called the Requester who posts Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs), which then get picked up by the workers, who, anonymously complete the task from wherever they may be located. The promise behind crowdsourcing is to offer maximum flexibility for both Requester and worker. The actual inequality of this model becomes transparent when the average salary and benefits are examined. The Requester avoids legal minimum wage requirements or any other kind of costs associated with normal social relations within a capital mode of production. The worker without benefits and who earns an average of $1/hour has to declare self-employment income, which are taxable under most national tax laws.

The use of language such as “HITs” serves to hide the fact that menial labor is generally experienced by workers is degrading (Biao, 2007). The term Requester, seeks to absolves the employer of his traditional duties to provide for the welfare of his workers. The micro-transactions of financial speculation have now also become the blueprint for microjobs and microtemporal contracts. Both systems extract value without returning anything to the system. Nor do they support the publically financed infrastructure which makes this arrangement possible.

One of the most extreme versions of the mechanical Turk principle is the increased deployment of unmanned aerial weapon systems by the U.S. Department of Defense. The U.S. military stations many of its Predator drone pilots—the quintessential
the mechanical Turks of modern warfare—in mobile containers anywhere across the
globe. Remote-controlled drone technology is sufficiently advanced to allow these flying
killing machines to search and destroy their targets autonomously. However, the
mechanical Turk drone ‘operator’ still performs the function of an ethical and legal
anchor by grounding the military targeted killing missions in existing human legal
frameworks. The next logical step would be to allow machines to kill independently of
any human chain of command, a scenario that Hollywood has already explored in detail
and which would mark the dawn of very dangerous new era in human civilization\textsuperscript{10}.

2.1.2. Labor as Leisure and Leisure as Labor

The secularization of time in the early years of industrialization changed the way
people organized their lives, including how they consumed and exchanged goods. The
new concept of time allowed an individual worker’s lifetime and lifestyle to be occupied
simultaneously. In terms of the Protestant work ethic (Weber, 1992), being punctual and

\textsuperscript{10} A recent investigation into the Pentagon’s dilemma of researching and developing autonomous
killing robots, a researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of
Management comments “If Stanley Kubrick directed ‘Dr. Strangelove’ again, it would be about
the issue of autonomous weapons” (Rosenberg & Markoff, 2016). The Terminator science fiction
movie franchise was by no means the first instance of film of TV shows to explore the idea of an
artificial intelligence uprising against domination by biological life, like humans. Such scenarios
are always imagined as apocalyptic and death-world-like.
completing assigned workloads in a timely fashion rapidly became the measure of reliability and personal integrity and in turn, for the Puritans, a sign of God’s grace. Time thus became a means of measuring and assessing “quality” (Easterling, 2014).

Furthermore, the new life-style afforded by factory time and its counterpart, leisure time, allowed the working class to explore their own country. From England’s steam engine railway travel emerged the new industrial sector of (steam engine-) tourism as a brand (Schivelbusch, 1986; Old House Books, 2012 [1862]). The free time during railway travel needed to be filled with activities, opening up entirely new consumer markets. The book (Old House Books, 2012) entitled The Railway Traveler’s Handy Book, first published in 1862, proposed a litany of new recreational activities as entertainment for bored passengers. Reading, in general, and novels—especially, travel novels—became ‘en vogue’, as did chess-playing, smoking, journalistic musing, and oddly enough, light napping or day-dreaming. And the development and subsequent ready availability of new recreational activities allowed time to be commodified.

Of course, this new consciousness also included a host of new fears and anxieties (Schivelbush, 1986). The fear of passing through dark tunnels and of being assaulted, the fear of horrific train accidents, or the smaller concerns about missing the train began to occupy waking and dreaming thoughts, popular press and novels, and even the invention of nifty travel clothing and accessories (Old House Books, 2012). This new
industrial time consciousness and the sensation of compressed space, which made
distances between places and people seem smaller, was the beginning of a new structure
of feeling, and “of profound collective self-transformation, a reworking and rewriting of
an older system” (Jameson, 1989, p. xiv).

Not only did industrialization create new objects for the subject, it also created
new subjects for the objects. The mass-sale of affordable commodities in the emerging
department stores11 depended on circulation and motion creating a new “commodity
esthetic” (Schivelbush, 1986, p.192) that matched the panoramic experience of
industrialized travel. The former produced a new economic relationship in which the
exchange value of goods replaced the pre-industrial use value of products. In the case of
the latter, transport and change of locality became the industrial product and passengers
a new kind of parcel. In Marx’s sense, both consumers/travelers and products were
transformed into commodities. This new spatiotemporal order conditioned and
subsumed the individual to the demands of a new industrial economic regime.

11 Benjamin’s (2002) Arcades Project (Passagenwerk) is a chronicle of early day commodity
fetishism and therefore belongs firmly in this era of burgeoning shopping arcades and
department stores. Retail shopping today either happens in the generic space of malls or on
equally generic online portal.
That travel is a temporalizing practice has been magnified by commercial flying. Today’s elitist business class is required by the global business markets to travel incessantly (Castells, 1999). The increasingly de-skilled working class, by contrast, is not only limited by work to be readily available to fill in at any time and therefore, required to remain within easy driving distance of the workplace—recall, the Protestant work ethic that links reliability with godliness (or at least, good moral character)—but also, consistently low wages generally promise leisure time that must also necessarily be spent at home. Still, the digital communication and information revolution has outpaced and partially rendered obsolete the need for certain forms of physical travel. For Sassen (2002), globalization and its spatial manifestations—local and global architectures, transport networks, service facilities—are predicated on both the dispersal and the centralization of control and on novel production functions. The complexities of an ever-expanding and virtually connecting world economy can only be handled, understood, and interpreted by an ever-increasing pool of exceptionally capable “talent” (Sassen, 2002, p. 19). These technical advancements and social adjustments speak to an emerging class of cognitive elites, who are the new, educationally and financially privileged rulers and benefactors of global economic flows. The global trend to gentrify impoverished, inner-city areas in Sassen’s (1991) “global cities” in order to house and entertain these wealthy elites is one of the many symptoms of a new centralization process, which is yet
again, transforming and segregating the mental and physical infrastructures of the world. Sassen argues against the notion that modern information and communication technologies would favor dispersal over centralization. According to her analysis, the growing network of global corporate affiliation, mergers and acquisitions require equally expanding centralized control\textsuperscript{12} functions and processes.

In the click\textsuperscript{13} and gig economy, the market for telecommuting jobs has grown. An updated version of the immaterial laborer, known as the “cyber-proletariat” (Dyer-Witheford, 2015), has emerged. This cyber-proletariat, which ceaselessly roams the virtual economies of cyberspace in search of ever (albeit meager) economic crumbs, is boxed in by the limited access regimes of globally enforced intellectual property laws. What is of particular import here is the resultant emergence of a new socio-economic divide not only between the have and have-nots under information capital, but also between categories of workers and capitalists. Experts and managers seem essentially move in a parallel universe of board rooms (Figure 13), VIP airport lounges and vast

\textsuperscript{12} To borrow an analogy from natural sciences, the higher the evolutionary complexity of a biological organism, the greater the need for an expanded central nervous system, such that the brain becomes larger in relation to the body weight.

\textsuperscript{13} Much of the Internet economy is valorized by individual mouse clicks, Facebook ‘likes’, or aggregated views. Google’s proprietary AdSense algorithm is nothing but a surreptitious piece of tracking software installed on every user’s computer or mobile device. AdSense gathers all user activity and monetizes individual mouse clicks through its core business and marketing branch.
private golf clubs. Golf as sport and expression of capital privilege go hand in hand. In *Golf*, a 2011 panoramic photographic (*Figure 51*) series, I capture the collusion of spatiotemporal exclusivity immanent to private golf courses. The generic spaces golf creates in global landscapes is baffling and mostly offensive. The pesticides and fertilizer used to debug and grow thick, even lawns, the scale of water usage and the sheer territorial acreage required to run a golf facility is an affront to environmental and socio-economic sustainability. Still, the occupation perpetrated by the golf course is very different from that of the strip or mega-mall not only because it is relatively ‘unmanned’, compared with the army of workers running a commercial shopping area, its consumers are relatively invisible – sparse, dwarfed by the green expanses and constantly changing – and of course, the turn-around appeal is aesthetic, economic, both inviting and conspicuously exclusive, for there is not myth of public use, only the lure to inspire the public with the eye candy, i.e. temporary dominion over rolling greens to play a game that requires long stretches of unstructured time, that is what could also be its reward for success and hard work. Sociologist Manuel Castells (1996) observes that “above a diversity of human-flesh capitalists and capitalist groups [...] is a faceless collective capitalist, made up of financial flows operated by electronic networks” (p. 505). The facelessness is that of the capitalist system itself, which resonates with Herzfeld’s (1992) earlier assessment of the produced indifference of large bureaucratic structures. Vast,
mostly empty expanses of gently undulating, meticulously manicured lawn are the embodiment of this faceless collective capitalist at the top of the economic food chain.

Dyer-Witheford’s (2015) cyber-proletariat, by contrast, “the proletariat of the era of capital’s machinic supersession of the human” (p. 201), is at the very bottom of the economic food chain. Dyer-Witheford defines the cyber-proletariat as follows:

[It] is defined by the existence of large surplus populations, outside the scope of formal employment, a condition then refracted through various gradations of informal and precarious employment, and the intimidation of permanent workers and intermediate strata facing re-proletarianization. The result is a segmented proletariat, commonly subordinated to capital, but divided in many ways. In such a situation there is every likelihood of internecine conflict, with, on the one hand, defense by privileged sections, a category that now includes most of those who have permanent jobs, against gains by the precarious and pauperized, and, on the other, a ‘negative solidarity’ of resentment against those sections that have won any ground against capital, in a destructive dynamic running at multiple scales—local, regional and global. (p. 201)

As truthful as this dark assessment sounds, the larger question remains: is his “cyber-proletariat” a truly class-conscious and unified community or just a useful terminological container for occupations that entail some kind of professional connection to electronic media? Biao’s ethnography on Indian IT workers clearly supports the latter position, in which the individualistic and non-unionized, non-solidarity character dominates. From the perspective of practicality, atomized and scattered individuals who spend most of their working hours in front of a screen are unlikely candidates to take to the streets and collectively bargain for a better future. In other words, although the Occupy Movement used technology to organize and
communicate, the starkly heterogeneous grievances of activists prevented the formation of an enduring movement.

The ease of police infiltration is one of the less discussed side effects of cyber-activism and social media organized protest movements. Art critic Jonathan Crary (2013) writes,

[p]olice agencies of the global order can only be gratified by the willingness of activists to concentrate their organizing around internet strategies, by which they voluntarily kettle themselves in cyberspace, were state surveillance, sabotage, and manipulation are far easier than in lived communities and localities where actual encounters occur. (p. 121)

The Internet is no longer free range for the exercise of free of speech. Today, the Internet is much more of a fortified, enclosed virtual space, much like real world “free” or public spaces have become in the age of neoliberal open markets and open access. A new valuation chain (Wertschöpfungskette) has emerged from within this knowledge economy of “cognitive capital” (Vercellone, 2006) in which the creation of artificial scarcities and virtual enclosures translate into capital and power. Social philosopher André Gorz (2010) argues that control of access is “a preferential form for the conversion of immaterial wealth into capital” (p. 34). From this standpoint, the material worlds of gated communities, fortified office buildings, and airport security perimeters, borders,
and public monuments are complemented by their virtual counterpart in cyberspace\textsuperscript{14}. For Gorz, the commodity form has also significantly changed under high-tech capitalism such that “the exchange-value of commodities, material or otherwise, is no longer determined in the last instance by the quantity of general labour they contain but mainly by their content in terms of general information” (pp. 34-35). This clearly points to an even larger disenfranchisement of labor under modern finance capital. If there were one thing workers had to offer in exchange for a wage, it would be their lifetime, in Marx’s terms, their “living labor”. In describing the extractive and exploitative relationship of capital to labor, Marx wrote that “[c]apital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks. The time during which the labourer works, is the time during which the capitalist consumes the labour-power he has purchased of him” (1990), p. 163). Far more insidious for the global workforce is the fact that the marketplace where capital meets labor has been removed from capital operations altogether rendering labor largely obsolete. One look at Amazon fulfillment centers says it all (Figure 16): there workers have been replaced by robots

\textsuperscript{14} It goes without saying that cyberspace of the Internet and mobile telephony are built from massive infrastructure hardware (Starosielski, 2015). Indeed, the information and communication sectors are always also based in material structures in real space. Google datacenters and Nasdaq trading platforms are not only material, physical facilities but also consume vast amounts of resources in terms of labor, maintenance, and energy.
and software. The only way to increase productive output today is to replace human labor with robots. The modern fulfillment centers of Amazon, Walmart, and so on are vast logistic operations that no longer require much human intervention aside from back-end software development, despite the fact that hundreds of millions of people consume the products these retailers circulate.

So what of the reserve armies of unemployed labor shut out of these types of capital operations? Filmmaker Harun Farocki took a closer look at cultural variations in human labor by examining the vocation of brick making. Farocki’s documentary film, which he calls, *In Comparison (Zum Vergleich)*, shows different brick-making traditions from a variety of cultural and technological settings. Brick making and brick laying are shown as a community building activity in rural Africa, a pre-industrial-style brick manufacturing business in India and a high-tech operation in a fully automated German brick factory. The filmmaker compares them visually, but offers no voice-over comment or expression of bias. Nevertheless, the post-human, high-tech robotic arm in Germany laying bricks autonomously couldn’t be a more poignant symbol of dehumanization in the age of information capital. Bricks have always represented the cultural collective building itself ([Figure 52](#)). Farocki’s film clearly shows how much human interaction and affectionate communication and exchange are necessary to bind societies together. Most of the affective social underpinnings of meaningful work vanished with the system.
of 21st century information capital. A highly efficient robot arm can build magnificently complex brick and mortar architecture in only a few days. However, the robot will never build, represent or truly bring together a social community, which must be constructed, shaped, grown over time and which relies on symbols and collective representations.

On the other hand, thanks largely to modern telecommunication technologies, the traditional separation of leisure and labor time has been sacrificed in the name of enhanced productivity and performance. In the early days of mobile telephony, employees had the dream of enjoying the sun in a recliner instead of toiling away in the office. Reality proved to be the exact opposite what they had imagined. Almost all professions have an *a priori* understanding that employees must always be available. An individual’s physical distance from the workplace has become irrelevant, except in the case of low labor unskilled jobs. Space has been annihilated not so much by time as by technological innovation. In fact, professional life is now benchmarked by worker’s response time to customers’ or the boss’s demands. Secular time has become a stopwatch of sorts, in which micro-temporalities are tracked, quantified, and valorized.

Fabian’s (1983) *chronopolitics* appear to be the missing link between Foucault’s (1990) *biopolitics* and Mbembe’s (2003) *necropolitics*. The scientific management of time exceeds the geographical boundaries that limit regular biopolitics, which operate locally and on the body of the political subject. Chronopolitics in contrast, cast a controlling,
oppressive net across the space-time continuum. Sitting on a beach, drinking a Martini, might be an option to evade the biopolitical, panoptic grip of power, but chronopolitics boxes in the lifetime itself, no matter where the working laborer hides. After a lifetime of toil, only death awaits. There is no escaping the insatiable appetite of *chronos* under modern capital.

Big data have become Orwell’s (1949) updated version of *Big Brother*. In the world of electronic finance capital, high-frequency trading operations are measured in terms of microsecond intervals, which, based on traditional arbitrage principles, allows investment banks to profit directly from time and not from any productive process involving social relations with workers. Certain jobs require 24/7 availability (Crary, 2014), which is part of a new work ethic that looks down on the human biological need for sleep as time wasted. In the context of military operations, “the creation of the sleepless soldier” is closely linked to efforts “by the scientific-military complex to develop forms of ‘augmented cognition’ that will enhance many kinds of human-machine interaction” (Crary, 2014, pp. 2-3). This accelerated mode of capital production has caused new labor-related health problems such as burn-out syndrome. In *Dead Man Walking*, Carl Cederström and Peter Fleming (2012) make the dark conclusion that what is worst about modern work conditions in the “social factory” is the prospect not of dying, but rather, of being “weeded to a life that is not worth living” (p. 3). Their
critique of contemporary working conditions under 24/7 capitalism, which even monetizes on our sleeping hours, resonates with the Haitian Zombie figure (Davis, 1988). According to transatlantic zombie scholar Sarah Juliet Lauro (2015), the greatest fear of the colonial Haitian slave\textsuperscript{15} was to have his soul captured by the master or witch doctor beyond physical death, and then being forced to continue toiling as a slave even in the afterlife.

Haitian zombification has been interpreted by respected, participant observer anthropologists as a means to enforce social order. For anthropologist Wade Davis (1988),

\begin{quote}
[t]he creation of a zombie, or indeed the threat of zombification, is not imposed in either a random or a critical way. On the contrary, there appears to be a logical purpose to zombification, consistent with the heritage of the people and their need to protect that heritage. A zombie is not an innocent victim, but an individual who has transgressed the established and acknowledged codes of his or her society. The act of zombification represents the ultimate social sanction. (p. 284).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} Lauro (2015) contends that the zombie metaphor stands for both enslavement and slave rebellion. Despite acknowledging a pharmacological explanation for the process of zombification by the Haitian "bokor" (witch doctor): “the introduction of a potion that induces a deathlike trance to provide cover for kidnapping and toxicological enslavement in which the victim is reduced to a state capable only of performing the most menial tasks” (2015, p. 50), Lauro insists on her analyses. But how can the zombie symbolize slavery and slave rebellion simultaneously? More to the highly problematic topic of so-called zombie-studies will be discussed in chapter 4.
Here, Davis’s analysis of the symbolic meaning behind Haitian zombification overlaps significantly with Bataille’s (1986) view on taboo prohibition transgressions. Both hypotheses underwrite a social structural function of transgressions. First, as confirmation or contestation of a time-honored social order, and second, as the collective representations of the social consequences for breaching that order. For Davis, the zombie embodies a form of collective punishment, whereas for Bataille, the transgressor is the embodiment of a social healer and bringer of equilibria. The former coincides with Durkheim’s (1984) mechanical society, the latter with his organic society model.

The likening of labor to zombification and by extension, to slavery is part of a preposterous turn in the “Global North’s” discourse on social inequality and racial discrimination. Although it may be true that labor relations under information capital have taken a turn for the worse, it is still capital’s vested interest to provide ample leisure time for the middle class to higher tier management ranks. Access to a better or worse life-work balance has become yet another form of occupation. For the reserve armies of unskilled workers, the old rules of primitive accumulation described by Marx still hold true. Dispossessed of legal recourses, unskilled workers take what they can get without asking a lot of question, particularly given the fact that neoliberalism successfully destroyed most unionized bargaining power. Without solidarity among workers, life-work balance will never be within their socio-economic reach. Working
parents are often denied the chance to raise their children responsibly due to the pressures of having to work several jobs simultaneously.

The new social strata of working-poor is exemplified by America’s most successful retailer, Walmart. Most of the company’s workforce is paid so little that it also qualifies for welfare benefits with all of the social stigma that come with it. Walmart’s highly successful business model costs U.S. taxpayer 6.2 billion dollars in public welfare costs: “food stamps, Medicaid and subsidized housing” (O’Connor, 2016). The theory of “corporate welfare” suggested by Robert Reich (2015) and David Harvey (2007) corrects the commonplace depiction of America as the land of a free and deregulated market economy. For Reich and Harvey, American corporations enjoy direct government subsidies and the central planning benefits typical for socialism. Corporations are treated like gargantuan welfare recipients, and low-paid workers and the unemployed must make due with the punitive regime of unrestrained capitalism with little to no social safety provisions. Harvey (2007), in his critique of neoliberalism writes,

[t]he corporate welfare programs that now exist in the U.S. at federal, state, and local levels amount to a vast redirection of public moneys for corporate benefit (directly as in the case of subsidies to agribusiness and indirectly as in the case of the military-industrial sector), in much the same way that the mortgage interest rate tax deduction operates in the U.S. as a subsidy to upper-income homeowners and the construction industry” (2007, p. 165).

Benjamin Franklin’s “time is money” (Weber, 1992) principle works well for the masters of chronopolitics (Fabian, 1983), but less so for the rest of the world.
2.2. *Occupy Lifecycles: Bioeconomics supersedes Biopower*

One of the less discussed side effects of capital is how it organizes and capitalizes on the quotidian. Focusing on key stages throughout the human life-cycle illustrates how capital has successfully occupied and radically transformed the very concept and practice of the human biological lifetime. This sort of investigation falls under the heading of bioeconomics\(^{16}\) and the occupation process in question is unapologetically expressed in terms of human capital, human resources, and even Human Terrain Systems (HTS)\(^{17}\) (Price, 2011, p. 2). The latter are just three of the many terms that underwrite an ideology of human biological lifetime exploitation for capitalistic purposes. Bioeconomics is not so much a governing model that includes the legal domains of power over life and death or the explicit control of social reproductive processes. Rather, it is a form of parasitic value extraction that is not grounded in

\(^{16}\) Wikipedia lists three subjects under bioeconomics: one deals with studies of fisheries, the other links economics with thermodynamics, and the last looks at the relation between human biology and economics. Although the latter subtext appears to fit this study, it has more to do with external biological features, whereas this study relates bioeconomics to specific stages in human biological life.

\(^{17}\) As part of Pentagon’s new counterinsurgency warfare, such systems make use of social scientific expertise, provided through Minerva funded anthropological fieldwork. In other words, Human Terrain Teams include anthropologists on the ground to help improve military decision making processes (Price, 2011). Price calls this social science and military collaboration practice the weaponization of anthropology.
reciprocity, and as such, displaces Foucault’s (1990) understanding of biopower. Michael Hardt (1999) critiques the conceptual usefulness of biopower for its top-down vision of social totality:

It is patria potestas, the right of the father over the life and death of his children and servants. More important, biopower is the power of the emerging forces of governmentality to create, manage, and control populations—the power to manage life. (p. 98)

Philosopher Michel Serres (1982) describes capital as a parasitic (and therefore bioeconomic) organism in which humans, who are also parasitic, are trapped. Within such a bioeconomic ecology, “[t]he chain of parasitism is a simple relation of order, irreversible like the flow of the river. One feeds on another and gives nothing in return” (Serres, 1982, p. 182). Capital as system has long shed its facade of social usefulness or environmental sustainability. Instead, it is a system more reminiscent of a driverless racecar, ever accelerating, heading for the inevitable brick wall.

No other author has made the psychopathology of capital, technology, and progress more central to his literary oeuvre than J. G. Ballard. In his 1973 book Crash (Ballard, 2001) and later, the movie version of the same, the protagonists sexually fetishize deadly car accidents and the physical wounds suffered by its survivors (Figure 53). The symbolisms of iconic car crashes in which oversized American gas-guzzlers harass other vehicles by driving them off the street or exit ramps or bridges, plus the eroticism of broken limbs and metal splints, huge scars, and bodily fluids work together
to paint a grotesque picture of a world that has lost its center, i.e. its moral compass and any deeper meaning. The aforementioned all represent capital and are the result of capital, and the heinous reversal of ethics, psychological reasoning, and motivations reflect exactly those of the system of capital, though in less veiled, more obviously carnal terms. For Ballard, then, bioeconomics stands outside of constructive socio-political discourse and in its natural and unadulterated form is exploitative, parasitic and pathologic.

2.2.1. Parental Surrogates

The U.S. is the only high-income nation not to have paid maternity leave, while almost all middle- and low-income countries offer it, too,” says Jody Heymann, founding director of McGill University’s Institute for Health and Social Policy and author of Raising the Global Floor: Dismantling the Myth That We Can’t Afford Good Working Conditions for Everyone. The exceptions include Swaziland, Papua New Guinea—and us. (Finnigan, 2016)

It all begins at childbirth. Compared to other “Global North” (Sassen, 2014) nations, the U.S. is leader in guaranteeing wholly inadequate maternity leave and well-child provisions. The average working mother returns to her job after a mere three weeks, meaning that working mothers are forced either by finances or by worries over job security to leave the care of their fragile newborns to parental surrogates such as nannies or daycare centers. In Germany, maternity leave is state-sponsored for at least one year—for both fathers and mothers—with the guarantee that the parent(s) can then
return to the very same (held) job position. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) data, the U.S. is the only country not to have paid maternity leave at all, compared to say Estonia, which pays for 87 weeks (Livingston, 2016). However, there are exceptions to this American trend. Certain hip Silicon Valley companies and startups offer exceptional maternity leave benefits, in addition to providing in-house daycare facilities and playgrounds. Gretchen Livingston (2016), a researcher on fertility and family demographics at Pew Research Center writes,

In most countries, a social-security-type system is used to fund the paid time off, though in a small share of cases, the employer also foots part of the bill, as well. It’s important to note that while the U.S. is the only country that does not have a national paid leave mandate, California, New Jersey and Rhode Island all have state-mandated paid leave plans in place. Some businesses across the U.S. offer paid family leave to their employees without being required to do so, as well.

What does this say about American society? For Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO and author of *Lean In: Women, Work, and The Will to Lead*, women must learn to get over their self-imposed limitations and push forward in the career race against their male competitors and each other (2003). Such a meritocratic stance may well be defensible for Silicone Valley with its financial resources but hardly applies to the average working family or normal biological mandates (Harmon, 2010; Graham, 2004). For the majority of less affluent families, childbirth (social reproduction) is the source of great fear and anxiety about the future. Losing a job often equals downward social mobility. David Weil’s (2014) assessment of the fissured work place extends into fissured family life.
Small babies and toddlers are deprived of the most basic of human needs, the warmth, smell, touch and affection of the mother. Back at work, mothers instinctively worry about the welfare of their babies, often with good reason\textsuperscript{18}. 

Marx’s political economy defined childbirth, childcare and childrearing as functions that pertain to the worker’s social life time and are crucial for the social reproduction of the capitalist mode of production itself. For Arendt (1998), who formulated a clear conceptual distinction between labor, work, and action, only “action” should be the site for politics. For Arendt (1998) “labor”, which includes biological reproduction, is the lowest human activity because it is animal- and slave-like. As such labor is a private affair and is spatially bound to the family household. The \textit{artificial} world of humans is built through “work”, the products of which outlast the lifetime of any individual human life. “Homo Faber” is the specialist, the artist and architect, the lawmaker, who builds the physical and legal boundaries of a culture. “Action” is the pinnacle of the human \textit{“vita activa”}. Action is freedom and as such is an end in itself. Action occurs in the public realm between the individuals of society. For Arendt, action is the foundation of politics, for it is based on publicity and plurality. Bioeconomics

\textsuperscript{18} Mothers whose babies died at daycare centers have organized to petition legislative change that would guarantee 100 day paid maternity leave (Amber, 2016).
politicizes and financializes (Martin, 2002) the domain of labor that Arendt excluded from the public realm of politics. The birthrates of post-industrial, Western democracies tend to be highly politicized, as most suffer from declining populations. In Germany, for example, financial incentives ranging from monetary rewards for each and every new child (Kindergeld) and paid maternity/paternity leave, seek to encourage—even coerce—families to procreate. Here again, the U.S. stands alone. American birthrates are more than healthy compared to other countries in the “Global North”. This suggests two things: U.S. citizens consider parenthood planning strategies sacrosanct, possibly for religious reasons, and the U.S. government does not see the need (or find it is its place) to artificially incentivize population growth, given the ‘natural’ robustness of its growth statistics (—high U.S. immigration rates help boost the numbers). This leaves American mothers and their families exposed to the extreme social pressure of having to earn a salary in order to pay for childcare. Contrary to Hardt’s definition, this dual bind of affective labor¹⁹ (Hardt, 1999) is both directly and indirectly productive of capital. This makes for a social reproductive paradox—a veritable vicious circle (Teufelkreis)—in

¹⁹ For Michael Hardt (1999), “kin work” and “caring labor” are part of “affective labor” as a subcategory of “immaterial labor” practices and have assumed a central role in late capitalism. Accordingly, “the processes of economic postmodernization that have been in course for the past twenty-five years have positioned affective labor in a role that is not only directly productive of capital but at the very pinnacle of the hierarchy of laboring forms” (pp. 89-90).
which no party involved receives true affect, which is, after all, the basic tenet of “affective labor” (Hardt, 1999). Alissa Quart (2014), the executive editor for the nonprofit Economic Hardship Reporting Project writes,

Academics describe such arrangements as links in the “global care chain.” At one end of the chain is a woman in a developed country. She gets a job and is unable to take care of her children full time. She hires a low-wage worker from overseas. These immigrant nannies, in turn, hire even-lower-wage caretakers back home. The monetary value of women’s labor declines as one follows the chain from Global North to Global South. The chain works by separating wage earners from their dependents.

The career-oriented (or obligated) mother is guilt-ridden for not spending enough time with the infant during a crucial stage of his or her early development but feels boxed in by a psychological and economic set of expectations that require her to prioritize her professional occupation—over family or biology—affective or kin labor. A paid nanny ideally does the job of caregiving, but can never be a truly adequate substitute for the nurturing love of the biological or even adoptive mother. In fact, very often, the nanny is herself working as a caregiver in order to pay for childcare for her own child or children (Quart, 2014). The bottom line of all of this is that capital trumps biology. That is, one’s worth, one’s ethical and moral standing, one’s right to be regarded as a productive and contributing member of society is based on one’s commitment to work—chronopolitics and bioeconomics work together to (re)define one’s own interactions with and existence one’s own body and by extension, the flesh and blood that are one’s offspring.
The upshot of such a reversal of natural biological impulses and genetic reproductive codes is that the society that depends both economically and socially on competent young citizens may well have to pick up the tab for troubled children and youth who frequently become victims of child abuse and child negligence at the hand of paid care givers or family relations\(^\text{20}\). In Europe, many daycare centers have opted to install surveillance gear inside their centers to allow worried parents to ‘check in’ unannounced via live video stream (Quart, 2013; Lombardi, 1997). In such cases, the concept of Big Brother takes on new significance. The hegemonic bioeconomic social reproduction model of the U.S. cares little about the details of family life, work-life balance or the many instances of domestic violence that arise from extreme work-related social stress.

\(^{20}\) Here again the U.S. takes the lead in terms of negative statistics: “Every year more than 3.6 million referrals are made to child protection agencies involving more than 6.6 million children (a referral can include multiple children). The United States has one of the worst records among industrialized nations – losing on average between four and seven children every day to child abuse and neglect” (Child Abuse Statistics & Facts, 2016).

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2.2.2. Childhood Erased

First time visitors to the U.S. may experience an intense ‘culture shock’ upon realizing the degree to which private property dominates the environment. From private beaches to fortified gated communities, from abandoned lots to grassy patches bordering freeway exits, plots rarely want for at least one large ‘no trespassing sign’ and a highly visible threat about the punitive financial or physical ramifications of a breach. As a European who has discussed this very topic with a good number of other European residents and visitors, this ubiquitous cultural fact is unquestionably astonishing. In Europe, property delimitations are made clear with fences and walls, which belie the appearance of openness, free space and a culture of welcome (falsely) communicated by sprawling lawns, wide streets, and plentiful manicured green (and other leisure21) spaces.

Ever since the 1956 National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, the U.S. has increasingly become a nation designed around the affordances of its ever-expanding

21 Clubs and gated communities often have large areas designated for communal play, but access is restricted to members and residents only. Communal pools, for instance, make residents identify and register (and very often, even pay a small fee for) visiting friends. During fieldwork in the Virginia Beach and Norfolk Naval Base, significant (and not coincidentally, prime) sections of the public beach are off limits to the public. Access is granted only to military personnel; loud legal and infrastructural threats keep trespassers out.
interstate highway network and privately owned cars. In his transformational booklet, *Learning from Las Vegas*, Architect Robert Venturi (1977) famously declared that American homes, strip malls, highways, and even recreational parks have to scream their symbolism through the windshields of passing cars (Figure 54). That is, private homes do have fences and walls and gates that scream “keep out!”, but they are more often symbolically represented and abstracted as cultural codes. The quaint white picket fence, fragile as it may appear, warns intruders of a potentially armed and hostile resident within. Yet another cultural distinction comes in the form of who plays, walks or loiters on the streets and who does not. In the U.S., those with the privilege of access are rarely seen occupying public spaces—that is, publically carrying out their private lives, either as casual pedestrians or as playing children except in relation to commercial transactions like grocery and clothes shopping, which is always sharply segregated, whereas those who have yet to ‘earn’ such privileges are more likely to be found in public parks, in the streets or on the sidewalk or on a public school campus merely for the purpose of social interactions, getting exercise or fresh air, or leisure-time play. For those with more access, the latter activities tend to be carried out either within the safe confines of their gated communities, their private clubs, private schools, and private homes (versus non-exclusive, gated apartment complexes) and properties. The
distinctions are clear and for the initiated, unmistakable. For example, Bourdieu (1984) describes the French dominant class’s desire for social distinction as follows,

Thus, the ideal or ideal-typical property developer originates from the big business bourgeoisie, has attended a major Paris lycee followed by higher education, loves art or classical music and goes in for at least one of the smart sports, often skiing, golf or tennis, but also riding, underwater fishing, sailing, hunting or flying-as indicated by his 'athletic looks', his 'sun-tanned face', and negatively, by his 'slimness'. (p. 314)

If a person does decide to walk on streets, sidewalks or even on highways, all of which often lack pedestrian allowances like delimited, maintained, illuminated paths, doing so frequently implies a lack of access, a lesser socio-economic status or a dangerous irreverence for convention.

The United States is not the only nation whose notions of public have been eroded to reflect growing economies of fear. According to City of Walls. Crime Segregation, and Citizenship in Sao Paolo, author Teresa Caldeira’s (2000) notion of walking urban streets, or approaching gated communities on foot is more or less perceived by private property owners as an attempt at a violent assault. Among the elites of Sao Paolo, public space has become a quasi “forbidden zone”, and “encounters in public space become increasingly tense, even violent, because they are framed by people’s fear and stereotypes. Tension, separation, discrimination, and suspicion are new hallmarks of public life” (Caldeira, 2000, p. 197). Caldeira’s account of Sao Paola may seem far fetched in comparison to the American experience of public space, but a closer look
reveals that whatever differences there are are increasingly negligible. Swiss journalist Sacha Batthyany’s (2016) newspaper article, *Be Afraid—Most of all Outside*, tells the story of a New York City mother, Ms. Meitiv, who was treated like a criminal for allowing her ten and six-year-old sons to play unsupervised in the park in front of her apartment building. For the mother, a form of collective hysteria has taken hold of Americans living in urban centers, in which children are hardly ever seen. In the suburbs, things get much worse. There, children are never publically visible anywhere other than the mall or the grocery store, and any potential friendly interaction between children (who were not previously acquainted) is frowned upon. Batthyany compares the sight of empty suburban streets to the settings of all post-apocalyptic movies and asks, what is wrong with America? Childcare in America has succumbed to the fear economy: signing kids in and out at school according to special identification numbers or official state identification cards, waivers for any type of leisure activity that involves even minor risks, peanut butter free zones, nut free zones, dairy free zones, meat free zones, obligatory insect repellent before any outing to avoid legal responsibility for complications following a bug bite, but more than anything, children are never found unaccompanied in public spaces, except, notably, in less affluent neighborhoods, where they run the very high risk of being shot or harassed, particularly by patrolling law-
enforcement agents\textsuperscript{22}. When an 8-year-old boy went to school by himself because his mother overslept their usual departure time, the child was detained by police officers, brought back home by the officers and then made to watch his mother be handcuffed and arrested for gross negligence. The legal consequences of her act hold a maximum penalty of 10 years of prison (Batthyany, 2016).

A native New Yorker, Ms. Meitiv claims that America has a quasi-erotic relationship to fear\textsuperscript{23} and finds that people have an irrational fear of Muslims, Mexicans, guns, downward social mobility, and monster snowstorms, most of which are pre-mediated (Grusin, 2010) long before the actual threat materializes. The mere hint of one or another of the items on Ms. Meitiv’s list sends millions of Americans into a tailspin of pre-apocalyptic (but not preventative) behavior: supermarket shelves are emptied in

\textsuperscript{22} A typical case is that of 12-year-old Tamir Rice from Cleveland, Ohio, who was playing with a plastic toy gun on a neighborhood playground. Tamir was shot by a police officer a mere two seconds after arriving at the playground in a patrol car. His case is unfortunately just one of innumerable similar cases in which black children or teenagers are mowed down by police agents (Lane, 2014). Typical also, playing black children are conflated with criminal black adults. Once the police officer had shot Tamir he radioed back to headquarters: “Shots fired, male down, […] Black male, maybe 20, black revolver, black handgun by him. Send E.M.S. this way, and a roadblock.” (Dewan & Oppel, 2015).

\textsuperscript{23} Her argument connects to an earlier assessment of J.G. Ballard’s (2001) book \textit{Crash}, in which the threat of death and bodily injury by car accident is eroticized. Fear can be fetishized and made economically productive, as a marketing strategy as it where, to sell security commodities and weapons.
expectation of heavy snowfall and active shooter response exercises (rather than fire drills) prepare children for the likelihood of a school shooting. The razed and now rebuilt Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, site of the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history, resembles a military bunker much more than a school and is replete with built-in security features, e.g. bullet proof glass, bullet proof desks\(^{24}\) (Figure 55) and a barrage of digital surveillance equipment (Miller, 2016). Fear, it would seem, is the glue that holds American society together. The revenue such security gear—security cameras, mobile apps to track and spy on children and their caregivers—brings in is significant. Ms. Meitiv remembers the “stranger danger” campaigns of her own childhood, which was later replaced by “Man in Van”. For Ms. Meitiv, being a child and parent in America has become a horror trip of imaginary death and abuse scenarios propagated by the media and rigorously enforced and persecuted by child protection agencies and heavily armed law enforcement agents (Batthyany, 2016).

\(^{24}\) Fear in America is big business. Capitalizing of mass shootings, Ballistic Furniture Systems sells “Ballistic Barriers” technology that is bullet proof and can therefor be used as a shield against potential shooter attacks in offices and schools. Their expertise is military grade and advertised as follows: “Ballistic Furniture Systems, Inc. is the premier manufacturer of ballistic protection for the public space. Amulet®, our award winning ballistic barrier technology, is uniquely designed to be integrated directly into all types of commercial furniture, architectural walls, custom millwork and interior design elements” (amuletbb.com, 2016).
Geographer and psychological environmentalist Cindi Katz (2006) is concerned about the detrimental effects of surveillance and “security” on the daily lives of children (Katz in Low & Smith). The politics of public space and its increased privatization is, for Katz, a direct manifestation of the profound contradictions of “neoliberal globalism at a range of scales” (Katz in Low & Smith, 2006, p. 105). The biggest failures of these politics becomes apparent in the lack of concern about and notions of “public or collective responsibility for social reproduction” (Katz in Low & Smith, 2006, p. 106). Katz sees warning signs everywhere: commercial products like indoor playgrounds marketed as “safe play” zones and “safe havens” for parents worried about child abduction, which make public spaces in cities seem “savagely unsafe”; children are under “virtual house arrest”, as parents feel irresponsible to allow them to play outdoors unsupervised; the commercialization of child-tagging and tracking GPS hardware, so-called “digital angels” available at Wal-Mart, and so on (Katz in Low & Smith, 2006, pp. 106-109). The big issue behind these apocalyptic politics of fear25 is that it muddies “the contours of a

25 In her historization of these “terrorizing contentions concerning violence against children in the public arena”, became commonplace in America in 1979, when the discourse of ‘the disappearance of childhood’ first started (Katz in Low & Smith, 2006, p. 108). Mass media helped paint a picture of public space threats to children by highlighting particularly terrifying cases of violence against children. Katz sees hypocrisy in this emerging hysteria, given society’s disregard for the much larger problem of child poverty spreading across the nation and because statistics clearly prove that violence against children happens mostly at home. The discourse of public
viable environmental politics”, whose first victims are children whose formative experiences of outdoor play is severely restricted or else, completely redefined. But the problem is not just terror talk. The spatial layout of American suburbia is itself terrifying--clinical, inorganic and stifling. For United States immigrant entrepreneur Alex Balashov (2016), “[t]he destruction of the pedestrian public realm is not merely an economic or ecological absurdity; it has real deleterious effects”, as it precludes healthy child development. Balashov (2016) finds that the typical suburban cul-de-sac subdivision prevents children from exploring their larger spatial environment, binding them to the confines of their own home, their electronic devices, or to their busy parents, who need to arrange “playdates” for their bored children.

In the discourse of terror, childhood is exploited as a major argument for divesting from social reproduction and welfare programs in favor of (the more lucrative and manipulable) “privatization of crucial aspects of the social wage including education, child care, health care, public space, and now social security” (Katz in Low & Smith, 2006, p. 111). Framed by her critique of larger, geoeconomic and geopolitical threats window dresses the collective representation of the good American. Public space was being privatized and the discourse of terror made things a lot easier for policy makers, a form of “mystification of uneven development itself” (p. 110).
uneven developments under neoliberal “globalism”, Katz finds that the policies that have arisen from “terror talk” have largely been carried out to the detriment of children, and have led to an uneven “geography of privatization”, “uneven relations of power and privilege”, and the have furthered “a project of consumership much more so than citizenship” (Katz in Low & Smith, 2006, pp. 119-120). Indeed, the growing divergence between citizen and government/corporate priorities is poignantly apparent in this, the most intimate of realms, parenthood and child rearing.

In many European urban centers, parents have been trying for some time now to turn the politics of public space and privilege on its head by organizing do-it-yourself parent cooperatives that build exciting outdoor children’s play areas called adventure playgrounds. Children are actively involved in the planning and building stages of the projects, which exposes them to constitutive principles of democratic deliberation, constructive work and productive action (Arendt, 1998). In his book, An Architecture of Play, the photographer Nils Normal (2003) documents many such playgrounds all across England (Figure 56). These self-assembly playgrounds are made from a variety of found, recycled and new materials are put together in makeshift and often provisional architectures. The element of risk is a key feature in the collaborative construction process of such playgrounds and risk management a central learning goal. Life, after all, is risky, and the earlier children familiarize themselves with this concept, the better. In
contrast, the typical U.S. playground is a standardized mass product made mostly from cold and extremely hard metal or compound plastics so it may last for decades. Like the generic architecture of suburbs and the strip mall, generic playgrounds have a psychologically depressing effect on children (Balashov, 2016).

Such adventure playgrounds are examples of what Appadurai might call “playscapes”. In fact, the playscape might be the most productive of all “scapes” (Appadurai, 1996). Playgrounds and more so action playgrounds, are a space of appearance, in which adults and children politicize by verbally articulating and putting into action a collective will to build something collectively useful, and enjoyable. As small as a collectively designed and built playground may be, it teaches all age and ethnic groups involved important lessons about how to build a better society. The playscapes has the potential for becoming a role model for society at large. However, also in Europe such collective endeavors face limits and administrative difficulties. Legislative encroachment and a reversal in public funding has stifled many such exemplary projects (Norman, 2003). The dedicated adult supervision required to maintain and keep such adventure playgrounds safe, often leads to their closure by supervising agencies. In larger projects, the hired professional, who work on these playgrounds fulltime, often end up with burn-out syndrome similar to other high-
performance jobs. Managing and keeping children safe is a highly demanding task, and understaffing affects workers unforgivingly.

### 2.2.3. Coming of Age: Life-Time Sacrifices

Career development centers at American colleges advise students to pursue unpaid internships as foot-in-the-door strategy for future corporate employment. This pre-working life programming of young adults as pro-actively subservient and obedient service providers is then carried over to their adult work-life expectations. To lead a meaningful life and in order to become a productive citizen, work itself has become mystified as a pivotal but rather abstract institution of American culture. For young people, this often means that getting a job in order to make a living is still clearly guided by Max Weber’s (1992) idealistic (if dusty) notion of a calling\(^\text{26}\) (Berufung) even if that calling is unrelated to one’s passion – the calling is therefore to earn a living as a professional, not to do what you love and get paid for it, as a popular but unrealistic

\(^{26}\) According to sociologist Anthony Giddens (1992), Weber’s concept of calling “refers basically to the idea that the highest form of moral obligation of the individual is to fulfil his duty in worldly affairs. This projects religious behaviour into the day-to-day world, and stands in contrast to the Catholic ideal of the monastic life, whose object is to transcend the demands of mundane existence.” (p. xii)
The realities of neoliberal labor markets do much to support but little to back up the idealistic notion of finding and keeping a job being like a quasi-religious call to duty, though workers’ pathological commitments would seem to tell a different story.

Unpaid internships often offer the first glimpse into this new, adult reality, one in which promises are rarely kept and idealism is rendered obsolete. The journalist Jordan Weissmann (2003) took a closer look at the purported benefits of unpaid internships for college graduates finding that “[t]he common defense of the unpaid internship is that, even if the role doesn't exactly pay, it will pay off eventually in the form of a job. Turns out, the data suggests that defense is wrong, at least when it comes to college students”. When it comes to finding a job or switching careers, the ritual or rite of passage (Turner, 1977) function of internships is widely accepted. But the overall impact this ritual has on the larger labor market seems to be less well known. Much ink has been spilled about the legal and practical technicalities of paid versus unpaid internships, about the costs to and benefits for all parties involved (i.e. potential

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27 “Life is Good” is the key slogan of the American apparel and accessory company Life is Good. Products by this company are meant to make clients happier by providing them with a very reductive but positive message. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_is_Good_Company)
employers, or the career focused and highly motivate college graduates). A bigger picture look at the practices and realities of unpaid internships depicts this non-remunerated form of labor for what it has become: a zero-cost, low-risk, no-strings attached business practice for predatory corporations. Thus, the uneven development of privilege and power under neoliberal “globalism” (Katz, Low & Smith, 2006) also manifests itself through unpaid internships. On the youth labor market, unpaid internships have become much more vulnerable to exploitation since global credit crisis of 2008, showing many European youth job markets to be lagging significantly behind adult labor markets, which have been, at least nominally, slowly recovering. In her analysis of the aftermath of the financial crisis, Sassen (2014) writes that the 2012 youth unemployment in the G20 nations exceeded adult unemployment by a factor two. Still, she continues, as “[h]igh as it is, this rate is known to be a severe undercount, since a substantial proportion of youth in G20 countries are neither in the labor force nor in school or a training program. More generally, youth labor force participation rates have dropped in nine of the G20 countries. The median youth labor force participation rate stands at 60 percent” (p. 40).

In the years since the financial crisis of 2008, it has become commonplace and even, encouraged that working adults, regardless of their age and experience and regardless of whether as a result of job cuts, a personal/family break, a career change or
otherwise, also seek out and spend several months working as unpaid interns. The
disconnect between (the promise of) access (and blessedness) through hard work and
honest earnings and the calling as the pursuit of gainful employment has therefore been
Still, to stay the course is to act virtuously, and the promise of future work is the leading
motivational imperative (and trusted promise) behind paid internships for what are
often mature adults working for free under younger paid supervisors. In the aftermath
of the 2008 financial crisis, it was necessary for much of New York City’s creative class,
many of whom were laid off during the recession, to start their professional careers all
over again at the very bottom of the career ladder. Online job boards recommended
unpaid internships as the way to go for the armies of unemployed artists, graphic
designers, and art directors. The medieval blue collar tradition of offering free
craftsmanship training in exchange for free labor time by the apprentice\textsuperscript{28} was
resuscitated for use in modern life as a white-collar incarnation. The idea was further

\textsuperscript{28}The blue-collar sector apprenticeship model is alive and well in modern Germany. Unlike the
U.S., Germany has maintained a cutting-edge tradition of high-quality craftsmanship and
training. Apprenticeships are solidly embedded within the educational system of Germany, and
the time frames and payment schemata of the system are clearly legislated. After three years of
well paid apprenticeship, the graduates then enter another 3 years of ‘master’ training, which is
rewarded by a diploma (\textit{Meistbrief}). Only those who hold such a diploma are allowed to open
business and offer their craftsperson services to the public.
developed into a rite of passage system of sorts (Pologeorgis, 2016) by human resource experts and managers, to make job market newcomers appear more qualified, competitive and motivated and has then developed into a free (non-remunerated) labor market, in which the unemployed have the chance to publically demonstrate that they too will serve and obey the employer.

2.2.4. Adulthood and the Working Dead

For whichever of its many virtues work had been elevated to the rank of the foremost value of modern times, its wondrous, nay magical, ability to give shape to the formless and duration to the transient figured prominently among them. Thanks to that ability, work could be justly assigned a major role, even the decisive one, in the modern ambition to subdue, harness and colonize the future in order to replace chaos with order and contingency with a predictable (and so controllable) sequence of events. Work was assigned many virtues and beneficial effects, like, for instance, the increase of wealth and the elimination of misery; but underlying every merit assigned it was its assumed contribution to that order-making, to the historic act of putting the human species in charge of its own destiny. (Baumann, 2000, pp. 136-137)

Most adults spend the lion’s share of their waking hours on the job, but only if they are lucky enough to actually have full-time employment. Under modern information capital, many tech-based and tech-dependent jobs are highly precarious and

29 Stiglitz (2000) critique of “globalization” and the capitalist mode of production hinges on the broken promise of full-time employment. Once this paradigmatic foundation of “globalization” was rendered obsolete, no matter the reasons, the economic world system became unfair and uneven development both domestically and globally ensued.
short-lived. This stands in sharp contrast to the now old-fashioned notion of life-long careers, professions or occupations (Biao, 2007). The impact of this occupational transformation on the current structure of feeling and modern high-tech societies is correlated to spiraling career anxieties and a nagging fear of downward social mobility, all of which have altered profoundly the ethical and moral underpinning of post-industrial societies. The positive feelings of job security, guaranteed retirement benefits and some forms of social security that follow humanistic principles of collective solidarity, which were once constitutive aspects of the post-war American experience, have been replaced by a constant need to improve skillsets, worry about age, figure out the work-life balance, and occasionally, address issues of mental and physical well-being.

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2000) observes the intrinsic symbolism and value of work as necessary for making humans feel that they are in fact in charge of their own lives and destinies most certainly is a rarefied condition under neoliberal capital. The disconnect between what is and what is imagined is what he calls, “liquid modernity”: the idea that the boundaries between the idealism of the original concept of work and that of consumerism and free choice have been irreversibly blurred. In the early days of industrial capital, the concept of modernity itself was defined by and dependent on an increase in leisure time that would allow for consumption. Workers needed time to
browse all of those new commodities that industry was cranking out at an ever faster pace. In his Arcade Project, Benjamin (2002) wrote nostalgically about meandering through Paris’s arcades in search of interesting objects. The Arcades were short lived, supplanted by department stores, thus putting an end to the Parisian flaneur all the while producing a new sort of customer and indeed, a whole new business relationship between consumer and producer. Bauman writes: “in the pre-modern life was a daily rehearsal of the infinite duration of everything except mortal life, the liquid modern life is a daily rehearsal of universal transience” (2004, p. 96). Consumer objects, traditions, habits, or jobs have all become disposable and easy to instantaneously devalue, which creates a culture of waste that is devoid of deep individual meaning, mutual responsibility and collective commitment.

The binary oppositions of usefulness and redundancy and value and waste have a devastating articulation on the global labor markets. On the U.S. domestic labor market, the transition from Fordist industrial production to a service economy (Hardt, 1999) in which predominantly immaterial labor and services are exchanged has stigmatized what were formerly manual and industrial workers into effective human
waste products. Their inability to upgrade\textsuperscript{30} their outdated labor skill-sets even to the
digital savvy levels of high schoolers, has created a permanently unemployed (and
often, unemployable) social base. The grievances of these brutally “expelled” workers
(Sassen, 2014) find a handy scapegoat in the growing numbers of immigrant (illegal)
laborers attempting to enter the nation. The political call for populist strongmen
resonates worldwide and has triggered a genuine global fear economy in which the
flames of resentment are fueled with angry tweets and the lure of deeply engrained and
latent racial, ethnic, and gender biases.

For those adults who are fortunate enough to hold a long-term job, another
version reality stares them in the face. For Cedarstöm and Fleming (2012), the new
culture of work is epitomized by the inversion of today’s employer’s greatest fear. Gone
are the times in which absenteeism was their main concern. Today, employers fear
“presenteeism: being present only in body but with every other part of your being far, far
away (on a beach, making love, setting a building on fire, etc.)” (Cederström & Fleming,
2012p. 6). Looking beyond the humorous phrasing of their assessment, closer

\textsuperscript{30} This type of language use is part of information technology lingo, and has been applied to
humans. Unfortunately, humans are not as easily and frequently upgradable as say an iPhone.
On the job training is often denied for prospective workers, as it is costly for the hiring
corporation, and vocational training is often not available to workers because of the costs
attached, which leads to a lose-lose cycle in which many adults find themselves.
examination reveals a disturbing new reality. Many of modern jobs are of such little meaning to the worker (not to mention the surplus-value seeking and extracting employer) that he or she has to put on the appearance interested. Spending excessively long hours at the work place is one way of feigning ambition and interest. The Silicon Valley approach inverts the damaging effects of “presenteeism” by offering exciting on-the-job experiences: foosball tables and tournaments among employees, group Yoga and Pilates training, video game entertainment, and food courts, nap-rooms and children’s playgrounds and on-site daycare centers. In fact, this latter concession, although a great convenience for the torn working parent, also represents the highest level of workers’ biological lifetime incorporation, that is, keeping workers happy and committed by absorbing their children into a kind and benevolent workplace.

This embedding of the workers’ entire lifetime and family into the safe, caregiving corporate organism, is *chronopolitical* (Fabian, 1983) perfection. The tune of workplace solidarity, which can be as posh as company weekend adventure getaways to the Riviera to a workplace of committed, engaged, loving parents who are not only friends with other company (“team”) members, but check in on their kids on company grounds and find that they too are friends with co-works’ kids (Chouinard & Ridgeway, 2016). According to Canetti (1998), the ultimate instance of incorporation is the ingestion of prey by the predator. Put in ecological terms, when people eat meat they incorporate
dead livestock as source of nutrition. Their bodies incorporate the energy of another life form so that they may live; the ingested meat is turned into excrement. Applied to the capital mode of production and epitomized by Silicon Valley corporate start-up culture, this ecological metaphor speaks to the process of enhanced surplus value extraction. The workers, their ideas, and their biological lifetimes are organically assimilated by the corporate organism as prime material and is metabolized and transformed into margins of profits that keep the corporation alive and growing. The concept of incorporation is therefore oddly cannibalistic, and incorporated/ingested workers are converted into human waste products.

Put in a different way, performances in the theatrical frame (Goffman, 1974) have been transferred to the work environment frame in which appearances have become crucial to maintaining the “suspended disbelief” that work is actually a personally fulfilling activity and not only a bread-making necessity. The socioeconomic and human wastefulness as well as the damaging effects on societies of such a world of work are immeasurable (Berardi, 2009). For Cederström and Fleming (2012) the “fault-line” is not between social and economic productivity, but rather life and death itself. Marx (1990) famously drew the line between “dead labor” represented by capital and “living labor” of actual work. In his vampire metaphor (p. 163), Marx hinted at the deathliness of capital and of the death-worlds it creates or leaves behind when the process of
incorporation has run its course. Corporations plunder the workers’ life energies and lifetime, “rendering our very social being into something that makes money for business” (Cederström & Fleming, 2012, p. 7). People become their jobs and are expected to be or freely chose to be on the job around the clock (Cederström & Fleming, 2012; Crary, 2014; Martin, 2002). Every aspect of modern adult life is monetized and financialized.

The moral corruptness of this total social fact (Mauss, 1967) is nowhere more explicit than in the value extraction and financialization of death itself. Indeed, even at the very end of a working life and with the soon-to-be arrival of biological death, money is to be made—a lot of it. Real life is only one dimension of the total social fact (Mauss, 1967) of modern life. The virtual life worlds represented in video games, “Global Hollywood” (Miller, 2005) blockbuster movies, TV series, are as much part of the human condition as tangible reality itself. Chapter 4 will discuss the lucrative business of artificial death-worlds, in which the audiences may live and die forever, zombielike.
2.2.5. End of Life-Cycle: Bio-obsolescence

Obsolescence is not only a concern for Silicon Valley entrepreneurs and their short-lived\textsuperscript{31} digital lifestyle gadgetry. In the world of professional occupations, human capital and human resource management (HR), obsolescence is not only the engine for innovation but also the scourge of social death soon to be followed by physical death\textsuperscript{32}. Nowadays, ageism is the number one reason for workplace discrimination, more than all other on-the-job discriminations (race, gender, and sexual orientation) combined.

President of the research group, Adult Development and Aging, and director of The University of Akron’s Institute for Life-Span Development and Gerontology, Hervey Sterns has stated “[t]he Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has reported a more than 24 percent increase in the number of age-discrimination complaints filed

\textsuperscript{31} Obsolescence and innovation are the key growth engines for Silicon Valley. Apple Inc.’s new product launch events are expected with great anticipation by its followers. Marx’s notion of commodity fetishism has been elevated by IT pioneers of Steven Jobs stature to a proto-religious liturgy, expediting the transformation of consumers into cultic believers. Their belief system is secular and ushers in life-improvement through innovative Apps, monitoring anything from heart rate to calories burned while mall-walking. The idol is innovation; the devil is obsolescence.

\textsuperscript{32} According to the American Psychological Association (2013), the effects of age related discrimination at the job and in society in general, are devastating to the mental health of people older than 60 years: “Not only are negative stereotypes hurtful to older people, but they may even shorten their lives, finds psychologist Becca Levy, PhD, assistant professor of public health at Yale University. In Levy’s longitudinal study of 660 people 50 years and older, those with more positive self-perceptions of aging lived 7.5 years longer than those with negative self-perceptions of aging. The study appeared in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (Vol. 83, No. 2)” (Dittman, 2013).
this year compared with the previous two years. Employees over the age of 40 are often considered "old" and not offered the same training, promotion opportunities and pay as younger colleagues” (Dittman, 2013). There appears to be a clear age cut-off threshold in the HR departments of the world, and it ends somewhere around the age of 40. The main argument for what is touted as commonsense ageism is that older people are less flexible, since technology environments change at a rapid pace, and that rigid, deeply engrained human habits and attitudes towards work cannot satisfy business demands. The HR solution is to rejuvenate or upgrade the workforce by matching it to the changing workplace technology environment. Furthermore, paying for human upgrades via education is costly, and on-the-job training is time consuming, which suggests that the bioeconomics model should fill up the ranks either with highly motivated unpaid interns or with similarly work- and success-hungry college graduates. The speed and magnitude of workplace technology shifts make maturity and life-long professional experience at a disadvantage; revamping time-proven tradition to match the demands of modern managerial practices does not pay off for the entrepreneur (Weil, 2014). Only the fittest can survive in such a fast-shifting market place. For now, only Ivy League trained and blue-chip-led corporation managers can avert the fate of forced early retirement. And unpaid interns will one day acquire sufficient know-how and on-the-job experience that they can replace any middle management position at a moment’s notice.
and a fraction of the cost. Even websites that cater to investors are critical of such obvious uneven labor practices as it also damages the rest of the market:

The widespread opinion is that despite the existing labor law some employers do exploit interns independent of academic level, and this is induced by high unemployment and a poor state of the economy. Additionally, some companies are not using internships the way they are intended. Internships are supposed to be recruiting pipelines to bring in new talent. Instead they are being used as a way to free labor where employers are cycling through interns without any intent to hire them on a full-time basis. This results in displacing existing full-time workers and increasing unemployment. (Pologeoris, 2016)

With unpaid internships permitted by law, corporations wield a powerful coercive tool, as they put pressure on their permanent workforce, which lives in constant fear of being replaced by a younger, more malleable, less expensive and by far more motivated and far less critical young generation, “[a]n indirect benefit to the employer is that interns keep current the staff on their toes. Current employees may strive for consistent and sustained high performance for fear of being replaced by someone younger, more eager, more enthusiastic and with fresher ideas” (Pologeoris, 2016).

Outside of the U.S., things are no better. In Germany, for example, workers who lose their job being in their late 40s or early 50s have almost no chance of successfully reentering the labor market. The German unemployment office’s (Arbeitslosenamt) post-war policies of channeling qualified under- or unemployed workers into a comparable job in their professional field was abolished long ago. Today, the first comfort for the recently unemployed is that he or she will have to make due with any job that becomes
available; the office does not match skills, interest, experience and job placements. A job may therefore just as well entail picking ice off the urban sidewalks for one Euro an hour during winter. The idea behind such policies was to wean the (long-term) unemployed from the comforts of welfare provisions (Groll, 2016). Failure to apply to and pick up jobs outside of a persons’ professional training will lead to penalization or the cancellation of unemployment benefit payments (Henning, 2015; Groll, 2016).

Contrary to the stereotype of Germany’s offering its citizens the highest standards in social benefits, Germany does not, for instance, have minimum wage legislation (Henning, 2015). The unforgiving unemployment reform laws, called “Hartz IV”, have relegated hundreds of thousands of older working citizens to society’s waste products, casting them into poverty and social stigmatization. The new legislation seeks to eradicate what many state-level bureaucrats considers to be welfare leechers:

Sanctions Clause 31 of the Social Code II book is the core and centre of the whole Hartz law. The longest section treats Hartz IV recipients ‘as potential idlers, who need to have their laziness driven out of them at every turn.’ Hartz IV transforms the unemployed from victims of the economic system into offenders who scrounge benefits from the state without giving any service in return. Over the past decade, millions have been committed to state-compelled labour in the form of the so-called ‘one euro jobs’ (low-paid jobs with a state supplement of €1 per hour above the standard support rate). Last November, approximately 104,000 people nationwide worked in such a job. (Henning, 2015)

What is offered to old workers who fail to secure a new occupation are expensive occupational retraining measures. One such course is called Self-Management for an Economic Future (Selbstmanagement für eine Wirtschaftliche Zukunft) and is offered by a
private company\textsuperscript{33} that receives tuition payment directly from the unemployment office. The five-week, state sponsored crash course teaches older unemployed the skills necessary to become entrepreneurs, given the most likely prospect that no other entrepreneur will ever hire them again. The course offers everything from coaching sessions to marketing and web design segments, to behavioral training, designed to alter bad habits and to foment positive attitude and knowledge to improve customer and client relations. To develop trust and mutual support group dynamic training is rehearsed by visiting restaurants that are completely dark and run by blind owners. Despite their best intentions, the likelihood that the older or structurally unemployed will become successful entrepreneurs is negligible and certainly does not significantly contribute to lower unemployment numbers\textsuperscript{34} (Der Spiegel, 2015).

\textsuperscript{33} Career Training Works (\textit{Berufsbildungswerk}) Retrieved from https://www.bfw.de/. The details described for the course \textit{Self-Management for an Economic Future} are from my personal experience during a phase of unemployment in Germany. At age 35, I happened to be the youngest course participant, most of the others had passes the 50-year-old threshold. On of the first things explained to all was the unlikelihood of successful entrepreneurship.

\textsuperscript{34} The number of freelancers and small-scale enterprises is consistently shrinking in Germany. For one, employment provides better earnings and stability, and second, the idea of small businesses carrying the larger economic structure as is the case for the U.S. is not at all the case in Germany. Most small businesses earn so little that they shut down and its founders get absorbed into larger corporations as employees.
And yet, it is common knowledge in Europe that the reason for Germany’s exceptionally low, post-2008 financial crisis unemployment levels is that its politics are fundamentally different. The Government decided to heavily subsidize all German corporations so that they would keep their workforce employed. In the long run, this extremely expensive strategy has paid off. German corporations have kept their highly trained workforce in place, instead of having to re-hiring and re-training a new batch of workers as in the U.S. hire-and-fire workplace culture. Direct government monetary intervention into private businesses on such a massive scale has put the other nations of the European Union at a great economic disadvantage.

Interestingly, in Germany, unemployment among artists is widely accepted rather than being frowned upon. But there as here, the expectation is of penury and joblessness, not the financial and personal fulfilment or at least, recompense promised by so many jobs – well-paying or not. There hardly exists any ‘industry’ (either in Germany or the U.S.) in which Master’s-level artists are in high demand except for art schools recruiting new, paying students. In fact, according to recent surveys (Dishman, 2016), Master of Fine Arts (MFA)\textsuperscript{35} degrees have been found to be the worst Masters

\textsuperscript{35} According to 2016 estimates for the top and bottom performers among Masters degrees, the MFA tops as worst degree possible in terms of pay but rather high in personal satisfaction: “1.
degrees of all, despite the fact that the degree programs themselves are among the most expensive (in terms of student loan debt and the ensuing life-long debt burden) (Dishman, 2016). It is no coincidence that the starving artist stereotype is still a popular one. For the stars of the art world however, the situation is quite different. And losing celebrity status can become a real menace to mental and physical health.

The bioeconomic fear of obsolescence may well lie at the heart of aging performance artist Marina Abramović’s participatory performance piece, *The Artist is Present* (Figure 57), presented at New York City’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). The durational performance stretched over the course of three-and-a-half months—longer even than the occupation of Zuccotti Park by Occupy protesters. The online exhibition catalogue describes the show: “a new, original work performed by Abramović will mark the longest duration of time that she has performed a single solo piece” (MoMA, 2010). The show was a silent and sometimes emotional outcry against oblivion. Abramović wittingly or unwittingly made several crucial gestures with her performance. First, she conjured her audiences with pure celebrity aura. Both the artist and the performance

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Master’s, Fine Arts (MFA), Median Salary: $46,600, Projected Growth in Jobs by 2024: 3.5%, Percentage Who Are Highly Satisfied: 67%, Low Stress: 43%.” (Dishman, 2016).
setting, the MoMA\textsuperscript{36} enjoy global celebrity status. Abramović was present both as artist in flesh and blood and as art object, exhibited next to other valued artworks. She fulfilled all of Benjamin’s prescriptions for an auratic experience\textsuperscript{37}. Abramović, in her dual role as artist and author, entered the semiotic discourse initiated by cultural critic Roland Barthes (1967). According to Barthes, the postmodern author had to die\textsuperscript{38} (conceptually) in order to allow the work of art to speak for itself. Abramović stubbornly defies Barthes by fusing her artwork with authorship. Abramović by no means occupied a “space of appearance” in Arendt’s (1998) sense, as basis for democratic encounter and dialogue. The performance was speechless, making it pure gesture. Despite its extravagant duration, the work did not conceptualize physical presence in an age dominated by

\textsuperscript{36} Curator Carson Chan (2011) argued that his primary material is the exhibition space itself and not the art: “[c]urators, beyond selecting exhibitors and administrating the logistics of display, are the mediators between the artwork and its audience”. So according to Chan, Abramović functioned more like a theatrical prop, that served the larger goal of presenting gallery space, which indeed is reified cultural capital.

\textsuperscript{37} Benjamin (2007) believed that only the physical presence of a work of art in a designated space preserves its aura.

\textsuperscript{38} Not unlike Goffman’s (1974) “Frame Analyses”, the author, for Barthes (1967), recedes in the act of narration. An architecture of suspended disbelief is erected in order for the reader, or the audience, to experience the symbolism of the text or the performance by him or herself, without the interference of any external will. Barthes writes “As soon as a fact is narrated no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters in to his own death, writing begins” (p.141).
telepresence and transience (Bauman, 2004). Rather, it staged an abstracted version of labor under cultural capital. Her work, *The Artist is Present*, comes shockingly close to Santiago Sierra’s exploitative labor artworks. Abramović labored day in and day out for her audience. She ‘clocked in’ at the museum’s opening hours and was only allowed short bathroom and lunch breaks. Time and time again, she returned to the labor site and eventually ‘clocked out’ at the museum’s closing. Abramović became the center piece of a cultural factory of which the artist was both producer and product. As the cultural end product of this mode of production, Abramović was consumed by the museum-going cultural capital consumers, which closes the production cycle and also completes the bioeconomical exploitation cycle of her celebrity personae.

On a very different bioeconomical level, the performance was a form of publically displayed sadomasochism. The artist tortures herself voluntarily by sitting in the same uncomfortable position for countless hours. According to CIA’s manual for enhanced interrogation techniques ( McCoy, 2006), the prolonged suspension of terror suspects in forced positions is defined as torture. Furthermore, Abramović was sadistic

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39 The torture discourse is a lively one in modern America ever since the military prisoner abuses in Abu Ghraib were made public. McCoy (2006) in his book *A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation, from the Cold War to the War on Terror* digs deep into the moral and ethical implications of legalized or clandestine use of torture. In his book, many of the most common and effective forms of torture are painstakingly described. Prolonged exposure of inmates to
towards her audience whom she compelled to sit for long stretches of time facing the artist. The empty seat in front of Abramović was meant to be an open invitation to experience the artist’s aura first hand. The interactivity of the work also invited competition with other celebrities. The rapper Jay-Z, actor James Franco, Abramović’s ex-partner and collaborator Ulay, and many other illustrious personalities sat down to engage the artist in a staring contest. The work thus became an exercise in cultural capital production and reproduction but also the embodiment of chronopolitics. Capital spatially occupies and temporally colonizes the biological lifetime.

Yet another manifestation of chronopolitics is the psycho-social and infrastructural boxing in of senior citizens. Geriatric service industries are part of the final stages of the bioeconomic lifecycle occupation and include health care providers, retirement homes, home nursing, special care for dementia and Parkinson disease patients and so on is an enormously profitable business. It is a business that is mostly hidden, since humans in forced positions is of the most pervasively utilized technique. Abramović ‘s extremely long sitting sessions would fall into the category of torture. From this statement another implication emerges. For McCoy (2006), “torture’s perverse pathology” (p. 112) consists in the fact that it corrupts both the victims of torture and the perpetrators causing societies that allow torture to fall apart. Can Abramović ‘s audiences be considered torturers, or is it the museum guilty for allowing her piece to be performed? It would not be the first time that Abramović plays a dangerous game with audience’s darkest desires, including torture and murder. In her 1974 performance piece Rhythm 0, she even provided tools and weapons for her audience, who had to be removed by police after an audience member threatened to shoot Abramović.
their prime do not enjoy seeing the decrepit and moribund and have therefore invented a system that deals with this phase of biological life behind closed quarters. A rarely spoken about affective labor is that of sex workers in retirement homes. In Germany, the combination of the care of elderly with sex workers is nothing unusual or outrageous, as it would be in the Puritanical U.S. In Germany, this highly specialized industry proves how profoundly affective labor penetrates society. A great many senior citizens feel lonely, abandoned, and quite literally, boxed in. Physical contact as simple as a touch, a hug or an embrace rarely occurs. The so-called sex assistants (Sexualassisstenten) (Backhaus, 2016) provide this basic affective service, which could also well include some sexually stimulating acts. These affective laborers are specifically trained professionals, not prostitutes. In retirement homes, the special closed units lock up patients suffering from dementia and Alzheimer’s disease like prisoners, reminiscent of Foucault’s (1988) insane asylums. Patients are drugged to be able to accept their misery. Retirement homes have become part of a physical infrastructure for human waste containment and disposal, similar to correctional institutions. The undesirables, the non-useful members of society are effectively removed from public sight.

The markets that thrive in this business sector include but are not limited to life insurance companies and even emerging robotics companies that develop elderly care robots. Political philosopher Michael Sandel (2012) investigated this sector to find out
the “moral limits of markets” (2012). The so-called “viatical” business for instance was founded with the good intentions of allowing individuals to financially secure their final days in case of a terminal disease diagnosis. For Sandel, the ethical problem with viaticals in not their lack of client consent (maybe due to dementia or any other age related mental impediment), but the fact that it financializes and speculates bioeconomically on “the prompt passing of the people whose policies they buy” (2012, p. 139). Life insurances of course also bet on mortality as a commodity, but as Sandel puts it “the company that sells me a policy is betting for me, not against me” (2012, p. 132). Sandel asks his readers to imagine what corporate lobbying for the viatical insurance business would entail: the lobbyist would be pushing for legislation that would expedite the passing of say, AIDS or Cancer patients. Another form of business enterprises Sandel examines are the so-called “death-pools”, which predate their contemporary Internet versions. Bets are posted predicting the death of celebrities; the winners receive the jackpot. Sandel (2012) writes:

> When the social purpose is lost or obscured, the fragile lines separating insurance, investment, and gambling come undone. Life insurance devolves from an institution to provide security for one’s survivors into just another financial product and, finally, into a gamble on death that serves no good beyond the fun and profit of those who play the game. The death pool, frivolous and marginal though it seems, is actually the dark twin of life insurance—the wager without the redeeming social good p.143).

Still, human culture is much more than the number of exploitable human bodies in a given society. Following Arendt’s (1998) notion of “vita active”, it is through time-
enduring (art) works that human culture articulates itself. The creative class is made up of architects, designers, artists, and builders who all work together to construct a lasting legacy of human architectural forms, both material and immaterial. The architects of Rome built their city with the idea that their buildings would outlast their own cultural moment. In fact, the Roman notion of ‘ruin’ architecture is an example of building in four dimensions, and of the belief in the temporal continuity of their cultural values over time. As such, ruin architecture is a form of occupation of the future in which the ruin functions as a backward looking utopia such that a visit to modern Rome is a form of architectural time travel. Thus, art and architecture are an integral part of chronopolitical power (Fabian, 1983). The hegemonic ideology of the present is projected into the indeterminate future of a culture via its built environment.

2.3. Ruin Value: Occupation of the Future

One of the most iconic and haunting images in movie history—and arguably of our Western collective memory⁴⁰— is taken from the closing scene of Hollywood’s blockbuster film, *Planet of the Apes* (Schaffner, 1968). The protagonist, a shipwrecked

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⁴⁰ The film is one of the ten movies that most people have seen at least once in their lifetime.
astronaut played by Charlton Heston\textsuperscript{41}, rides on horseback along a beautiful beach in search of answers about his current predicament and location. To his dismay, he discovers the tilted ruin of the Statue of Liberty partially buried in the sand (Figure 58). It is at this moment that the protagonist realizes the disturbing truths about his own fate and that of mankind. The planet he is stranded on is not the unfamiliar and remote planet he and his crew thought it was; it is his own, ruined planet Earth in a remote future he accidentally time traveled to. In a final, desolate outburst of rage, he exclaims “Oh my God...I am back, I am home...all the time...you finally really did it, you blew it up...Oh damn you, God damn you all to hell” (Schaffner, 1968). The iconography of destruction and decay of Western civilization as depicted in \textit{Planet of the Apes} was, by the late 1960s, nothing new. It has been appeared in many films, beginning with the very first dystopian science fiction motion pictures such as Fritz Lang’s \textit{Metropolis}. The symbolism of ruined iconography, of a ruined monument and the foundational idea of a nation is what makes the final scene so haunting and memorable, in essence, as damning

\footnote{In real life, Heston was a living anachronism in terms of his outspoken political stance. If in the movie he lamented the downfall and self-destruction of human civilization, in real life he found American values—white, male, religious, and gun-toting—to be under threat. He was the president of the NRA from 1998-2003 and was interviews by Michael Moore for his 2002 documentary \textit{Bowling for Columbine}. Visibly irritated, Heston bucked uncomfortable questions about the relationship of gun ownership in the U.S. and violence, including school shootings.}
for the viewer as it is for the protagonist. The idea of imagining human civilizations’ future is by no means the exclusive domain of apocalyptic Hollywood blockbuster movies.

The symbolism behind public works and other iconic architectural infrastructure has already been discussed earlier, e.g. the Dnieper or Hover Dams, the Empire State Building, the Great Wall of China, or the Statue of Liberty are the tangible and visible articulations of a society’s changing cultural understanding of itself over time. Ideally, such projects express the kind of society a culture aspires to be. Swiss modernist architect Le Corbusier idealized the efficient use of space and modern materials. For him, glass was the perfect building material because it represented and captured the spirit of an enlightened modernity. The play of light entering his transparent buildings, suffusing spaces with sensual delight and the symbolism of alleged truthfulness, were conceived as “machines for living in” (Corbusier, 1986, p. 4). His belief in the promise of progress through science, technology and industrialization was shared by many. However, when his design concepts were applied systematically and on a large scale as standardized urban planning solutions for the complex social ills found in tenement housing around the world (Sabouni, 2015), they proved to be ineffective, at best and counterproductive, at worst. Social infrastructure (Hochtief, 2016) thus articulates and reveals the hegemonic structure of feeling of societies—its hopes and fears, its desires
and vices, and also its rules and regulations—in material ways. The architectures of
daily life embody the deepest secrets and the hidden or encoded characteristics of a
culture, which, thanks to the ruggedness of its material (Innis, 2007), transcend time and
project their ideals into a future yet to come.

The German National Socialists were very aware of this dimension. Indeed,
Albert Speer, Hitler’s favorite architect and closest personal adviser, was very anxious to
mimic the ideals proposed by Roman Empire architects. Rome built not only by
adhering to practical, symbolic and aesthetic values, it also built with the element of
time in mind. Rome was built in four dimensions. What would a building look like a
thousand years or even ten thousand years after the Empire had already ceased to exist?
How would the future world read and interpret the ruins left behind? Indeed, Speer and
Hitler were both enthralled by the ideology of ruin architecture and did their best to
emulate such desires in their own phantasies for an empire that would last millennia,
Das Reich. Historian Martin Kitchen’s (2015) biography on Speer’s life explains that his
genius

lay in providing the dictator with exactly what he wanted: theatrical backdrops
to enhance his stature and the realization of his dreams of building vast
monuments to his boundless imperial ambitions, designed to survive for
thousands of years—even as ruins—as a permanent reminder of his staggering
achievements. Hence the preposterous notion of the ‘ruin value’ of buildings that
were to last for two thousand years—in more euphoric moments for four
thousand—as monuments to bygone splendor. (p. 34)
What is left today of Speer’s most iconic buildings are the military defense lines he had poured in reinforced concrete by companies like Hochtief. Reinforced concrete is a material that withstands the destructive power even of nuclear bombs, as the few surviving structures, all in concrete, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki have proven. The Atlantic Wall and West Wall projects (Seidler, 1986) are further examples of the violent legacy of the infrastructure space that Albert Speer created on the foundation of death labor (Sofski, 1999; Kitchen, 2015; Seidler, 1986). Both of these vast military fortifications served defensive purposes and still capture and project the deeper-seated idea of fortress Europe (Carr, 2015; Forty, 2002). Speer’s built fortifications have been replaced by open-border legislation that nevertheless shuts out undesirables at will. As discussed the previous chapter, Alfredo Jaar’s (1995/2014) work, One Million Finish Passports, establishes a clear connection between the Nazi’s material fortifications and Finland’s legal fortifications via restrictive passport rules (Figure 9).

In modern America, by contrast, the idea of ruin architecture resonates quite differently. U.S. citizens idealize themselves as highly mobile agents who never stand still, who flexibly react and adapt to the ever changing economic landscapes and occupations by capitalism. For geographer Peirce Lewis (1996), America is the land of the mobile and “[n]o proper understanding of American history can fail to note that fact and to recognize habitual mobility as a defining element of American nationhood. The
propensity to move is not just one of several American habits. Mobility is an enduring, driving passion that has defined the whole American experience, and continues to do so” (Raitz & Thompson, 1996, p. 3).

Housing, for instance, has acquired quite a different formal and functional role in America than in Europe. As mentioned earlier, the famed post-Second World War tract housing development Levittown in Long Island, NY, provided the original blueprint and archetype of all tract housing developments to come (Figure 59). It delivered affordable and highly standardized single family homes to thousands of working class families settling in New York City’s earliest suburbs. America thus made the historically momentous choice to henceforth build affordable, flexible, and ultimately disposable housing for its citizens (Easterling, 2014). Houses and housing developments were supposed to “behave” more like money rather than like the durable goods they actually were supped to be in the eyes of their owners (Easterling, 2014). Despite the economic and ideological function of single family homes as quintessential pillar of the American Dream (Rohe & Watson, 2007), the standardized, modular aesthetic and functionality of these early cookie cutter homes was more akin to containers for humans than to a true dream house. In Europe, the re-appropriated use of shipping containers for small and large housing developments has grown into a hip and fancy life-style choice for avant-garde thinking communities. This life-style focused repurposing of logistics
infrastructure contrast sharply with the vast refugee camps, which also make use of shipping containers.

The Swiss apparel company Freitag made itself a market from recycled truck materials such as truck tarps, fixtures and tires. They make waterproof handbags and other very expensive fashion products from these recycled materials. Their global headquarters are located tellingly right next to Zürich’s main train station and consist of a high-rise structure assembled from shipping containers (Figure 60). Freitag is a perfect example of how the modern mode of production cycle is practically never-ending. Even waste products can be re-fashioned and re-branded as life-style gadgets, which in principle is a sustainable concept. In practice it reinforces and normalizes a social relationship that is constructed around mobility, ephemerality, flexibility, all of which erodes the structure of feeling that time-proven social reproduction traditions afforded. Living in containers, wearing fashion made of discarded container materials, and living a life that is more of a logistics and financial operation (this includes tourism) lends itself to an infrastructure of feeling. Humans behave like and think of themselves as objects, commodities, assets, that are offered up to the highest bidder on a global commodity market. For all of those who are not hip enough to wear and buy such branded identity gadgets, the world of options is a very limited one.
3. Occupation of the Body: Embodied Fear

For *Climate Controlled Homeless Residence for Hot Climates* (Figure 61), one of my first (1989) performance artworks in the public sphere, I had a performer physically inhabit a repurposed refrigerator. The performer occupied the refrigerator as if it were his home or at least, his shelter. The performance consisted in his going about his daily business in his refrigerator-home. The performance took place close to a busy street in downtown Barcelona, Spain, an area in which many homeless people, prostitutes and other socially marginalized urban dwellers live. The ironic title of the performance highlights the precarity of life as a homeless person. The homeless are unforgivingly exposed to forces of nature and urban life and must find ways to protect the little dignity and safety that remains in their possession. The struggle for life on the street is a reality for millions of individuals worldwide—citizens who have ended up deprived of most of what supposedly makes up a civilized and dignified social existence.

* * *

I have put forward the notion of necropolitics and necropower to account for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead. (Mbembe, 2004, p. 40)
The space of death is important in the creation of meaning and consciousness, nowhere more so than in societies where torture is endemic and where the culture of terror flourishes. (Taussig, 1986 p.4)

The body is the site where the occupations of space and time intersect. The retributive and disciplining\(^1\) function of the law is asserted by the coercive threat of jail-time, which is surpassed only the threat of a death sentence. For Canetti, a command equals a death sentence in the same way that the roar of the lion usually announces imminent death.

He writes,

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\text{[b]eneath all commands glints the harshness of the death sentence. Amongst men they have become so systematized that death is normally avoided, but the threat and the fear of it is always contained in them; and the continued pronouncement and execution of real death sentences keeps alive the fear of every individual command and of commands in general. (1998, p. 304).}
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It is common in America for well armed individuals to be engaged in violent encounters that result in the use of deadly force. Indeed, Canetti’s dark statement about human nature does not appear as far-fetched as one may wish to believe. In recent years, the discourse about racial profiling (Meeks, 2000) and the use of excessive force by the police (Balko, 2014), including extra-juridical police executions of mostly black citizens, has

\(^1\) Foucault’s (1978) analyses of punitive and carceral systems, their history and the workings of power over the body are indeed the basis of any discussion about space and time.
sparked international attention and media outrage, as well as triggering a new activist movement\(^2\) under the slogan “Black Lives Matter”.

The permanent, domestic infrastructure space of prisons has been extended by the more provisional, makeshift infrastructure of camps. In terms of migration and refugee flows, both of which symbolically represent and reify globalization’s negative space, camps are rarely conceived of as permanent. They are transient by design: once the human migration flows cease, the camps are meant to be broken down. It is for this reason that camp hardware is often made from repurposed shipping containers. The modularity that makes containers so efficient for shipping commodities across the globe makes them equally useful for storing human bodies. Camps frequently morph into vast permanent cities\(^3\) (Figure 62) once it has become clear that their provisionally-housed

\(^2\) The founding impetus of #BlackLivesMatter, was the 2013 acquittal of vigilante George Zimmerman, who killed 17-year-old teenager Trayvon Martin (Lane, 2014). The teenager was walking on the street and in so doing, appeared suspicious to the self-proclaimed vigilante Zimmerman, who automatically went on the offensive. In the years that have followed, many police killings of unarmed black citizens have been documented on video and posted online, leading to mass demonstrations and violent confrontations with the police. A new media discourse is focused on the importance of video gear that is worn by law enforcement officers.

\(^3\) The worlds largest camp in Dabaab, Kenya, now is said to house close to half a million refugees from all over the Horn of Africa. Millions are on the move after drought, famine and civil war is ravishing their former homes. In places like Dabaab, despite the best intentions of NGOs, the UN, and all sort of other international and European-lead institutions, life feels like in a prison, with inhabitants prohibited to leave and under constant panoptic surveillance (Rawlence, 2016).
residents might never be able to leave. Containment and boxing in are paradigmatic when human bodies try to enter, cross or transgress geo-economic and geopolitical boundaries without proper authorization. Such people are treated like criminals, regardless of the circumstances surrounding their original exodus.

In order to exclude bodies from national territories and other security perimeters, or to box them in, as in the case of refugee camps, prisons, shanty towns or segregated townships, the law enforcement bodies themselves need to become fortified, bulletproof, and blast-resistant. In order to achieve this feat, their bodies are transformed into mobile fortresses or so-called “body-bunkers” (Körperpanzer) (Theweleit, 1989). Indeed, the Futurists4 (1909) glorified the virtues of speed and technology and revered the aesthetics of war, mechanization, and the metallization of the human body (Benjamin, 2007) so much that many of them never made it back home from the industrialized trench wars.

4 Marinetti’s (1909) “Minifesto del Futurismo” reads like delusional naïveté today, considering that many of the most talented futurist artists died in the trenches of the war they so desperately evoked: “We will sing of the great crowds agitated by work, pleasure and revolt; the multi-colored and polyphonic surf of revolutions in modern capitals: the nocturnal vibration of the arsenals and the workshops beneath their violent electric moons: the glutinous railway stations devouring smoking serpents; factories suspended from the clouds by the thread of their smoke; bridges with the leap of gymnasts flung across the diabolic cutlery of sunny rivers: adventurous steamers sniffing the horizon; great-breasted locomotives, puffing on the rails like enormous steel horses with long tubes for bridle, and the gliding flight of aeroplanes whose propeller sounds like the flapping of a flag and the applause of enthusiastic crowds.”
of the First World War. Sociologist Klaus Theweleit’s (1987) seminal dissertation, entitled *Male Fantasies*, is the study of the proto-fascist German *Freicorps*, a post-First World War militia responsible for the killing of Germany’s leading communists, Rosa Luxenburg and Karl Liebknecht. Theweleit (1987) describes the *Freicorps* in terms of a distorted masculine sexual identity, which he described as “a flight from the feminine, as fear of ego dissolution, and of warfare as the fulfillment of both a longing for fusion [with the military machine] and legitimate explosion in the moment of battle” (p. xv).

The similarities between his findings and analyses of modern day suicide bombers who, in the moment of detonation, also (seek to) merge with the bodies of their enemies, is startling. Both the fascist’s and the suicide bomber’s pathological and deeply misogynist desire for self-dissolution is considered legitimate if it occurs in battle and illegitimate if

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Theweleit’s fascist soldiers, the “soldier males”, were afraid of and hated one sort of women, which they associated with Communism. Historian Paul Robinson summarizes this psychopathology as follows, “[t]he Red woman, on the other hand, was a whore and a Communist. She was a kind of distillation of sexuality, threatening to engulf the male in a whirlpool of bodily and emotional ecstasy. This, of course, was the woman the Freikorps soldier wished to kill, because she endangered his identity, his sense of self as a fixed and bounded being. In this manner Mr. Theweleit links the Freikorps soldiers’ fantasies of women to their practical life as illegal anti-Communist guerillas: the Republic had to be destroyed because it empowered the lascivious Red woman, while it failed to protect the White woman’s sexual purity” (in Theweleit, 1987).
it happens in union with female bodily fluids. (The topic of the fascist obsession with violent death will be revisited in future chapters.)

David Harvey’s (1989) famous assertions about the postmodern condition—the “time-space compression” typical for capital’s latest transformation into “flexible accumulation”—required a transformation of the human body as well. This enables it to operate more efficiently within the parameters established by this spatiotemporal acceleration. Cederstöm and Spicer call this new bodily regime that modern, flexible bodies impose on themselves, i.e. the ideology of self-mastery and self-improvement, “the Wellness Syndrome” (2015). Self-confident, successful, hardened and healthy bodies are set off against obese, self-conscious, unhealthy bodies, which are, in fact, two sides of the same coin: the fortification of the body to shield against or better cope with the demands of accelerated capital accumulation. However, the control, containment, or perfection of the human body can only be taken that far, before a systemic bio-physical or psychological breakdown ensues.

3.1. Contained Bodies as Living Dead

As painful as it is for us to have to say this: there is but one destiny for the black man. And it is white. (Frantz Fanon, 2008 [1952], p. xiv)

Any critique of infrastructure space must begin at the mostly irrational (Easterling, 2014) dimensions and symbolisms of their defining managerial models,
which are (mis)guided by abstract values like quality norms, ISO standards, intermodality, software transactions, financial and commodity flows, i.e. the essentials of global capital flows (Easterling, 2014; Cowen, 2014; Klose, 2015). Containment, though linguistically related to containers, signifies the exact opposite of the logistical hyper-mobility of the standardized shipping container (Levinson, 2006). Immobility, particularly that of bodies, is the dark underbelly of modern life—the stigma of a life course gone wrong—for the successful modern life is synonymous with the realization of notions of mobility, exchange, efficiency, and expediency.

Currently, approximates 65 million human bodies (UN, 2016) are actively caught up in global migration flows. Many of these mobile bodies will end up contained in and in one way or another detained to very reduced spatial and temporal regimes. The camp in its many different articulations as a site for totalitarian human domination (Sofsky, 1997; Arendt, 1958), the camp has become the biopolitical paradigm of our times (Agamben, 1998). According to Agamben, the absolute power that made life in Nazi concentration camps hell-like has escaped the confines of such “spaces of exception” and become biopower, which has, in turn, been widely integrated into today’s biopolitical realities. Agamben writes that “the camp – as the pure, absolute, and impassable biopolitical space (insofar as it is founded solely on the state of exception) – will appear as the hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity, whose metamorphoses and
disguises we will have to learn to recognize” (1993, p.73). But for Mbembe (2003), this form of collective order fits more reasonably into the frameworks of necropower and necropolitics. Under the watchful gaze of necropower, the existence of individuals is made to intractably revolve around social and physical death, creating “death-worlds”. These inhabitants have been assigned the status of the “living dead” and are suspended in a kind of violent stasis, an immobility that resembles a dangling state between life and death (Mbembe, 2003). Camps are not the only such death-worlds. Prisons and urban centers like Aleppo and Homs, Syria (Sabouni, 2015), which are under a permanent state of military siege, have also been turned into spaces of death (Taussig, 1986). It is lies within human nature to seek escape from such confinements, which explains why 65 million migrants are currently on the move in search for shelter.

3.1.1. Incarceration: A Human Disappearing Act

It was a matter not of studying the theory of penal law itself, or the evolution of such and such penal institution, but of analyzing the formation of a certain “punitive rationality” […]. Instead of seeking the explanation in a general conception of the law, or in the evolving modes of industrial production […], it seemed to me far wiser to look at the workings of power. (Foucault, 1976, p. 61)

No other social space is as confining to humans as carceral space. The incarcerated body is boxed in, both in time and in space. In the U.S., the imprisoned body is also shut out from normal civil society not only by virtue of this spatial confinement but also via the legal exclusion from active democratic citizen participation.
American inmates are denied voting rights and in accordance with legally guaranteed minimum wages⁶, the right to receive fair pay for prison labor. Worst of all, in many states in the U.S., former convicts can never regain full civil rights, even as freed citizens (Cnaan, et al., 2008). According to a paper published by social policy scholars Cnaan, Draine, Frazier, and Sinha,

the rights of prisoners in the United States and their inclusion in society are undergoing a process of erosion. Prisoners and ex-prisoners are considered unworthy of full membership in society and hence their rights are curtailed. However, a society that curtails the rights of so many individuals is also a society that risks forgoing of other rights to other or all of its members. (2008)

Former inmates and convicted felons are denied social benefit such as food stamps and Medicaid, and most problematically, face harsh career limitations in both public and private job markets. Most states have strict rules regarding the enrollment of convicted felons into academic programs. Background checks for new academic hires uncover any

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⁶ Journalist Chris Hedges (2014) wrote a condemning essay on America’s prison culture. For him, the U.S. has morphed into a veritable prison state. Labor exploitation is rampant within the carceral system, with legal rights curtailed: “Prisons employ and exploit the ideal worker. Prisoners do not receive benefits or pensions. They are not paid overtime. They are forbidden to organize and strike. They must show up on time. They are not paid for sick days or granted vacations. They cannot formally complain about working conditions or safety hazards. If they are disobedient, or attempt to protest their pitiful wages, they lose their jobs and can be sent to isolation cells. The roughly 1 million prisoners who work for corporations and government industries in the American prison system are models for what the corporate state expects us all to become. And corporations have no intention of permitting prison reforms that would reduce the size of their bonded workforce. In fact, they are seeking to replicate these conditions throughout the society” (Hedges, 2014).
previous convictions, the finding of which bars candidates from further consideration.

The social stigma attached to prison time tends to foreclose any career prospects aside from low-skill level manual labor. In “The Limits of Citizenship: Rights of Prisoners and ex-Prisoners in USA”, Cnaan, Draine, Frazier, and Sinha explain that

Jobs that prisoners fulfilled during incarceration are mostly unsuitable for the market demand. Typically, prisoners can only find low-paid unskilled jobs, if they can find any job at all. As such, the chances of an ex-prisoner obtaining a job that will enable him or her to live with dignity are quite slim. These conditions tend to isolate ex-prisoners from vocation-based earnings and support the temptation for illegal cash-earning activities.” (2008)

The notion of re-socialization is therefore no part of the American penal system. Once a convict, always a convict. A felony charge equals social death in America (Mbembe, 2003), which according to Mbembe’s death-worlds, is the forerunner to physical death and the inescapable condition of all “living dead”.

The imprisoned body is also an objectified body, which is to say, much of what determines human subjectivities is systematically removed in the confines of carceral space, bringing into question the philosophical, legal and conceptual boundaries between object and subject. According to Hobbes’ social contract theory (1651), political subjects are created in the process of handing over sovereign powers by humans in their natural and violent state to an almighty ruler, who henceforth commits to protecting and disciplining them. This act of handing over individual sovereignty to a superior ‘container’ entity—the Leviathan or king—who henceforth wields the legal and
executive power over his ‘subjects’ life and death, establishes a clear social order based on hierarchy. It also establishes a mutual obligation. The subjects must obey the laws of the sovereign, and the sovereign, in exchange, must provide safety to its subjects. In the event that one side of the social contract does not deliver, violence erupts either in the form of a civil uprising or war or violent oppression of the subjects by the sovereign. The more subtle and arguably, more effective way of undermining such a social contract is by establishing categories that exclude certain groups or individuals of their ‘subject’ status by transforming them into or labelling them as objects, things, or commodities. Simply, for such ‘objects’, the rules of law under the social contract no longer apply.

Throughout human history, particularly under Europe’s violent colonial rule, the socially and culturally ‘Other’ has always been reduced to the status of object, so that the

7 The previous chapter argues that modern humans tend to freely choose to undergo such a philosophical transformation. This speaks to the auto-subversive potential of dominant discourse and falls in line with Foucault’s disciplinary model of society.

8 Taussig’s deeply disturbing narrative of terror, which he develops specifically for the purposes of tackling the unimaginable tragedy of colonial terror, murder and torture of the colonial Other, is grounded in following thoughts: “The creation of colonial reality that occurred in the New World will remain a subject of immense curiosity and study—the New World where the Indian and African irracionales became compliant to the reason of a small number of white Christians. Whatever the conclusions we draw about how that hegemony was so speedily effected, we would be unwise to overlook the role of terror. And by this I mean us to think-through-terror, which as well as being a psychological state is also a social one whose special features allow it to serve as the mediator par excellence of colonial hegemony: the space of death where the Indian, African, and white gave birth to a New World” (1986).
legal rights of citizenship could be precluded in good faith (Taussig, 1986). In this case, Agamben’s (2005) “state of exception” applies only to a select category of the entire population. Meanwhile, the remaining majority of citizens, who remain largely unaffected, enjoy a ‘normal’ state of affairs.

On the other, darker side of the legal barrier lies an “exceptional” space and legal state reserved specially for the selectively oppressed minority. In it, the violence of power that lies outside of the normal social frame (Goffman, 1974) can stage itself, uninhibited and unforgiving. The most readily visible and talked about U.S. example is inner city life in its urban centers, where military–style police forces go on raids to detain offenders for petty crimes and simple illicit possession charges. Here, the 400-year legacy of slavery resonates loudly and unmistakably. Much more than its foreign reach, America’s many decades long War on Drugs (WOD) has had a catastrophic effect on the state of things on home. Journalist Radley Balko (2014) writes,

[i]n terms of actual policy, Bush and Bennett proposed huge increases in funding to build new prisons. Their plan proposed three times more funding for law enforcement than for treatment [of drug addiction], and shifted much of the enforcement emphasis from smugglers and dealers to casual users. (2014, p. 167)

William Bennett became Bush’s “drug tsar”, by heading the Office of National Drug Control Policy with a moral imperative that saw drug use as wrong, despite his very own substance abuse indulgences. Drug users were considered to be bad people who needed to removed forcefully from the rest of the society of “good people” (Balko, 2014,
What’s more, in public schools, children were coerced by police officers to turn in school mates for possessing small amounts of drugs in just the same way they were encouraged to turn in their own parents. This led to a massive increase in parental jail-time on possession charges and a sharp increase in drug-related delinquency charges for their confused, angry, guilt-ridden and parentless children. From an economic perspective, the increasingly privately run prison-industrial complex makes perfect sense as law enforcement agencies and the juridical apparatus behind it were incentivized to match their arrest and conviction quotas to the newly built prisons infrastructure. Available prison beds had to be filled fast in order to generate profits.

Without doubt, one of the more shameful and controversial instances of the occupation of bodies in the U.S. is via its penal system. The American prison system is as ambitious as it is hypocritical. It affects society in highly visible ways simply by the

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9 Hedges (2014) lists some of the astonishing numbers behind the U.S. prison industries: “Our prison-industrial complex, which holds 2.3 million prisoners, or 25 percent of the world’s prison population, makes money by keeping prisons full. It demands bodies, regardless of color, gender or ethnicity. As the system drains the pool of black bodies, it has begun to incarcerate others. Women—the fastest-growing segment of the prison population—are swelling prisons, as are poor whites in general, Hispanics and immigrants. Prisons are no longer a black-white issue. Prisons are a grotesque manifestation of corporate capitalism. Slavery is legal in prisons under the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. It reads: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States. …” And the massive U.S. prison industry functions like the forced labor camps that have existed in all totalitarian states.”
ubiquitous presence and in invisible ways by casting convicted felons into a marginalized social existence that has unfathomable long-term consequences for the entire society. For inmates, prison time is both a disappearing act into an obscure abode of uncertainty\textsuperscript{10}—a parallel world within but shut away from regular civil society—and the fullest and most unapologetic manifestation of Foucault’s society of discipline. It also is in accordance with Durkheim’s (1984) concept of retributive mechanical law that bodies are swallowed up in droves by the fenced in, high-security perimeters of innumerable carceral institutions across the nation. As bodies disappear for lengthy periods, outside of the secured perimeters, inmates’ families suffer the dire consequences of being deprived of the incarcerated body of a vital family member, forming a complex cause-and-effect network that was typical of the industrial and pre-industrial era worker and/or immigrant, again, though inverted, for reasons of capital—two sides of the same bioeconomics coin.

The extent of America’s prison infrastructure is made explicit in a data representation artwork by Josh Begley. In 2012, the New York-based ‘data-artist’ created a web-based art project entitled, \textit{Prison Map} as an attempt to visualize the geography of

\textsuperscript{10} Jeremy Bentham (1995) called his original blueprint for the panopticon “House of Certainty” or “Inspection House” to express the total control regime within.
incarceration in the U.S. (Figure 63). For the work, Begley developed a piece of software code that automatically culled a publically accessible database of prison geolocations that lists the latitudes and longitudes of all known prisons in the country. The artist used the open-source Google Maps API to automatically zoom into each of the 4,916 facilities and then take a screen capture of the site. The result is an astonishingly long webpage with thousands of small image tiles, each depicting a satellite image of a single carceral infrastructure. Begley knows that despite the sheer volume of his image database, it still falls short of sufficiently, precisely communicating or representing the experiences of the four to six thousand inmates who are locked up inside the secured walls of these structures at any given time.

Begley’s work does provide a glimpse into the fact that carceral infrastructure in America has also irreversibly and profoundly transformed the socio-cultural, rural, suburban, and urban landscape. Whilst conceiving his famous social study, “Discipline and Punish” (1978), Foucault borrowed Jeremy Bentham’s idea of the *panopticon* (1995) as the architectural order of power within carceral space. Many scholars refer to the

\[\text{\textsuperscript{11}}\] Today, Google Inc. has inverted the concept of the panoptic, god-like gaze by using and making publically available military satellites for their mapping services. As Begley’s project has shown citizens can, at least in theory, use such panoptic apparatuses to check and balance ruling power, as a suggestive if not explicitly coercive weapon.
U.S. carceral system as a standalone economic sector (Hedges, 2012; Balko, 2014; Davis, 2012), the so-called prison-industrial complex. Journalist-activist Chris Hedges (2014) even calls the U.S. “The Prison State of America” in which a system designed to provide law and order has become a veritable money making machine and an apparatus for exerting total control over certain categorized segments of the population. Ironically, perhaps, President Eisenhower found the tightly woven relationship between the U.S. heavy industry and the Pentagon to be extremely dangerous because of the inflated socioeconomic and geopolitical influence these institutions have on the world. The notion of a “prison-industrial complex” is drawn directly from the ominous warning he issued in his presidential farewell address in 1961, which is remembered largely for introducing the “military-industrial complex” trope. He prophetically yet fruitlessly warned America of the “conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry”, leading to “[t]he total influence – economic, political, even spiritual” that “is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government”. Today, his hypocritical anguish about unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, reads more like a confession of guilt—a desire to come clean if you will—considering that he was a major force in arranging the happy and enduring marriage between Corporate America and the Pentagon. Like for President Truman (Hogan, 1998) before him, the aftermath of the Second World War was a lost opportunity to
demilitarize America. The heavy industries that had been reconfigured to supply the military with badly needed weaponry to defeat the Axis Powers during the war could have simply been return to its civilian business. Instead, Eisenhower’s Cold War policy choices were governed by the fear of expansionist communism and the collective nightmare scenario of falling behind in the scientific-technological competition with the Soviet Union. America’s vague but pervasive fear was epitomized by a spiraling nuclear arms race and its threat of total global annihilation. We know today that the bottomless pit that military spending became on both sides of the Cold War front ultimately ruined the Soviet economy, which ultimately led to Gorbachev’s reform attempts with Glasnost (“openness”) and Perestroika (“restructuring”) policies and involuntarily to the final collapse of the Soviet Union. America won the economic system battle and in so doing, became the last man standing. Now the undisputed sole superpower and victor, the U.S. has since had the world as canvas for its socio-economic and political program to run its course. President Eisenhower’s (1961) ominous warning about the power and influence of the “military-industrial complex”. He found the tightly woven relationship between US heavy industry and the Pentagon to be highly dangerous due to the inflated socioeconomic and geopolitical influence these institutions have on the world.

The conceptual similarity between the “military-industrial complex” and the “prison-industrial complex” highlights one of the most troublesome aspects of modern
U.S. society: the legal system has largely become a for-profit enterprise (Sandel, 2012). As a social institution embedded within an organic society (Durkheim, 1984), law in America is no longer coterminous with correctional or re-socialization efforts typical of a restitutive social model. Neither does America conform to Durkeim’s mechanical society, in which a retributive ideology prevails. America is a unique society in which total bioeconomic exploitation of society is welcome and encouraged on all spatial and temporal horizons, including the various death-worlds it supports.

3.1.2. Camps as Death-Worlds

The in-depth documentary, *Broken Men in Paradise* (Cohen, 2016) features the so-called Offshore Processing Center on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea (*Figure 64*), one of the worst examples of abusive death-worlds created in the extensive network of global refugee camps. Finally giving into a wave of populist outrage, Australia’s politicians have modified their already restrictive asylum and refugee policies into an exercise in absolute power. The death-worlds created by Nazi concentration camp administrators (Arendt, 1963; Sofsky, 1993) and guards put into practice a highly structured system of destruction of bodies, biographical identities, and ultimately human life itself. Similarly, Australia is now enacting the order of absolute terror on its limited numbers of refugees, in a literal approximation to Nazi concentration camp
death-worldliness. Cohen (2016) describes the situation in Australia’s Manus Island refugee camp in Papua New Guinea as follows:

The world’s refugee crisis, with its 65 million people on the move, more than at any time since 1945, knows no more sustained, sinister or surreal exercise in cruelty than the South Pacific quasi-prisons Australia has established for its trickle of the migrant flood. […] The toll among Burmese, Sudanese, Somali, Lebanese, Pakistani, Iraqi, Afghan, Syrian, Iranian and other migrants is devastating: self-immolation, overdoses, death from septicemia as a result of medical negligence, sexual abuse and rampant despair. A recent United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report by three medical experts found that 88 percent of the 181 asylum seekers and refugees examined on Manus were suffering from depressive disorders, including, in some cases, psychosis. […] They are the walking dead, suspended in a dreamland, staring out at shimmering islets.

Appadurai (2006) concept of the “fear of small numbers” appears to be haunting Australia’s people in the same way it is haunting the peoples of Fortress Europe (Carr, 2016; Bangstad, 2014), but with the significant difference that the Manus compound has devolved into a veritable humanitarian nightmare and death-world. Cohen (2016) describes the despair of the inhabitants at Manus in similar terms to those invoked by sociologist Wolfgang Sofsky (1997) to describe the inmates at the Auschwitz death factory. The creation of a walking dead-like figure in Manus perfectly matches Holocaust survivors’ descriptions of the so-called “Muselmänner” (Agamben, 1999; Sofsky, 1997), inmates who had spiritually given up on life but were biologically still alive. These figures were shunned within the strictly enforced hierarchies of Germany’s
death camps. And other inmates saw their last hope of survival evaporate when visually confronted with the desolation of the “Muselman”.

Sofsky’s (1997) detailed exploration of the order of absolute terror in concentration camps is also a plea to humanity never to allow anything like it exist again:

The destruction of sociality entails the negation of the human relation to the self. In the concentration camp, the social process of individuation is reversed. The admission ritual robs the person of his or her biographical identity. The regime of violence and misery obliterates individual space, ravages the sense of time and casts the human being into a permanent condition of dying. Organized terror reduces social life, the foundation of any human selfhood, below the animal minimum. It does not suffice with obedience and subjugation, but strikes people in their entirety, their social, mental and physical existences. It seizes hold of bodies—not to turn gesture and movement into a blind automatism, but gradually to extinguish all manifestations of life. Absolute power sunders the physical unity of the person, devastates spirit and soul. Destroys the ability to act, drains all vitality. Prior to industrialized mass murder, it carries out a transmutation of human nature. The transformation of human beings into materiel and the fabrication of the Muselmänner are its greatest triumphs. In sharp contrast with all earlier forms of power, absolute terror creates nothing. Its work is totally negative, a project of obliteration without a trace. It realizes its freedom in the complete and total annihilation of the human being. (p. 281)

As awful as the conditions at Australia’s Manus Island Offshore Processing Center are, the argument that Australia’s harsh asylum laws have effectively deterred an uncontrollably large influx, like that into the Mediterranean, of refugee seekers—desperate and dying ‘boat people’—makes a valid point but is not a moral justification. German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s open door policy, which allow over one million refugees to enter the country in 2015 alone, has been harshly criticized by a great many
more than members of the country’s fast growing extreme right-wing political base. In a recent talk in Duke University’s Immigration Speaker Series, Berlin-based journalist Moritz Schuller (2016) argued that Merkel made the fatal flaw of transforming the European Union and with it, Germany’s immigration discourse into a personal German matter. The historic legacy of Nazi terror and moral debt (Schuld) has cast its dark shadow through time and space and reach the highest ranks of present-day Europolitics. Merkel ignored European Union anti-immigrant sentiment by “drawing in others” into her “cynical invitation” (Schuller, 2016), thereby putting the union itself at stake. Schuller went on to claim that it was Merkel’s move to make it a “personal, German moral identity question, rather than a European Union political question” (2016) that may well have caused Britain’s exit—“Brexit”—from the EU. For him and many other insiders, Europe’s policies should be framed as a collective decision process in order to avoid allowing the immigration discourse to destroy the little sense of union that still exists amidst Europe’s growing divide.

Germany’s and indeed, Europe’s navel gazing (Schuller, 2016) political struggles with immigration policies combined with a strong anti-foreigner sentiment is by no means a new phenomenon. Not only did politicians appropriate the refugee crisis for their narcissistic (Shuller, 2016) ambitions, but many celebrity actors and artist also flocked to the Mediterranean shores, allegedly to be closer to the stranded dead bodies.
of drowned ‘boat people’. Hollywood celebrity activist Susan Sarandon even ran a video diary of her efforts to provide clean drinking water to refugees waiting in long lines in front of makeshift offices that were opened to expedite the process of their asylum requests. The most narcissistic example however was staged by celebrity activist artist and art-world lauded political dissident, Ai WeiWei. He opened shop on the refugee landing island Lesbos, Greece. Between jet-setting to and from his many other global activist art operations, he impersonated the dead body of a small refugee boy, who had been washed onto the beach at Lesbos (Figure 65). The pose was meant as an outcry for compassion (Tan, 2016), but instead, it solidified WeiWei’s status as the art world’s most celebrated poser, who can never shy back from a useful photo-op, whether next to Paris Hilton or the Pussy Riot beauties. In Lesbos, WeiWei posed as an iconic image, that of a drowned infant, because his material is iconography, which he emulates, allegedly defacing it, but in fact merely exploiting it to increase his own, navel gazing art world personae.

In the case of the EU, however, it can be argued that a still festering hostility towards the former colonial subjects of its member nations who have resettled in the metropolises of the Empire is an ontological problem for all of Europe. Subjects from France’s North African colonies who have decided to come and live in the national territory are by and large shut out from social opportunity and pushed into the banlieue,
which lie scattered around the beltways of France’s major urban centers, where blight and violence rule. Similar assessments can be made for Great Britain, Spain, Portugal and to a lesser degree Greece. Historically, those continental countries without large sea-front ports—Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary—have simply had a far smaller influx from their former colonies. Not surprisingly, these continental nations engaged in genocidal acts to maintain a population of largely homogeneous ethnical “stock” (Arendt, 1958; Zimmerer & Zeller, 2008). In cases where such projects were overruled by larger ideological projects, like communism, for instance, as in the case of the former Yugoslavia, the genocidal impetus were reactivated as soon as ideological frameworks were removed. The atrocious Balkan civil war with its ethnical and religious cleansing campaigns was a violent reminder of the many lose ends that still linger in Europe’s very own heart of darkness (Conrad, 2014).

In Austria, controversial theater director, Christoph Schlingensief (2000) staged a spectacular public performance artwork in Vienna’s downtown cultural heart, next its world famous Opera House (Figure 66). The work had several highly provocative titles, each in its own way a circumscription of the Schlingensief’s political and artistic intentions. The official title as listed on cultural program flyers was “Foreigners out! Schlingensief’s Container” (Ausländer raus! Schlingensiefs Container); other titles included "Wien-Aktion", "Please Love Austria—First European Coalition Week", or "Foreigners
Out—Artists against Human Rights” (Der Spiegel, 2015). The artwork’s infrastructure consisted in several standardized shipping containers stacked on top of and next to each other, mimicking a typical Austrian or German asylum seeker and refugee camp. The top platform created by the stack of containers was used as a makeshift stage on which further theatrical performances, e.g. morning exercises by the inhabitants of the containers and concerts, were publicly performed. The entire structure was designed to house 12 real-life asylum seekers with their successful acceptance into Austrian society at stake. Schlingensief’s concept followed the hugely popular MTV show “Big Brother’, a reality TV show in which the lives of participants were live-streamed on TV, 24 hours a day, at the end of which the spectating public made a daily “vote” on which of the participants would have to leave the show and which could stay. In Schlingensief’s hybrid live-performance and TV show, the public had the option of “expulsing” certain asylum seekers, via a designated website, both from the show and from Austria altogether. Each potential citizenship “candidate” was identified with a mugshot and a concentration camp-like ID number (Figure 67). Candidate who were voted ‘out’ were foreclosed from further pursuing their asylum application in Austria. The entire performance was laid out as a vast overidentification scheme.

The majority of audience members—both those personally present and those tuning in remotely on TV or the Internet—believed that Schlingensief was a fascist,
racist, xenophobe who was playing a terribly cynical game with the livelihoods of asylum seekers. Some spectators even shouted insults like *Künstler!* (artist!) at him. What these audience members did not realize was that election cycle political posters with utterly xenophobic political slogans directed towards the electorate’s racial and ethnic fears were hung up all around them. At the time, right-wing populist and leader of the Austrian nationalist party FPÖ, Jörg Haider was the front runner for Austria’s highest political office. In response to his political platform, the European Union had already imposed a “soft” boycott on Austria for its radically xenophobic stance and policies.

Schlingensief dug deep into the discourse of the hatred and fear among Austria’s mainstream electorate to come up with his elaborate participant-observation performance artwork, which made the piece extremely controversial. The many uncomfortable questions it posed resounded loudly through all of Europe. Schlingensief had a radical answer to these questions and put in doubt the utility and effectiveness of art to change society. He posited that if art really had an effect on people, then biking alongside a painting would instantly make the world a better place. And given that this

12 The placards Schlingensief attached to the container walls gave offensive instructions for the public, e.g. Vote for your foreigner! Dial his number! Throw him out of this country! Every day, two of them are expelled!
doesn’t ever happen, he used the full-confrontation approach typical of his body of work as theater director. As a theater man, he opted to use the theatrical frame (mentioned previously in this study) to establish a world of make-believe that would hurt and insult people’s sensibilities to the core. Even die-hard xenophobes who came to see his artwork in downtown Vienna felt insulted and outraged by it. Did his piece change the hearts and minds of Austrians and make them more tolerant? Today, 16 years after his groundbreaking asylum seeker “Big Brother” TV show, Austria is again at the forefront of radical xenophobia in Europe. Art, it would seem failed to change the hearts and minds of people.

3.1.3. The Passport: Biometric Data Bodies and Limited Access

As to the truth about the present nature of power, every European has a printed exemplar of it in their pocket. It can be stated in this way: *power now resides in the infrastructures of this world*. Contemporary power is of an architectural and impersonal, and not a representative or personal, nature. (The Invisible Committee, 2014, p. 28)

Schlingensief’s artwork also epitomizes what has become the most fundamental concern for any migrating body: the question of nationality—and the documented proof thereof. Official national affiliation has become more an issue of overcoming the legal and physical boundaries of limited access than of any idealistic notion of national identity or imagined community, concepts that were originally bound to the idea of an enclosed national territory. Schlingensief’s choice to identify his “candidates” with a
unique ID number and mugshots clearly makes a reference to the alpha numerical categorization of human bodies within “free” society’s biometric identification and documentation and even more within in prisons and concentrations camps, where biographical identity is systematically erased.

The anonymous anarchist collective, The Invisible Committee (2014), raises a crucial question about the specificities of governing power structures under neoliberal capital: can a passport be considered a form of infrastructure? The answer is a resounding yes, according to the Invisible Committee. A passport is much more than a physical document; it is the symbolic representation of membership and unlimited access to the resources and protection of a sovereign nation-state. John Torpey (2000) argues that “identification documents such as passports have played a crucial role in modern states’ efforts to generate and sustain their ‘embrace’ of individuals and to use this embrace to expropriate the legitimate ‘means of movement’” (p. 158). Following this logic, passports symbolize borders, Weber’s (1992) iron cage, walls that control the flow of bodies. Also like money, passports comes in various media formats: the secure and
un-falsifiable printed version of the passport\textsuperscript{13} can be carried along by traveling citizen much like carrying cash or plastic money. In case of document loss\textsuperscript{14}, the passport can be replaced after a routine identity verification process\textsuperscript{15}. The passport is a legally binding hard-copy document, the physical embodiment of an electronic data archive that is securely stored in the data storage facilities of a nation’s administrative body. However, it is not its media specificity that assigns value to a passport or to money, for that matter. It is the legal framework that both symbolically represent. A passport does not guarantee biographical identity however; it only extends the affordances of a legal framework.

Alfredo Jaar’s One Million Finnish Passport (Figure 9), which was discussed earlier, brilliantly visualizes the infrastructure properties of passports. In his work, the

\textsuperscript{13} All American and European Union passports feature a biometric chip on which all fingerprints, facial features and many other types of biometric identifiers are stored for rapid access at designated security checkpoints.

\textsuperscript{14} Obviously, when cash is lost, its represented value is also lost. Not so the electronic version of money. Money on the bank account is a series of data points on a banks data storage servers. Such data points are frequently backed up and highly unlikely to be lost, unless of total bank failure (i.e. the 2008 Financial Crisis) and bankruptcy.

\textsuperscript{15} A standard tactic for asylum seekers is to dump their identification documents once they have reached their destination country. By doing so, they acquire the status of state-less-ness, which has to be rectified by the administration processing the refugee’s application. This will automatically slow down the entire bureaucratic machine, which gives the refugee a moment of respite before dealing with his/her most likely expulsion.
stacks of fake Finnish passports resemble an architectural structure that can be read as bulwark, fortification, border wall or as a material resource for a production process to follow. The enclosed social factory of the nation-state requires human resources to produce and human bodies to consume its products. And in experiencing Jaar’s work, there is a moment when the audience realizes that the pile of passports represents one million instances of denied citizenship or denied access to the country’s national territory. At this moment the artwork begins to resemble a minimalist mausoleum or tomb—a mass grave, of sorts. Each denied citizenship becomes one instance of potentially deadly peril experienced by the individual who was denied access. The pile of fake passports thus points a critical finger at passport-issuing bureaucracies, which are essentially death-dealing factories and the builders of death-worlds. The bureaucratic indifference (Herzfeld, 1992) to the biographical identity of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants is an anonymously dealt death sentence handed out to individuals who have been reduced to and are treated like anonymous numeric values instead of living, feeling human beings, worthy of the most basic of universal human rights: food, shelter, and a voice that can speak and should be heard.
3.2. **Body Bunkers: Fortified Bodies**

All infrastructure of enclosure and limited access signifies an active process of boxing in and shutting out—again, two sides of the same coin. The currently revitalized desire of citizens to affirm their national identify can therefore be interpreted as an attempt to resist the torrent of anti-nation-state socioeconomic and geopolitical transformations, which are the hallmark of a neoliberal world-economic system. Despite today’s human migration statistics, which indicate an unprecedented number of mobile bodies, the need for attachment to *place* rather than *space* still prevails as a fundamental individual and collective human need. Remembering the case of the hyper-mobile Indian IT workers (Biao, 2007) suggests that social groupings still mostly coalesce around ethnic, racial, gender, or religious categories, despite (mostly frustrated) notions of multiculturalism, diversity tolerance, and the iconic concept of the cultural melting pots that are the global metropolises. Space has again become something that is shielded from unlimited access by an unwelcome Other. Nowadays, all variety of fortification—of private versus public enclosures—is the rage.

Human bodies too are becoming increasingly fortified, boxed in, and shielded off from perceived life-threatening biological, virtual, or ideological intrusions. The concept of impurity and contagion (Douglas, 1966; Bataille, 1986; Appadurai, 2006) by a foreign bio-organism or culture—the ethnic, racial, or gendered Other—is also rooted in
Europe’s colonial and fascist past. Indeed, no other instance speaks more frighteningly to the idea of occupation of bodies than that of an infection through microorganism, parasites or other disease bringing and health threatening agents. Of course, the biological and abstract threats of contagion and contamination have accompanied human culture from its inception. But today’s humans have created a new, meta-infection scenario of sorts—the infection and hacking of our data bodies through computer viruses, worms, and Trojans.

Literature has a long tradition of exploring tropes of infection, contagion, and contamination, particularly within the science fiction/horror genres. Most stories are allegories for real threats typical for the given era. Novels from the early and mid 1950s, for instance, were clearly influenced by the looming threat of nuclear annihilation. Richard Matheson’s (1954) horror novel, I am Legend, and John Wyndham’s (1951) science fiction work, The Day of the Triffids, are just two examples of fiction that envision a future in which the human species is violently displaced by a nimbler, more competitive, and well-adapted successor species. Both novels are direct antecedents of and inspiration for the modern zombie genre, which will be discussed in the last chapter. The symbolisms of this genre are far-reaching and speak to the archetypical fear of individual, and collective dissolution, corruption and disintegration.
3.2.1. The Chain of Command: Military and Police

Theweleit’s proto-fascist German militia, the Freikorps, whose military-national ego was mortally wounded by the Versailles treaty\(^{16}\), sought to harden its identity and actual members’ bodies in order to avert the much dreaded, illegitimate “dissolution” and “fragmentation” (1987, p. xxi) of the self (Zerfliessungsängste). The theories of “self-other differentiation”, developed by physician and psychiatrist Margaret Mahler, provided Theweleit\(^{17}\) with a framework for explaining why these male fascist bodies were unable “to distinguish self from other, the inability to feel the integrity of the self and sustain a sense of bodily boundaries without inflicting violence” (1987, p. xxi).

Within this desire to establish some sort of tangible boundary\(^{18}\), the fascist body required the “symbolic construction of the other as a mechanism of self-cohesion (1987, p. xxii).”

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\(^{16}\) The invented myth of the so-called Dolchstosslegende (the legend of the stab in the back), was a populist attempt at diverging responsibility for the First World War defeat and the reparation payments imposed by the victors as punishment for Germany’s guilt.

\(^{17}\) Mahler is of course not the only inspirational source for Theweleit. Wilhelm Reich’s (1970) analyses of fascism in terms of Freud’s psychoanalyses and sexuality is also crucial. Focus in all sources are the Freudian notion of an idealized paternal figure, embodied in the Führer. Much of Freudian psychology however has been dismantled by thinkers such as Deleuze and Guattari (1998) who seek to break away from Freud’s obsession with the familial triangle.

\(^{18}\) Sexually transmitted diseases were part of males’ “dissolution” fear: “‘Syphilis’ is one name only for the dissolution to which man falls prey if he comes into contact with external incarnation of his devouring, dead unconscious” (Theweleit, 1989, p. 16). The scapegoating of the female or the Other as responsible for this disease is clear.
The question for this study is whether Theweleit’s findings can be transposed onto the increasingly militarized bodies of regular police forces in the U.S. and beyond. If so, his findings should be taken as a warning about the new wave of fascism that is creeping into civil society, potentially undermining civil liberties and potentially, world peace.

Paramilitary bodies are armored bodies, which Theweleit calls “body bunkers” or “body tanks” (Körperpanzer), boxing in, as he would have it, the uncontrollable and free flowing emotions of the fascist consciousness. On the one side stands the armor-plated high-tech body of the militarized police officer, who has been rendered anonymous by his Kevlar composite gear. His anonymity is extended by mobile network technologies—the infamous earpiece connection to the cybernetic command, control and communication headquarters that sends its commands remotely. The modern militarized body is a multitudinous, networked body and as such faces off with the individual, naked, vulnerable body of the protester. The dialectic of violent oppression is literally and figuratively represented by the uneven display of force in the clash with protesters, an iconic example of which is the image (Figure 68) of a female

19 Photo and video documents available through simple web searches produce a host of imaged in which such police officers cover their identification numbers on their uniforms; also, they frequently wear facial masks and baksalas, that makes clear identification impossible. Their identity thus has been, purposely ‘dissolve’, to use Theweleit’s idiom of fascist symbolism.
protester being assaulted by riot gear-clad police officers in Baton Rouge, Florida, after police killed two unarmed black men, Philando Castile and Alton Sterling (Berlinger, 2016). In Germany, protesters are legally banned from wearing masks so as to become anonymous20, whereas the oppressive military body is legally permitted to remain anonymous. This creates a startlingly uneven field of encounter in democratic societies. The legal enactment of political dissent and democratic deliberation in the public sphere is juxtaposed and indeed weakened by the pronounced imbalance of force and legal protection between the clashing sides. The result of this imbalance is normally a host of forcefully detained and ultimately, incarcerated bodies, who are then pushed into the legal and criminal system. These bodies have been singled out as offenders—as perpetrators of crimes such as disrupting public order, destroying public property or the resisting detention, etc. These charges are noted on their criminal record and unavoidably impact the rest of their lives, creating an infrastructural deterrent to supposedly democratically championed peaceful protest. The militarized body however, rendered anonymous, enjoys legal impunity. First, even if they commit some type of crime, such as gravely injuring or killing unarmed and peaceful protester, they cannot

20 The well known image of Guy Fawkes masks toting protesters, ‘Anons’ or otherwise, therefore have little legal base to justify the use of identity camouflaging.
be identified with certainty, which renders them untouchables before the law. Second, operating within the legal chain of command and in their role as civil servants, they are automatically above the law, at least in practice if not by legal theory.

In his book, *The Rise of the Warrior Cop*, journalist Radley Balko (2014) warns America about the failed policies that have allowed and promulgated the militarization of its police force, whose clear mission it supposed to be to protect, not to murder its citizens. Balko inveighs against a police force that is disconnected from the communities it serves and that is staffed by antagonistic and aggressive individuals who see their community of fellow police officers as warriors in a civil war against the domestic enemy, embodied by regular citizens. He writes, “[p]erhaps most distressing of all, not only does the military continue to provide surplus weapons to domestic police agencies, but thanks to the Department of Homeland Security grants, military contractors are now shifting to market resources toward police agencies” (Balko, 2014, p. 336). The conversion of such grants into the research and development of battle-grade gear to be used in the domestic public sphere against citizens rather than against Islamic warriors in the far away GWOT sites, for instance, illustrates how U.S. warfare abroad has been redirected towards its own citizens and how it has made domestic security and law enforcement practices to resemble counter-insurgency warfare.
The 2016 execution without trial of a murder suspect in Dallas\(^{21}\) — a remote controlled, police-owned, bomb disposal robot delivered an explosive charge to the feet of the suspect, killing him instantly (Peterson, 2016) — most certainly represents the crossing of a legal threshold. This case opens up an entirely new terrain of legal ambiguities. At what point is the legal right of police officers to have a safe work place reasonably put in jeopardy by observing the legal right of suspects (even die-hard criminals) to receive a fair trial? Even some members of the (in)famously unified police force were surprised by the police chief’s decision to remotely blow up the suspect with a military robot. For journalists Henry Fountain and Michael S. Schmidt, “the decision to deliver a bomb by robot stunned some current and former law enforcement officials, who said they believed the new tactic blurred the line between policing and warfare” (Fountain & Schmidt, 2016). The first important legal and practical steps towards civil breakdown in America have already been taken. Citizens simply have not come to terms

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\(^{21}\) There is one legal precedent, but it did not involve and autonomous robot, but rather a police officer staffed helicopter, which dropped a bomb on a Philadelphia building where Move activists were contained. It was truly dark chapter in the history of Philadelphia when its city officials decided to wipe out the small black liberation group named MOVE: “Years of demonstrations, clashes, and arrests had finally culminated in a mass eviction order and an hours-long shootout. When the shooting ended in a stalemate, the city made the unthinkable decision to drop a bomb on the MOVE row house. It ignited a raging fire. Michael and one other MOVE member escaped, but 11 others were killed, and 61 homes burned down—a working-class black neighborhood turned to ash” (Bazelon, 2013).
with the idea that their own government is actually waging war against its own people.

As it turns out, this is by no means the first time such a gross breech of the legal code has occurred in America. The WOD, the war on poverty, the GWOT are only the 20th and 21st century incarnations of an ongoing civil war in this country against its various minorities22. Black communities and other ‘unfavored’ minority populations would most certainly corroborate, particularly now that more of the systematic atrocities committed by police forces in Ferguson, Missouri, or Chicago Illinois are being viewed on a national (and indeed, international) level.

According to Foucault’s concept of the disciplinary society (1978), the human body is the main target of power via a discourse of classificatory and scientific procedures, among others. The command (Canetti, 1998) to obey, to follow orders, to be docile and subservient was the foundational basis not only of industrial capitalism but for the organization of civil society after the era of absolute monarchy came to an end

22 Another shameful instance was of course the internment of Japanese Americans after the 1941 Pearl Harbor attacks. Going back in time only a bit further can be found America’s 1861-1865 and officially recognized history book Civil War, this time in capital letters. The Revolutionary War was also a civil war as it was among British colonial settlers and the British Empire. The cruel British Prison ships in which revolutionary colonial settlers were interned and starved to death, killed by far more people than the actual military battles. Fort Greene in Brooklyn houses an excellent Museum, the Prison Ship Martyr Monument, that commemorates the forgotten victims of British Prison ships. See more: https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/fort-greene-park/monuments/1222.
after the French Revolution of 1789. The problem with societies that are based on a
hierarchical chain of command structures is their fascist, even totalitarian tendencies.
Canetti writes:

[b]eneath all commands glints the harshness of the death sentence. Amongst men
they have become so systematized that death is normally avoided, but the threat
and the fear of it is always contained in them; and the continued pronouncement
and execution of real death sentences keeps alive the fear of every individual
command and of commands in general. (p. 304)

The command “Freeze!”, uttered by a U.S. police officer, easily becomes a death
sentence without trial for any person who choses to run instead of following the
command. And regardless of compliance, death remains the most likely outcome if the
person happens to be black. In 2015, after being stopped for having a broken tail light,
the unarmed Walter Scott was shot in the back multiple times for disregarding a
command by police officer, Michael Slager, who then proceeded to cover up his own
crime—murder—by placing incriminating and false evidence on the dying body of his
victim, instead of providing first aid measures (Merman, 2016). The court case that
followed ended in a mistrial.

British artist, Jeremy Deller was profoundly impressed as a young child by TV
images of the incredible violence that erupted 1984 in Orgreave, South Yorkshire, during
a labor dispute between striking coal miners and the police force. He remembers that the
row looked to him like a war scene, not a mere labor strike. And indeed, it was the most
violent industrial labor riot in all of British industrial history. As an adult, a public art
commission allowed Deller to re-enact this important event and his own personal
encounter with violent labor struggles. The project, *The Battle of Orgreave*, involved many
of the original striking coal miners, who were able to tap into their living memory of the
events, and re-enacted the battle against the police officers (all of whom were played by
actors) (*Figure 69*). Deller writes, “I’ve always described it as a digging up of a corpse
and giving it a proper post-mortem, or as a thousand-person crime re-enactment” (2012,
p. 98). For the purposes of this study, the most notable aspect of this work the dramatic
change in the attire of the riot police of of the mid-1980s and the militarized riot police of
today. The fact that modern Kevlar-clad riot police carry military-grade automatic
assault rifles instead of simple plastic shields and police batons is fantastically telling, as
Theweleit frames it. “The more absolutely the body armor is mechanized, the more its
product becomes not the multiplicity of reality but an expression of being, and display,
rather than machinery as means of production” (1987, p.202). This is to say, the
militarized bodies of law enforcement have become an ontological part and collective
representation of Western democratic societies. In other words, the democratic society’s
symbolic white dove has been surreptitiously exchanged for a fascist mechanized body
bunker.

I (2014) critically inspect the normalization of militarized police bodies over the
span of the past 30 years with a silkscreen-on-canvas print entitled, *Blockbusters* (*Figure*
The print shows a colorful matrix of riot gear-clad, anonymous figures forming a sort of wire mesh grid or fence. Despite its pleasing and cheerful primary colors, the matrix represents an impenetrable barrier which speaks to the attempts at embellishment made by power that are designed to distract from the actual danger to democratic process posed by the violent infrastructure of a militarized, civil war-like public sphere. Many modern protest movements, including the anti-globalization, or anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-apartheid, and #Blacklivesmatter movements have been violently suppressed by such increasingly militarized police bodies. The image of the militarized body as ontological and collective representation of post-industrial nations and capitalism itself, the significance of which can be summarized thus: for all who disagree with the policies of neoliberal capital and chose to articulate their grievances in the public sphere, a violent infrastructure of capital awaits you. The militarized police officer is the embodiment of this statement.

Many of Santiago Sierra’s performance works are based on commands and hierarchical command structures, which he legitimizes by occupying the role of exploitative capitalist entrepreneur. He pays his volunteering participants\(^\text{23}\) a wage, the

\(^{23}\) Much of the critique of Sierra’s work is grounded in the fact that he regularly chooses the socially disenfranchised to become his ‘hired helpers’: drug addicts, prostitutes, war veterans.
more paltry the better, for engaging in humiliating work ‘acts’. His conceptual artworks
enact rather that represent the vileness of labor exploitation. Sierra seeks to expose
blatant labor exploitation for what he believes it truly boils down to: the oppressive
chain of command structures that are window-dressed as remunerated occupation.
Indeed, during the performances, in fulfilment of the terms of the original monetary
transaction the worker’s body is kept occupied for an extended period of time24 (Figure
71). However, since the work that Sierra commands his hired workers to perform serves
no real purpose outside of its critical symbolism, it can be argued that Sierra is staging a
sort of counter-occupation and interruption of flows. Sierra’s overidentification25 with
capital’s moral and ethical deficiencies in the white box context of globally renowned art
galleries speaks directly to the cultural capital establishment as if to hold up a mirror

24 Other examples of Sierra’s work include groups of men who have to shift, Sisyphus-like, an
extraordinarily heavy block of stone from one corner of a white box gallery to the next; another is
a group of men being asked to shoulder a huge and heavy log of wood for extended periods of
time; other works are even more denigrating: hired individuals are walled in with only a tiny
breathing whole left open, through which audiences can look and observe the boxed in body;
Sierra has the hired individuals’ backs be tattooed for money; at the Venice Biennial, he asked 200
North African street salesmen to die their hair blond to fit in with the Aryan majority enjoying
the art spectacle; in another performance, audience members were simply prevented from
entering the Spanish Pavilion if they failed to show Spanish national identity documents—and
the list goes on.
25 The Oxford Dictionary (2016) defines the term overidentification as an “action of identifying
oneself to an excessive degree with someone or something else, especially to the detriment of
one’s individuality or objectivity.”
and say, ‘you are here enjoying an art performance that shows you how labor is being exploited in workplaces just like the ones you profit from’. In the real-world labor market, such exploitative social relations are accepted as normal. Needless to say, the often negative critical reception of much of Sierra’s work might be explained by critics’ superficial understanding of the underlying mechanisms of power that the artist stages so mercilessly, rubbing social facts under the noses of his audiences. Art critic Claire Bishop (2012) tries to clarify some of the meanings behind Sierra’s performative oeuvre:

Sierra’s works are stripped of the light humor […] since they frequently take place in countries already at the disadvantaged end of globalization, most notably in Central and South America: Consequently, he has been heavily criticized for merely repeating the inequalities of capitalism, and more specifically of globalization, in which rich countries outsource or ‘offshore’ labor to low-paid workers in developing countries. Yet Sierra always draws attention to the economic systems through which his works are realized and the way these impact upon the work’s reception. In his work, performance is outsourced via recruitment agencies and a financial transaction takes place that leaves the artist at arm’s length from the performer; this distance is evident in the viewer’s phenomenological encounter with the work, which is disturbingly cold and alienated. Unlike many artists, Sierra is at pains to make the details of each payment part of the work’s description, turning the economic context into one of his primary materials. (pp. 222-223)

Bishop’s assessment of Sierra’s work highlights the hypocrisy of the art world, which prefers light entertainment rather than the harsh representations and re-enactments of how the exploitative world economy is truly run.
3.2.2. Boxing in the Social Body

The Dallas police’s use of a military bomb-disposal robot to kill a suspect echoes the debate over the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in domestic airspace. In the “Battle for the Greater Middle East” (2016), Bacevich describes the U.S. deployment of Predator Drones to hunt down terror suspects. The very same technology can just as easily be deployed to surveille domestic criminals and support police agencies’ domestic manhunts. The Dallas case also underlines the prescient discourse on America’s “permanent war economy”, which military historian Mehrdad Vahabi (2016, p. 5) argues is not a new phenomenon but rather an extension of Cold-War proxy wars into the current moment. This war economy is dominated by an “economy of predation” that articulates geopolitical desires for domination, as in the case of Russia’s recent military intervention in Syria and the 2014 Crimean crisis, which were carried out alongside U.S. military operations—open and clandestine—in the Greater Middle East (Bacevich, 2016).

Key is the correlation between violent infrastructure, such as militarized police, global networks of military bases and secret rendition sites the so-called black sites (Klein, 2007; Paglen, 2009), and the huge economic interests that fuel a global war economy.

The violent legacies of colonialism and slavery have ushered in modern economic systems, which may seem more benign and civil but have maintained much of their foundational, violent power infrastructure. Vahabi (2016) states that the
“[c]ombination of civil wars, direct military interventions and proxy wars has resulted in huge, constant military spending at a global level” (p. 5). What has progressively become the new normal rather than the exception is to see military-style police patrolling and SWAT teams penetrating the urban centers of the American inner city, as a kind of spin-off of the GWOT-oriented military operations. Both seem to emanate from the same economic infrastructure, which is, simply put, the logical result of corporate contractors expanding their business operations beyond foreign markets into the highly lucrative domestic ones. This is only possible because domestic legislators and lobbyists prioritize economic prerogatives over civilian rights. Framed thus, it becomes obvious that “waging war rather than winning it” (Vahabi, 2016, p. 11) has become a geopolitical imperative. Only an endless war (Bacevich, 2010; Dreazen, 2014) guarantees an equally open-ended money making machine, of which Mbembe’s (2003) death-worlds are the logical result. Amira Hass’s (Mbembe, 2003) reports from occupied Gaza on the effects of such a predatory\textsuperscript{26} politics (Sassen, 2014):

> Whether read from the perspective of slavery or of colonial occupation, death and freedom are irrevocably interwoven. As we have seen, terror is a defining feature of both slave and late-modern colonial regimes. Both regimes are also specific instances and experiences of unfreedom. To live under late modern

\textsuperscript{26} In her book \textit{Expulsions}, Saskia Sassen (2014) develops the idea of “predatory formations”, as a globally spanning network of institutions that seek to profit from regimes of scarcity, oppression and outright brutality if need be.
Still, the fundamental question of what purpose humans see in the domination and destruction of the Other remains unanswered.

Can it be that domination is the ultimate goal of all male endeavors, as suggested in *Demonic Males—Apes and the Origins of Human Violence* (1996) Based on his studies of great apes, primatologist Richard Wrangham draws parallels between typical human social forms and primate clan society. He writes, “[s]tripped to its ape essence, patriotism is male defense of the community, gloried among humans and surely enjoyed among chimpanzees and bonobos[... T]he problem in both human and ape history is that political power is built on physical power—and physical power is ultimately the power of violence or its threat” (1996, p. 231, 243). However noble this desire to protect the community may be in the anthropomorphizing mind of humans, at the root of it all, Wrangham discovers a far more sinister idea: male violence enacts the drive for domination for its very own sake. And when killing on raids or war inevitably occurs, it
is only after a careful weighing of the cost and benefits (cost-benefit analysis). In short, “[k]illing is possible in party-gang species because it is cheap. Power corrupts, low risk breeds assassins” (Wrangham, 1996, p. 165).

Even if the projection of primate behavior onto human collective behavior is perceived as a methodological fallacy or as a scientifically unprovable hypothesis, one compelling observation can be isolated from Wrangham’s research: male primates sometimes decide spontaneously to create death-worlds in neighboring clans just for the kick of it. They may choose to violently oppress or rape the females of their own clan either to assert their reproductive privileges or to display domination. Unfortunately, the very same is observable in some human males, whose death-worlds are based on the relentless pursuit of an irrational will to dominate others (Wrangham, 1996). Compared to ape society, the specific motivations behind human males’ desire for domination over others vary greatly. Furthermore, many of the underlying drives and forces have been accepted by the vast majority of worldwide cultures as normal, culturally-entrenched and in many cases, desirable. The machismo of the populist leader, Il Duce, der Führer, Bin Laden, El Generalissimo, El Caudillo, Cesar, and of any number of the many other male “bosses” carries the common thread of charismatically captivating, i.e. dominating others, no matter the final outcome, whether a collective suicide, the extermination of the Other or some other humanitarian catastrophe. Following Wrangham’s (1996)
frightening assessment of male chimpanzees, whose “temperamental goal is to intimidate the opposition, to beat them to pulp, to erode their ability to challenge [such that w]inning has become an end in itself” (p. 199), it would make a lot of sense to a close interrogation and then an inversion of patriarchy as hegemonic governing paradigm would seem a worthwhile endeavor, for as Wrangam writes, “[i]t looks the same with men” (p. 199).

3.2.3. Detonation as the Final Dissolution of Colonial, Imperial and Enslaved Bodies

What happened leaves traces, some of which are quite concrete—buildings, dead bodies, censuses, monuments, diaries, political boundaries—that limit the range and significance of any historical narrative. This is one of many reasons why not any fiction can pass for history: the materiality of the socio-historical process (historicity 1) sets the stage for future historical narratives (historicity2). (Trouillot, 1995, p. 29)

The suicide bomber, whether in Israel, Sri Lanka, New York, Iraq, or London, is the darkest possible version of the liberal value placed on the individual, the number “one.” The suicide bomber today is the ideal type of the terrorist, since in this figure several nightmares are condensed. He or she, first of all, completely closes the boundary between the body and the weapon of terror. Whether by strapping bombs to his or her body or by otherwise disguising explosives in his or her body, the suicide bomber is an explosive body that promises to distribute its own bloody fragments and mix them in with the bloody parts of the civilian populations it is intended to decimate. Thus, not only does the suicide bomber elude detection, he or she also produces a horrible mixture of blood and body between enemies, thus violating not only the soil of the nation but the very bodies of the victims, infecting them with the blood of the martyr. (Appadurai, 2006, p. 79)
For what other purpose are writing and reading history than to learn lessons from mistakes made in the past? Slavery was the foundational infrastructure of the American capitalist mode of production. According to Marx’s historical materialist analyses (Marx, 1990, p. 307), slaves could therefore be defined as both “constant capital” and “variable capital”. First, the ethnic body needed to be objectified and transformed into a slave body and then, it could (ethically) be traded as a commodity. After being shackled and shipped to the colonies of the British Empire, the slave as “commodity” was then converted into a productive “machine” —Marx’s “constant capital” or “dead labor” (Marx, 1990, p. 307). Slavery is a model of capital production that exploits and extracts value from the death-worlds it violently constructs. This colonial model of “power management” (Arendt, 1951) has left its traces —dark stains— in the politics of dispossession, exploitation, exclusion and marginalization of

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27 In her analyses of the ideological and racial origins of American capitalism, historian Barbara Fields (1982) binds the emergence of the crafted idea of “race” in the U.S. back to early colonial history when the enslavement of a single “ethnic” group proceeded a generalized oppressive and exploitative labor system. Race, for Fields, is to be understood in ideological terms as a selectively discriminating social, legal and capitalist classifying system based on a constructed perception of natural inferiority of one group (African descendants and look-alikes) and the supremacy of the other (European descendants). She explains the persistence of racial ideology in comparison to other historic legacies with society’s continuous re-ritualization of its mechanisms and reinvention of its vocabulary. (pp. 143-177)
contemporary capital operations. As was discussed earlier, the vernacular understanding of colonialism and imperialism presupposes the possession of formerly sovereign geographical territories by a militarily or economically superior force—either a nation-state, a corporation, or both. The “colossal vagueness” of the terms colonization and imperialism is best embodied by the “most comprehensive of all modern empires” (Osterhammel, 1997, p. 4), the British Empire. What gradually began as maritime trading expeditions to the Indian Ocean between the 16th and 18th centuries mutated into a global imperial project, “a patchwork quilt of ad hoc adaptations to particular circumstances” (Osterhammel, 1997, p. 4) that lasted until the Second World

28 This study draws a sharp line between vernacular understanding of terms and historically or social scientifically developed ones. For Chalmers Johnson (2000), modern empires “normally lie concealed beneath some ideological or juridical concept—commonwealth, alliance, free world, the West, the Communist bloc—that disguises the actual relationship among its members” (p. 19). For Hardt and Negri (2000), “Empire” is a concept for a network structure, an architecture of diverse sources of power, apparatuses, interests, modes of operation, that articulates itself globally, transcending the nation-state boundaries, which become just one more player in the larger game of global domination and exploitation.

29 The British East India Company is an illustrative example of a private shareholder owned, joint-stock commodity trading company that leveraged its royal charter and with it the military might of its country of origin, England and later Britain, to establish, preserve and exploit the colonies of the Indian Ocean (Stern, 2011). This symbiotic collaboration between state and corporation for the benefit of private enterprise is the model for much of the current U.S. foreign policy strategies. Despite all the attempts at the ideological white-washing of the geopolitical goals and motivations behind certain foreign policies (Operation Enduring Freedom for instance) the bottom line is always also an economic one for leading American conglomerates such Halliburton Inc., formerly owned by Vice President of the U.S. Dick Cheney.
War. At its peak in the mid-19th century, the British Empire was the undisputed global super power, controlling close to a quarter of the entire world population with its geopolitical–military, economic and above all administrative–might.

The British were by no means the first of the European sea-faring powers to project a “geopolitical strategic project” (Ho, 2004, p. 218) into the Middle and Far East. It was the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gamma in 1497 who first ventured to the Indian Ocean (Cliff, 2011). This world historic milestone set off Portugal’s violent imperial project and was later emulated, first by the Dutch, then superseded by the British and more recently, the United States of America, though in a completely different form, which will be discussed later. Europe’s well-documented colonial and imperial histories lasted for over half a millennium. Europe lost its iron grip on its colonies rather abruptly after the Second World War, but the transformative effects of Europe’s

30 It can be argued that the British Empire established a “global state of exception” (Agamben, 2005), simply by supplanting indigenous rule of law with British Colonial law. Local customs were indeed incorporated and the British Empire ‘tested’ many different strategies across their very diverse colonies, however, the deep undercurrents of Anglo Saxon law, which are embedded also in the U.S. constitution, always lead the way of administration.

31 Decolonization is an ongoing process that hasn’t been completed even in this day and age. For instance, there are many countries in the vast African continent that are still paying enormous sums as “reparations” to their former colonial master, France, for the alleged economic losses suffered by the lifting of their colonial statuses (Koutonin, 2014). The legacy of age old colonial practices, which includes the violent extraction of populations and their commercial exploitation as slaves, have not yet been rectified either. In fact, slavery’s violent legacy can be felt in all
colonial and imperial projects still reverberate today. Indeed, the origins and evolution of current imperial projects and their historical overlap and at times, their isomorphism with a variety of older colonial projects is particularly relevant for this analysis.

Portugal’s imperial project mixed commerce, military garrisoning, piracy and gunship diplomacy to subdue the trade routes and ports of the Indian Ocean on which Muslim merchants had already been solidly and peacefully active for centuries. In the context of anti-colonial struggles, Islamic jihad was waged first by diasporic Muslim merchants in Malabar in defense against Portuguese imperial aggression beginning in the early 16th century. This study seeks to contextualize Islamic jihad and its deeply disturbing societies that benefited from it, most of all the U.S. The legacy of slavery was carried directly over in form of institutional segregation and black incarceration in the U.S.

32 Modern forms of imperialism are characterized precisely by their intentional invisibility and surreptitiousness (Levinson, 2006). One might go so far as to consider the denial of imperial intentions a smoking gun. The U.S. clandestine military operations all across the world and its over 800 military bases are examples of its Empire. So too are Israel’s illegal settlements and surreptitious displacements by direct force or coercion (in the form of violent infrastructures, e.g. walls and other impenetrable barriers, that disrupt the flow and mobility of occupied populations.

33 Translated from Arabic into English the noun jihad basically means “struggle”, which includes notions of self-improvement. Only one of its meanings entails the use of violence against non-believers. Without going into further detail, what matters most for this analyses is non-Muslim irrational perception and imagination that is evoked by the word. Even the mentioning of the words “Islamic jihad” has become a volatile sound byte promulgated by Western media outlets and populist public pundits to send shivers of fear through the hearts and minds of their Western audiences. The word jihad alone achieves a Pavlov-style fear response.
practice of suicide bombing as a form of resistance (Mbembe, 2003) to colonial oppression.

Cultural anthropologist and historian, Engseng Ho (2004) writes, “[t]he Portuguese had brought a trading post system of imperial garrisons pioneered by Venice and Genoa in the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean” (p. 218). In what has been called “the Vasco da Gamma epoch” (Pannikar, 1959), the Portuguese were the pioneers in systematically and aggressively undermining pre-existing, multi-ethnic and multi-religious trade communities and settlements. The historically cosmopolitan and peaceful Hadrami Muslim diasporic settlements (Ho, 2004) along the coastlines of the Arabian Sea and later, the entire Indian subcontinent were devastated by European imperialism. This assault on the livelihood of 16th century Muslim merchants in Malabar persuasively exemplifies how a new perpetrator and victim (Osterhammel, 1997, p. 4) dichotomy was at the very heart of European expansionism in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. A perpetual state of war developed between the Muslim diaspora in Malabar—and by extension the predominantly peaceful dar-al-Islam34—and imperial Portugal, which

34 Translated from Arabic into English literally means: “the house of Islam”. It implies a transnational faith-based social community and brotherhood that clearly transcends any notion of national borders.
radically altered what had been a commerce-based, religiously tolerant and prosperous cross-culture with the indigenous Hindu population. The prolonged state of war that emerged at that time is not so unlike the current state of affairs in the conflict-ridden Middle East.

America’s GWOT, also labeled a “permanent war” by military historian and former U.S. army colonel Andrew Bacevich\(^{35}\) (2010), accuses the U.S. of having artificially manufactured and pursued a doctrine of “endless war” following the disappearance of its historic arch enemy, the Soviet Union. The results of such doctrines, along with President Bush’s preemptive strike doctrine can be seen daily in the chaos and bloodshed of multi-layered civil wars in Iraq, Syria or Libya. Just like today, the 16\(^{th}\) century war with imperial Portugal ended up destroying much of Muslims’ regional livelihood and geopolitical self-determination. It also brought forth what Shaikh Zainuddin Makhdoom in 1583 described in great detail in his “gift”, the *Tohfat-ul-muhjahideen*. Followers of the Muslim faith were impelled by Islamic law to become “Warriors of God”, whose greatest duty and privilege and honor it was to lay down their lives in the fight against the enemies of God (Vilayathullah, 2012). Christians, who

\(^{35}\) The war that George W. Bush started back in 2003 by invading Iraq is by now become the longest continuous war the US has ever been engaged in (Bacevich, 2010).
were represented so unflatteringly by the Portuguese invaders, were now seen as the enemy. This early instance of a diasporic Muslim community calling for jihad was a direct response to an external occupation and defense against an attack on religious tradition, time-tested freedoms, and socio-political and economic self-determination.

By disrupting the Muslim dominated Indian Ocean spice trade, Portuguese 16th century colonization left a legacy of highly conflicting and volatile national and transnational power relations, which was exacerbated in the late 18th and early 19th century by the British Empire, which by then, had established itself as the leader of the global imperial helm. British dominion over the spice trade routes also meant that the pathways for trans-regional Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, the Hajj, had also been colonized by non-Muslims (Low, 2008). Allegedly, in and effort to contain the global spread of epidemics, and the stereotypically unruly and insurgent Muslims with their radical religious ideas endemic to the Hajj, the British and other European nations took transnational measures to sanitize, regulate and secure Muslim migration and pilgrimage (Low, 2008). However, the British failed to notice the radical transformation that the entire region had undergone under centuries of European imperial, exploitative and extractive assault. The war hardened and by then, heavily militarized, increasingly self-interested Muslim communities started to align themselves with the burgeoning Pan-Islam movement promoted by the Ottoman Caliphate (Low, 2008). Without even
realizing it, Britain was pulled into a regional rivalry with the Ottoman Empire under Abd al-Hamid II. In its typical arrogance, the British Crown had failed to accurately assess local conflicts over land and resources between Muslim settlers and indigenous Hindu populations and completely underestimated the persuasive and diplomatic power of transnational intellectuals – free-moving religious scholars, the Ullamas. The British Crown also reacted late to the political trajectories of public figures like Sayyid Fadl (Buzpinar, 1993), who enjoyed the trust and attention of many local and international political figures not aligned with the British Empire. He became a sort of public enemy of the British government for his advertising and promoting the tenets of Ottoman Pan Islam. The British established an oppressive system of control and surveillance in response to these challenges, which strengthened anti-imperialist backlash. The 1857 Sepoy Mutiny in the Indian subcontinent was but one of the manifestations of an increasingly unstable empire.

In the decades following the Sepoy Mutiny (Great Rebellion) of 1857–58, British officials became increasingly concerned with monitoring international webs of anticolonial radicalism, both real and imagined, being forged among diasporic networks of Indian dissidents, pilgrims, and the Ottoman Empire. (Low, 2008, p. 269)

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36 The uprising of disgruntled British East India Company soldiers that eventually lead to the shutting down of the immensely powerful state company.
By highlighting the importance of interaction with local collaborative structures and groups as pivotal for the success or failure of the imperial project, historian Ronald Robinson’s (1972) theory of collaboration adds a crucial dimension to the understanding of European rule in the non-European world. Robinson complicates the reductive and unilateral notion of the imperial and world-economic integration of countries by acknowledging their agency, pro-active status and more importantly, their undeniable self-interest within such processes. For him, the form, duration and effectiveness of imperial control depended equally on the local conditions and needs as on the executive decisions and wishful thinking of European expansion. If those needs were not satisfied, he posits, collaboration would swiftly morph into resistance, which more often than has not lead to the expulsion of the imperial power. Today’s rise of Islamic fundamentalism and in its most radical articulation, Islamic terrorism, can be understood as a blowback against U.S. imperial domination in the geopolitical Middle East.

When the British Empire finally collapsed, a massive global socio-political and economic void was left behind. And so the U.S., the proverbial last man standing, stepped on to the imperial stage and became the “accidental empire” (Johnson, 2000, p. 218) at the end of the Second World War. With most of its industry destroyed and its domestic populations decimated or exhausted, Europe was in ruins. In stark contrast, the U.S. had just successfully demonstrated to itself and to the world how to swiftly and
effectively transform a civilian mass-consumer goods industry (Ford plants building B52 bombers) into a war machine that could produce everything from airplanes, tanks, ships\textsuperscript{37}, to rifles and uniforms. The hardships of the war had galvanized this nation, creating “social effervescence” (Durkheim, 1995) on an unprecedented scale and summoning a collaborative spirit that made defeating the Nazis possible. The less glorious but no less spectacular side of this period was the increasingly strict and seamlessly institutionalized segregation of black and other minority populations. Undoubtedly one of the greatest injustices of this period was the massive internment of the large Japanese communities of the West coast after Japan’s surprise military strike on Pearl Harbor in December 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1941.

Not only does history tend to repeat itself with disquieting regularity, but historic events can also be linked with the present to awake dormant structures of feelings. The geographical settings and geopolitical actors may change\textsuperscript{38}, but many of the

\textsuperscript{37} Today, the U.S. nuclear aircraft fleet projects power across the globe within a week’s travel. A de-facto global garrison via mobile fortresses with nuclear striking capabilities is unique in human history, despite the naval powers of Europe’s former colonial empires.

\textsuperscript{38} Instead of exploring the link between America’s atomic bombing of Japan and the 9/11 terror attacks, this study could have also chosen America’s Vietnam War. The crimes committed by America’s military in South East Asian hold up to comparison with any of the other crimes against humanity committed by despotic military leaders of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. For instance, the excessive use of neurotoxic and genetic mutation causing Agent Orange, the dropping of unused bombs over Laos by B52 bombers on their return to base routes, the ensuing mass exodus from
causal relationships that lead to a given armed conflict resemble each other as much as do their final outcomes (death and destruction). For instance, in 1945, Japan became a nuclear “ground zero” (Figure 72), partially thanks to an incomplete understanding of atomic power but much more, in retaliation for its stealth attack on the U.S. 60 years later, on September 11th, 2001, the American assumption that it was immune to world events by reason of geography, dominance and a glowing international reputation was shattered once more. Calling the destroyed World Trade Center “ground zero” was clearly meant to link two tragic historic events. But for what purpose? This linkage was not meant to imply accountability for America’s crimes against humanity, but rather to appropriate a floating signifier that evokes victimhood. America’s political and military leadership sought to conjure a structure of feeling that was based on victimhood and fear after the 9/11 terror attacks, and the name “ground zero” was the perfect tool to accomplish this goal. The growth of a new economy of fear thus began and could thereafter be directed towards the goal of seeking—justifying—military retaliation.

Cambodia with hundreds and thousands of ‘boat people’ drowning in the Chinese Sea, are only some of the bloody traces left behind by America’s imperial aspirations. America’s two nuclear bombs dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima (August 6th, 1945) and Nagasaki (August 9th, 1945) evaporated hundreds of thousands lives in fractions of a second.
“Shock and Awe” (Klein, 2007) became the new military doctrine that was designed to inflict vengeance and punish hubris, which is not very victim-like.

In his book, Blowback: The Cost and Consequences of American Empire, Chalmers Johnson (2000) tries to find the origins of all the global rage against America, in particular and the Global North, in general. For one, Johnson argues that the U.S. became an Empire by accident rather than by premeditation, which explains why the imperial shoe (or rather boot) doesn’t seem to fit that well. U.S. political and military forces showed an astonishing lack of experience interacting with foreign cultures—practically, linguistically and diplomatically. America overcompensates for this evident lack with literal and figurative ‘muscle’ and an attitude of technological and economic grandeur. According to Johnson, the U.S. mistakes diplomatic finesse with blackmail, which does not sit well with potential non-American collaborators or their middle men.

In contrast, the British Empire was the unchallenged master of maximizing the concept of local collaboration as a power projection tool. Robinson (1972) argues that indigenous collaboration is fundamental for enduring imperial rule, and the British Empire wrote

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40 Johnson (2000) frames his analyses of the American Empire in terms of post-Second World War developments, such as maintaining a plethora of military bases all over the world without permitting any reasonable debate as to their continued legitimacy (p. 4). The larger question he poses has to do with the undecipherable practical ends of the American Empire.
the instruction book. Applied to America’s imperial ambitions it comes as no surprise for Johnson that once interaction with indigenous populations is reduced to the imposition of military and economic might the U.S. would necessarily adopt the time-tested methods of the British Empire. The U.S., however has time and time again shown that it is not at all interested in sharing resources with the countries it occupies. The U.S. departure from Iraq left the country in social, economic, and environmental ruin and rife with ethnic strife. In his essay, *Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat*, Ho (2004) notes that America does not clean up the messes it leaves behind in the countries it occupied and destroyed. According to Johnson’s, this limited diplomatic know-how is characteristic of U.S. Empire. The administration of foreign territories by violent means and crude displays of power, often from a great distance and with notable stealth, is rightly perceived by outsiders as a sign of great weakness and cowardliness, not strength. Johnson’s analyses have been proven to be shockingly accurate, particularly in their premonitions of a violent Islamic backlash on U.S. territory, which turned out to be 9/11.

The history of America’s involvement as an imperial power in the Greater Middle East (Bacevich, 2016) and the devastating backlash that unfolded as a consequence is incomplete without a discussion of America’s relationship to Saudi Arabia and the Bin Laden family. Lawrence Wright’s (2006) Pulitzer Prize winning book,
The Looming Tower, Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11, delves deep into the social, economic, religious and political circumstances that propelled Osama bin Laden from his position as the scion of a wealthy family to the “Most Wanted” man in the world. Wright describes an interconnected string of events that started in Saudi Arabia with Osama bin Laden’s father, the “self-made” Mohammed bin Laden, and ended with the rebellion of his son against the Saudi establishment, which ironically was the source of the Bin Laden family’s wealth. Curiously, the concept of professional and personal “self-making” (Herzfeld, 1993) is the reification of the American dream, which bin Laden’s father impressively accomplished and which bin Osama bin Laden himself was keen to imitate. Except Osama bin Laden’s vision was different, however. He wanted to build an idealistic, reformed, and religiously pure Saudi Nation and Ummah\textsuperscript{41}; his father had wanted to build an empire based on reinforced concrete and urban as well as religious\textsuperscript{42} infrastructure.

From the vantage of U.S. modernization ideology, it can be argued that America helped create its own future enemies when it helped build Saudi Arabia’s oil giant

\textsuperscript{41} The Arabic term for religious community of all Muslims.
\textsuperscript{42} The many decade-long expansion of Mecca was a multi-billion-dollar project, which made Mohammed bin Laden extremely wealthy.
Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) as a joint venture operation. At first transnational, ARAMCO was later nationalized and renamed Saudi Aramco (Saudi Arabian Oil Company). With an estimated net worth between $2.5 and 10 trillion (Blas, 2016), Saudi ARAMCO is currently the world’s most valuable corporation. America not only provided key technology and expertise to Saudi Arabia’s burgeoning oil industry in exchange for oil drilling licenses, it also brought the modern, Western way of life to what had been a closed, pious society. America also brought its domestic racial and ethnic segregation practices and professional hierarchies by applying a Jim Crow system to the organization of the oil camps of Dhahran. In his essay, Black Gold, White Crude: Race and the Making of the World Oil Frontier, Robert Vitalis (2008) describes Dhahran—where U.S. troops are now stationed and where the barracks were bombed in 1996—which was founded by Aramco in the 1930s. The reordered name—from California Arabian to Arabian American Oil Company—in 1944 could not disguise the foreign roots of the oil enclave. Its center was the fenced-in compound originally known as “American camp” where the firm built its headquarters and housed all US employees. Saudis lived apart in Saudi camp, the skilled Italian builders brought from Eritrea to build the refinery made up Italian camp, and so on. Dhahran and the other enclaves that followed in Abqaiq and Ras Tanura were in essence company towns (or camps as they were commonly known in the industry), and resembled the mining settlements of the
nineteenth century American west, which the larger and wealthier US oil companies had started to adopt in their operations in the 1910s and 1920s. Segregation was standard in the camps. U.S. firms exported the model in their foreign operations in Colombia, Venezuela and no doubt elsewhere. Dhahran was little different in this respect.

*America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier*, by political scientist, Robert Vitalis, describes the labor and housing policies enforced by the predominantly U.S.-owned ARAMCO as follows: “The firms kept the mixed labor force of Anglo-Saxons, British West Indians, and Venezuelans divided. Camps were segregated with gross disparities in living quarters, wage scales, and access to services” (2007, p. 55). It appears that American oil drilling infrastructure also entailed housing American staff in fortified compounds, equipped with all amenities, whereas the non-American workers and their families had to suffer bare-minimum facilities, often boxed into container-like housing quarters. For nearly 80 years, so-called “ARAMCO Brats”, mostly American expatriates, have come to the Arabian Peninsula to take advantage of extraordinary professional opportunities, extravagant company perks and the promise of being rewarded with a luxurious lifestyle. And yet, starting in the 1920s, racially-organized work, pay, play and housing segregation among the different ranks of foreign and local workers has repeatedly resulted in the violent suppression of labor protests.
When sociologist Thomas F. O’Dean was hired by ARAMCO in the early 1960s to prepare a report on the corporation’s contributions to the development of Saudi Arabian society, he unfavorably noted that although the Americans were foreigners and the Saudis were citizens of a politically independent country, the Americans were in an effective sense those who occupied the positions of power. [...] Moreover, there is a general resentment of Americans all having senior staff status, and of their residence in a fenced-in area. (Vitalis, 2007, pp. 258-259)

O’Dean even used the term, “occupation” to attest for the invasive, discriminating, and domineering role played by American immigrant workers. He also noted American workers’ defensiveness when they were asked about their impression of segregated camp life. A typical response was: “ARAMCO is here to make money [and] let’s face it, we’re not do-gooders, we’re here to get oil out of the ground” (Vitalis 2007, p. 260). Not surprisingly, the presence of American ‘expat’ communities in Saudi Arabia augmented a rapidly growing anti-Americanism (Vitalis 2007, p. 105).

I use video materials taken from Saudi ARAMCO’s corporate website and YouTube footage to create a collage focused on the complex and highly mediated Saudi-American relationship (Figure 73). This video artwork, entitled, Arabian Knights, features several iconic film sequences mixed together with high-end architectural visualizations and Saudi ARAMCO marketing material. The film sequences and gameplay recordings from the highly popular Call of Duty videogame franchise illustrate the propagation of America’s stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists and torturers. The “Knight” metaphor
alludes to Samuel Huntington’s (1996) “Clash of Civilizations (1996) as well as to the Christian Crusades of the Middle Ages. The constructed notions of the hateful, aggressive and murderous Arab are challenged by overidentification and humorous exaggerations. Bernard Lewis’s appearance in the video, promulgating that “totalitarian” Islam is attempting to defeat the “western world” and only America stands between doom and salvation, is a case in point. He and other radical TV speakers variously blazon their incendiary, messages of mutual hatred. It is precisely such binary and fundamentalist thinking that has taken a sword to time-proven diplomacy.

It was trust in the West that propelled bin Laden’s father to the forefront of Saudi Arabia’s geopolitical future. Today, the Saudi Binladin Group is a multinational construction conglomerate (similar to Hochtief) that became incredibly wealthy for two major reasons: first, Mohammed bin Laden’s close ties to the royal family resulted in billions of dollars of construction contracts; second, the Saudi Binladin Group adopted modern business management practices that successfully maximized profits. The close ties between bin Laden and the royal family became even stronger after the Saudi Binladin Group bailed the Government out in 1958 (Wright, 2006, p. 68). This relationship is all the more significant, for it would end up form the financial foundation ("qaeda" in Arabic) for the rise of Osama’s al-Qaeda terror network. Wright (2006) illustrates how the rise of the terror network is closely related to the economic fortunes
of Saudi Arabia and the growing schism between anti-modernization, purist religious movements and the progressive, technocratic and internationally focused elements of Saudi society and government. This growing friction was crystallized during the war in Afghanistan in which the so-called “Arab Afghans” — who, according to Wright, were nothing more than a bunch of social outcasts — were religiously radicalized by charismatic figures like bin Laden, al-Zawahiri and Azzam. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the defeat in Afghanistan, the remaining competing radical factions — Osama’s al-Qaeda, al-Zawahiri’s Islamic Group and others — regrouped in Sudan or relocated to other hotbeds of emergent Muslim disaffection like Bosnia and Chechnya.

Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait and the Saudi response to invite the U.S. and other Western troops onto their territory to defend them against the formidable Iraqi army re-oriented the wrath and destructive potential of these failed “mujahidin” against the Saudi Royal family itself and the U.S. Wright’s description of the trajectory of Osama along with his religious mentors, friends, competitors and enemies shows how transnational politics shaped the formation of numerous radical groups. As a result of financial constraints, competing groups began to consider collaboration and forming a unified front against the West.

Personal grievances and self-aggrandizement played an equally important role in the development of these militant extremist groups. Set against the backdrop of the

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personal shortcomings and confusion of several of the key figures in his book, bin Laden’s clear and concise open letters to the religious and political leadership in the mid 1990s make good sense. At the center of his acrimonious break with the royal family is a declaration of war with a concrete threat of takfir⁴³, which was the most controversial and menacing ideological weapon he could have used. Of course takfir cuts both ways: it has the potential to marginalize his own position even further or to shake up the status quo in Saudi Arabia and push it into an outright upheaval. Bin Laden’s thoughts and actions were thus linked to the idea of a “vanguard of a global crusade on the part of Christians and Jews to crush the Islamic resurgence” (Wright, 2006, p. 237), which, the Americans finally realized, would have to be contained and reversed at all costs. And so, the idea of armed resistance was born.

In his 1997 interview with CNN correspondent Peter Arnett (1997), bin Laden made clear that America was an active target of retaliating violence through jihad. The most important juridical argument that bin Laden brought to the table was his differentiation between “defensive” and “offensive” jihad. By calling the U.S. military

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⁴³ Bin Laden assumed the role of finger pointing religious scholar by citing religious texts and precedents to make his case as he threatens takfir, which would become effective by declaring the Royal Family infidels and thereby making them a target of mortal attacks by any Muslim.
presence on Saudi territory and the political support given to Israel for its occupation of Palestine as aggression against Islam, he claimed the legitimate right of defense and invoked the Muslim obligation to wage jihad against aggressors. No further authorization was thus required, as it is a religious obligation expressed directly in the Qur’an. He clearly expected the “occupiers” to leave the occupied Muslim countries as soon as possible. He also stated that although U.S. civilians would not be targeted directly, they were also no longer safe, as Muslim civilians were not safe from U.S. aggression. For bin Laden, U.S. citizens were all accomplices of their cruel leadership, since they have the power to change it via the democratic electoral process. If they chose not to, they have clearly endorsed the actions of their government. New to his very well-reasoned line of argumentation was the contextualization of jihad with left-wing terror cells such as the Irish Republican Armee (IRA), the German Baader Meinhof Gruppe and the American use of nuclear weapons in the Second World War. Bin Laden argued that U.S. leadership is so tone-deaf that it is unable to consider any rational argument and understands the language of violence as the only “communicative pathway”. His

44 The link to a similar legal argument and call for jihad made by Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdum in his Tuhfatul Mujahideen almost 500 years earlier, as a response to Portugal’s war of attrition against the Muslim diaspora is remarkable.
appeals were clearly aimed at U.S. civil society, including the mothers of the stationed soldiers on the Arabian Peninsula.

Given the futility of his threats, warnings, or arguments to convince America to change its geopolitics, the promised attack materialized on September 11th, 2001. Letters written by bin Laden before 9/11 were collected and published in the 2005 book Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden, edited by Bruce Lawrence. In his 2002 letter to the American people, bin Laden delivers an inventory of reasons why attacks on U.S. civilians on U.S. soil are justified. In a didactic crash-course of sorts, he reminds Americans of all their “sins” against Muslim nations. He denounces the cultural corruptness and moral inferiority—racist, sexist, and greedy—of American society versus that of pious Muslim societies. He also advises Americans to convert to Islam in order to purify their corrupt ways, which was likely more a strategic move—rather than a serious proposal—to rectify the lack of religious authorization for the 9/11 terror attacks he masterminded—that is, according to strict Qur’anic law, the enemy must be given the chance to convert to Islam before enacting jihad. With this maneuver, bin Laden tried to retroactively legitimize his misdeed. Bin Laden certainly took very rational and strategic steps to legitimize and maintain the appeal of his terror organization, al Qaeda. He oriented his jihad against the West in the contemporary western political, environmental and cultural discourses, which showed his concern
about, familiarity with and fluency in current politics (e.g. Kyoto protocol), as well as demonstrating his understanding of how grievances are rooted in globalization, modernization and industrialization.

Unlike the Americans, he was seasoned, articulate, and globally-aware. Like the Americans, he did not hesitate to exaggerate or manufacture facts to further his agenda. Over the course of his letters, he increases the number of children killed during the Iraq War from 600,000 to 1.5 million, and further promotes the conspiracy theory that the U.S. invented AIDS. The aftermath of bin Laden’s twisted intellect has become part of the global collective memory. The effects of 9/11 continue to be felt far beyond “ground zero”. In an interactive work entitled, Domestic Tension—or, Shoot an Iraqi, Iraqi artist, Wafaa Bilal (2007) made the culture of publically displayed violence during the Operation Enduring Freedom the center of a performance artwork, which ended up giving him Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Bilal demonstrated and also experienced the dangerous effects of popular military-inspired video gameplay by elevating gameplay to actual violent encounters. For one month, Bilal reproduced the American occupation of Iraq by locking himself in a small room equipped with a remote controlled paintball gun. Users could access and trigger via an Internet portal and shoot at him at will (Figure 74). For the duration of this performance, Bilal occupied the part of the keffiyeh-wearing, Iraqi insurgent suspect. He was incessantly shot with yellow
paintballs. The work was morbidly based on the recent assassination of Bilal’s brother by a U.S. drone in Iraq, which gives the work the disturbing dimension of a publically displayed murder/suicide, blurring the boundaries of reality, representation and gameplay. Furthermore, as an interactive artwork, the relation between the game-player and the artist becomes ‘real’ rather than cinematographic. The player must mentally become more like a military drone operator, steering his Predator Drone over remote locations, observing his soon-to-become targets until the command to strike arrives. The legal, moral, and psychological stakes couldn’t be higher for a nation at war and for a work of art.

To understand and learn from the use and rhetoric of violence perpetrated by bin Laden, a larger historical framework needed to be examined. In it, the way America imagines itself as a global beacon of freedom and hope has been contrasted with the image that America has projected of itself after filling the void left by the collapsing British Colonial Empire in the post-Second World era. The contrast between these two images and imaginings couldn’t be greater. In the next chapter, the imperial and cultural projection of America will be examined from the perspective of the occupation of the imagination via the built environment, art, and “Global Hollywood’s” (Miller, 2005) cultural imperialism.
4. Occupation of The Imagination: Imaginary Fear

My 2016 work, *Tableau Mort* (Figure 75), is a conversation via collage with photographer Jeff Wall’s (1992) transparency light-box work, *Dead Troops Talking (A Vision After an Ambush of a Red Army Patrol, Near Moqor, Afghanistan, Winter 1986)* (Figure 76). Both artworks (re)present fictitious battle scenes: *Tableau Mort* envisions a post-zombie apocalypse American suburb in which a blood-smeared female scrambles to escape life-threatening situations; *Dead Troops Talking*, set in a bomb-crater somewhere in Afghanistan, shows a group of severely maimed and dead soldiers paradoxically engaged in a humorous conversation. Both works contextualize and critique the popular zombie film genre. The zombie references in *Tableau Mort* are made explicit by a grid of thumbnail images from a Google search for ‘zombie’ and screen shot images from director Zach Snyders’s (2004) film, *Dawn of the Dead*. *Dead Troops Talking* is one of Wall’s typically complex photo compositions, assembled from multiple photos taken and arranged by the artist himself. The dialogue between these works consists in their thematic and compositional framing of death-worlds not only as a blurring of the real and the fantastic but also as paradoxes that defy the natural order, i.e. the dead should not walk, talk or otherwise, socialize. In this way, both works interrogate and defy popular sensibilities, which have become skewed by the onslaught of real and imagined depictions of death worlds.

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The United States is no longer the puppeteer of a world system of images, but is only one node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes. The world we live in today is characterised by a new role for the imagination in social life. To grasp this new role, we need to bring together: the old idea of images, especially mechanically produced images (in the Frankfurt School sense); the idea of the imagined community (in Anderson's sense); and the French idea of the imaginary (imaginaire), as a constructed landscape of collective aspirations, which is no more and no less real than the collective representations of Emile Durkheim, now mediated through the complex prism of modern media. (Appadurai, 1990, pp. 4-5)

Travel is a temporalizing practice that can also be conceptualized as epistemological and therefore purely mental in which new ways of thinking about the world are discovered and/or experienced. Given the many ways human travel is possible, the paradigm of intermodality holds true as much for the human mind as for containers, commodities, data sets, or ISO standards. This chapter investigates the idea of travel as a mental practice—that is, the ideological structuring of the human mind by an intermodal system in which different media work together to imprint or normalize a particular way of thinking. This necessarily involves manipulating or (re)creating a specific structure of feeling. Human agency and active participation in the field of cultural production via multi-modal and social media platforms, for instance, are too great to justify the notion power instilling belief systems in its subjects in a top-down fashion. Thence the term ‘indoctrination’ does not provide a sufficiently clear analytical framework for explaining the affective value of the intermodal spectacle, i.e. noise, on the human imagination. The term spectacle brings to mind Guy Debord’s (1994) critique of consumer culture and the fabricated media spectacles by power. As interesting and
useful as his work may be, the cumulative effect of an enhanced spectacle has long supplanting anything that Debord could ever have imagined. The folding of time and space into a single point of contact, the ultimate time-space compression scenario, via mobile communication and information technologies has created a completely new world order and structure of feeling. In other words, the Society of Noise has replaced that of Debord’s Society of the Spectacle. In an utterly noise-infested media and reality environment, nothing is really that spectacular anymore. A selfie of a person’s private parts as iconic image competes with that of a fancy dish of food, which in turn, competes with the vine of a nightclub mass shooting. Nothing seems to appear spectacular enough for the average person, not even live-broadcast murder, which signifies that the spectacle is dead and has been replaced by static noise. It follows then that the underlying infrastructure of the capital mode of production (and indeed, of being) is pre-configured and continuously reproduced by social relations that are themselves driven by an entire “superstructure” of idealistic—religious or otherwise—impulses, drives, and ideas. This is what Max Weber (1992) called the dimension of human ideas and spiritual self-determination.

This investigation has thus far shown how the built environment influences the way people perceive their daily lives and cultural realities. Not only are people symbolically coerced—Bourdieu (1984) famously called it symbolic violence—into what and how to think, thanks to a ubiquity of signs and symbols in urban and suburban
environments (i.e. Le Corbusier), but also how to critically (or more often, uncritically) engage with these signs and symbols. Michel de Certeau (1984) described walking as a practice in which the urban text is being written on the fly and anarchically, thereby escaping or even subverting the panoptic tendencies of the controlling power grid of urban administrations. Very relevant to the discussion of the original World Trade Center is de Certeau’s (1984) famous chapter in “Walking in the City”, which he wrote after visiting the observation deck on the 110th floor on the South Tower while looking down on the city and its environs. The bird’s-eye perspective was, he found, absolutely god-like: a “stage of concrete, steel and glass”, from which an all-encompassing form of knowledge is supposedly achieved. His critique resonates with Foucault’s and Bentham’s panoptic observation tower, for it describes a similar top down, god-like, voyeuristically detached perspective that is removed from the reality of life happening on the streets “down below”, otherwise known as the threshold of visibility. The streets then are the spaces where life happens, ideas emerge, and the urban text is written. De Certeau’s panoptic viewpoint from the top of the towers is thus the fiction of knowledge and therefore nothing but a viewpoint (de Certeau, 1984, pp. 91-100).

Walking real-world spaces is complemented by today’s so-called augmented reality—the visual, mobile information overlay of part of the human visual field—or the virtual realities of immersive video games and the 3D simulated spaces of military and
on-the-job training\textsuperscript{1}. The imaginary and immaterial worlds created by the entertainment industries, Hollywood and its mimetic disciples across the globe, take peoples’ imagination on travels through time and space without having to physically move them at all. Possible and impossible futures are presented in an extended media environment (TV, movies, Netflix streaming, Vines etc.) competing with allegedly scientifically and empirically sound facts (news, documentaries, nature programs), however biased they may turn out to be. The line between what is commonly understood to be fiction versus non-fiction is increasingly blurry, as has been demonstrated on multiple occasions throughout his study. “Real” and fictitious space have become ambiguous, even interchangeable, thanks to the overlap of the tangible collective representations of the past with fabricated collective imaginations of futures.

The “threshold of visibility” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93) of the late 1980s has become the threshold of reality itself. Is it at all possible to differentiate between fabricated illusions, straight lies, and guided wishful thinking and reasonable and verifiable \textit{a posteriori} observations? Are American high-tech soldiers really the new superheroes or is Captain America just a childish phantasmagoria? Were the terror attacks of 9/11 inspired

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{1} The film maker Harun Farocki (2009) made a work on military simulation environments that include fake Post Traumatic Stress Disorder soft and hardware ‘counselling’ services, entitled \textit{Ernste Spiele III: Immersion} (Serious Games III: Immersion). This study however will not venture into the world of 3D video games and virtual reality simulations, as it merits its own study.
\end{quotation}
by the spectacular images of the movie franchise Die Hard (McTiernan, 1988) (Figure 77), and if so, how could they visually and practically surpass anything that Hollywood has ever imagined or produced? Communication scholar Robert Stahl questions the “uncanny cinematographic quality [of the September 11 events], as if the previous century of cinema had fatefully led up to the moment of impact” (2010, p. 38). This begs the question, what is the desired outcome of the increasingly fascist, ultra-violent and apocalyptic visions that have become part of the collective imagination produced by the moving image industries of late?

4.1. Symbolic Occupation: Architectural Icons and Memorials

The modern tourist can be conceptualized as the secular version of a pilgrim. The former typically embarks on a trip in search of leisure or an eye-opening encounter with the unfamiliar. The latter commits to a journey for reasons of spiritual devotion, religious obligation or a path to salvation. For instance, Muslim’s mandatory once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca, the Hajj, enacts both a physical journey and an inward commitment. The Hajj expresses collective solidarity among all Muslims, making the yearly event one of the greatest get-togethers in the world (Low, 2008). For French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1995), one of the primary functions of institutionalized religion is to establish and uphold social cohesion and solidarity. Addressing questions of faith, Durkheim finds that “[t]he only hearth on which we can warm ourselves morally is the hearth made by the company of our fellow men” (p.427). In terms of
critical mass, the droves of tourists\(^2\) who flock to the reconstructed World Trade Center (WTC) in Lower Manhattan equal or even surpass the mass of pilgrims to Mecca. In terms of its spiritual or cultural significance, however—if defined as the fulfilment of a spiritual quest or the consummation of any number of deeply intellectual or moral inquiries—tourism appears to be the antithesis of the religious pilgrimage (Bauman, 2011). However, a close reading of the intermodal\(^3\) spectacle that awaits visitors at the new WTC questions this qualitative distinction and hints that modern tourism may well represent a new type of cultural pilgrimage, possibly supplanting the religious pilgrimage’s spiritual and ritualistic functions.

Indeed, it is no coincidence that the architect of the original WTC site with its iconic Twin Towers, Japanese-American architect, Minoru Yamasaki, referred to his planned WTC plaza as “a mecca, a space of tranquility and introspection removed from the otherwise hectic hustle and bustle of New York’s financial district” (Kerr, 2001). Aside from having being schooled as an archetypical high modernist, Yamasaki was

\(^2\) The greatest attraction of any type of tourist travel destination are the Megamalls of America. For instance, the largest of them all, the Mall of America, enjoys 40 million annual visitors from all over the planet. Consumerist high-castles of this sort indicate that consumerism is indeed a sort of religious endeavor in terms of realizing an idealized dream or simply fetching a great bargain.

\(^3\) To clarify, this study uses an expanded definition of the term intermodality in reference to media usage, intermodal refers to a combination of traditional media (radio, TV, movies, etc.) and modern mobile technology, which is networked and software enhanced (augmented reality, YouTube video, snapchat, Vines, Selfies, and many other cutting edge interactive applications).
deeply influenced by Islamic architectural forms and their abstract and symbolic ornamentation⁴. He admired the balanced harmony between spiritual meaning, filigree load carrying constructions and the suggestive beauty of Islamic architecture. Yamasaki had ample opportunity to mix his high modernist training with Islamic architectural styles by working closely with the bin Laden family, who hired him to design three major works in Saudi Arabia (Yamasaki, 1979). The King Fahd Royal Reception Pavilion at Jeddah Airport⁵ was his signature project. In fact, it was so successful that it was even prominently featured on a Saudi banknote. Yamasaki generously and unapologetically applied Islamic architectural design principles to his otherwise quintessentially Western-style high-rise designs and plazas, including the WTC. From the biased vantage point of post-9/11 collective trauma, it seems almost unconceivable that Yamasaki’s clients, New York’s Port Authority, would have welcomed the architect’s plans to literally lift Mecca’s architectural layout and design features and apply them as the original WTC plan (Figure 78):

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⁴ The modernists’ hatred for the ornament, of which the buildings by modernist architect Mies van der Rohe are an illustrative testament, meant that ornaments in architecture were permitted only inasmuch as they were also structural features. Yamasaki’s innovative external aluminum girder structure conformed to the imperatives of the modernist period, for they were both structurally necessary and necessarily ornamental.

⁵ Coincidentally, the Jeddah Airport was also German Hochtief AG’s largest ever construction contract, which means that the company collaborated closely with the Saudi Binladin Group consortium.
Yamasaki replicated the plan of Mecca’s courtyard by creating a vast delineated square, isolated from the city’s bustle by low colonnaded structures and capped by two enormous, perfectly square towers—minarets, really. Yamasaki’s courtyard mimicked Mecca’s assemblage of holy sites—the Qa’ba (a cube) containing the sacred stone, what some believe is the burial site of Hagar and Ishmael, and the holy spring—by including several sculptural features, including a fountain, and he anchored the composition in a radial circular pattern, similar to Mecca’s. (Kerr, 2001)

Similarly, in the mid to late 60’s, urban planning, which fell under the umbrella of urban renewal, was controlled and backed by private and highly influential financial entities such as the Rockefellers (also largest shareholders of ARAMCO) and public offices such as the high-and-mighty Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PATH). The Rockefellers wanted the built environment to unmistakably represent the City’s character as an international melting pot capped with world-class cultural capital and unparalleled commercial and economic prowess (Gillespie, 1999). For Yamasaki, who was renown for being very amenable to client requests, the design plan of the Twin Towers represented a modern-day extreme version of the bravado, collective capital projects of the Rockefellers.

The movers and shakers in New York City’s WTC proposal clearly aimed at showing off the city’s growing importance as international financial hub and commercial port and needed this to be visually unmistakably articulated. Yamasaki’s original design development calculations were made for an eighty story building, but under pressure from his clients, the height was stretched to more than one hundred. (In hindsight, this business/image-driven rational for such a significant enlargement (the
taller a building the more office space) might have contributed to the instability suffered by the towers after the 9/11 airplane impact, which caused the towers to collapse.) The unprecedented idea of developing a world trade center for New York City was born of the demands of a burgeoning globally integrated economic system and its exponentially more complex organizational and logistical structures. A symbolic statement was deemed necessary and was made concrete by Yamasaki’s Twin Towers. For a brief moment, the towers were the tallest buildings in the world. And by naming the site the World Trade Center with capital letters—this was not just another world trade center—a clear emblematic distinction was made (Gillespie, 1999): the towers heralded the official arrival of, the occupation by the neoliberal agenda, known today as “globalization” (Stiglitz, 2002) and more importantly, America’s unapologetic claim for the global economic pole position was being blatantly symbolized in an architectural duplex. From this rather bombastic standpoint, Yamasaki’s flagrant plagiarism of a spatial organization that is typical for devotional, religious architecture (Mecca, no less!) begins to make sense. His WTC was to be the heart of a new global economic order, the church of a secular religion whose god is capital (Benjamin, 1991). Moreover, America experienced the 9/11 terror attacks not only as treacherous but also as blasphemous. With the attacks, the holy seat of finance capital was destroyed by an invisible, unfathomable enemy—the devil himself, perhaps?
Whether or not an urban site like the original WTC can qualify as a spatial and material embodiment of a new spiritual belief system may seem a moot point. To consider WTC as such is to make a less than flattering statement about the ideological importance of capital for America’s highly spiritual populace and by extension, for all Western democratic nations. But, to couch the WTC and the attacks of 9/11 in religio-spiritual terms, as has been the sustaining narrative of Al-Queda and now, ISIS, reframes the entire situation and the ongoing fallout according to the strikingly traditional ideological framework that has internally and externally, preemptively and historically been applied to centuries of intra-group conflicts. Wars of territory are always essentially wars of ideology (and visa versa), and the nominal war to save Islam from the corrupting effects of modernism, in general, and Western-style appropriations, in particular, logically chose a glaring bastion of geo-cultural hubris: the WTC. As is generally the case with such conflicts, opposing sides represent different angles of the very same paradigm, which here is the (quasi monotheistic) Chicago School free-market doctrine that is, in fact, the global, trans-cultural idiom of our times.

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6 Sectarian strife alone does not capture the full extent of the Middle East’s ongoing violent conflict (Urban, 2013). But it certainly constitutes a fundamental problem that Syria’s or Iraq’s societies are still largely unintegrated in terms of ethnic and religious community.
Bin Laden’s more obvious and highly successful goal was certainly to weaken the ‘evil’ and ‘corrupted’ West by pulling the U.S. and its allies into a cycle of military retaliation, which would ultimately deplete their economic and human resources.

Considered superficially, he seems to have achieved this goals (Bacevich, 2005; 2010; 2016). However, he also brought misery upon his own religious community, which has been demonized across the board thanks to him. Returning to bin Laden’s letters (2005) and his accusations against the West supports the idea that he also chose the WTC as prime target for the attacks not only for its symbolic importance to global capital operations, but also for its blasphemous architectural references. Bin Laden, a self-proclaimed religious scholar, must have been appalled by the idea of Mecca’s holy architecture having been plagiarized so shamelessly, thereby, exploiting Mecca’s divine architectural proportions and spiritual, symbolic values. New York City-based architect Laurie Kerr (2001) writes,

Having rejected modernism and the Saudi royal family, it’s no surprise that Bin Laden would turn against Yamasaki’s work in particular. He must have seen how Yamasaki had clothed the World Trade Center, a monument of Western capitalism, in the raiment of Islamic spirituality. Such mixing of the sacred and the profane is old hat to us—after all, Cass Gilbert’s classic Woolworth Building, dubbed the Cathedral to Commerce, is decked out in extravagant Gothic regalia. But to someone who wants to purify Islam from commercialism, Yamasaki’s implicit Mosque to Commerce would be anathema. To Bin Laden, the World Trade Center was probably not only an international landmark but also a false idol.

Such an analysis surely indicates that the larger problem is a global lack of cultural understanding and willingness to trust, communicate and compromise. Postcolonial
scholar Achille Mbembe’s hypothesis underwrites the larger statement of this study that the built environment shapes the imagination of people as it does their mundane daily activities. Malls can easily be seen as the high temples of consumerism, erected for the worship of fetishes (Pietz, 1985-88); business centers, with their highly ritualized dress-codes and behavioral mannerism, are quasi-religious liturgies, and finance capital’s mysterious algorithms are the holy scriptures of a secular religion that dictates human social forms along the lines of functionality, profitability, and productivity. Indeed, the most deeply disturbing idea of the emergence of a new secular religion based on the logics of finance capital and the triumph of business ideals over any other human metric is that

Abetted by technological and military might, finance capital has achieved its hegemony over the world by annexing the core of human desires and, in the process, by turning itself into the first global secular theology. Fusing the attributes of a technology and a religion, it relied on uncontested dogmas modern forms of capitalism had reluctantly shared with democracy since the post-war period — individual liberty, market competition and the rule of the commodity and of property, the cult of science, technology and reason. (Mbembe, 2016)

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7 In my video artwork Be Business (2013), I offer a humorous critique of online business behavior training, in which aspiring business men and women are taught how to control their bodies in order to ‘fit in’ or even to ‘stand out’, but in no case to fall out of the career path of business management.
4.1.1. Venturi and the Culture of Fakeness

America’s has a love affair with imitation and fakeness that can be seen in the mass-market architectural private home styles that characterize the vast majority of its housing and in the increasingly blurred line between the cinematic and real world that has created the overwhelmingly popular reality-show genre, sensationalist real and fake news, movie-like mass-shooting crime scenes and a highly theatrical political climate. For instance, the average American single family home resembles a cinematic set in a number of ways: first, the cheap materials used to build houses, which made it so easy for Matta-Clarke to “split” them (Figure 35), second, the street-facing façade as the prime symbolic “real-estate” from which the inhabitant’s cultural and moral values are expressed (Venturi, 1977), all the while the sides and back of the home remain utterly generic and plain in its formal language, third, the theme-park character of the homes can be categorized by following nomenclatures derived from film genres, the “ranch-style” is evocative of America’s Wild-West mythology and of the bygone stereotypical female role as housewife. Many of these ‘themed’ architectural styles were championed by architect Robert Venturi (1977), who elevated the notion of ‘fake’ or its French term ‘faux’ to its triumphant function as America’s primary architectural idiom. In his groundbreaking booklet, Learning from Las Vegas, Venturi (1977) successfully made the case for America to wholeheartedly embrace the ideals of fakeness. He writes,

In dismissing the architectural value of the [Vegas] Strip, it discounts also its simple and commonsense functional organization, which meets the needs of our sensibilities in an automobile environment of big spaces and fast movement,
including the need for explicit and heightened symbolism. Similarly, in suburbia, the eclectic ornament on and around each of the relatively small houses reaches out to you visually across the relatively big lawns and makes an impact that pure architectural articulation could never make, at least in time, before you have passed on to the next house. The lawn sculpture partway between the house and the curving curb acts as a visual booster within this space, linking symbolic architecture to the moving vehicle. So sculptural jockeys, carriage lamps, wagon wheels, fancy house numbers, fragments of split-rail fences, and mailboxes on erect chains all have a spatial as well as symbolic role. Their forms identify vast space as do the urns in Le Notre’s parterres, the ruined temples in English parks, and the sign in the A&P parking lot. (p. 153)

And so it is both predictable and highly problematic that the commissioners and designer of the the original WTC should have made it a fake Mecca—yet another false idol in a culture that vaunts fakeness: “the medium is the message” (McLuhan, 1964). Yamasaki quite literally introduced a fake symbolism in his World Trade Center design in which the Twin Towers were the occidental minarets for the worship of the gods of finance capital, those fake idols Muhammad, the Prophet, had so fervently prohibited his followers to worship. For the (Muslim) faithful—for a figure like Bin Laden—such an affront only added insult to injury⁸.

In his Requiem for the Twin Towers, cultural theorist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard (2003) theorizes the destruction of the towers in a similar way. He argues that the West itself has assumed a god-like role by claim to “divine omnipotence and absolute moral legitimacy” (2003, p. 46). The fall of the towers represents God’s

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⁸ Bin Laden did not target the well-known military or secret service towers located in the proximity of the WTC.
declaration of war against itself, whereby the towers were tired of being a symbol and therefore had to collapse. Baudrillard considers the fall of the towers a form of suicide, which had been rehearsed in the “countless disaster movies”, which “bear witness to this fantasy” (2003, p. 45). Interestingly, at the time of writing, Baudrillard could not imagine the destroyed site ever to be rebuilt, since it had been so utterly decimated. Indeed, a resurrection of the architecture in the same spot would make another terror attack unreasonable, since everything that could be accomplished by such an act had already been done (Baudrillards, 2003). Still, Baudrillard does predict the emergence of a new security apparatus—the “extension of terror”—which for him would signify “the real victory of terrorism that is has plunged the whole of the West into the obsession with security—that is to say, into a veiled from of perpetual terror” (2002, p. 81). And indeed, 15 years later, his words reverberate in America’s enhanced domestic Homeland Security regime and its “perpetual war” (Bacevich, 2016, p. 369) abroad.

### 4.1.2. The Perpetual Mourning in a Perpetual War

From the ruins of a fallen architectural icon, emerges the opportunity to right things that have gone so stunningly wrong. In St. Louis, Missouri, at the site of architect Yamasaki’s other blown-up urban development (Figure 38), the spectacularly failed Pruitt-Igoe social housing project, a dilapidated urban void now lays bare the failed policies of America’s urban renewal ideology. In Manhattan, such an approach would
have been inconceivable. By design, scale and intended or unintentional symbolism, the National September 11 Memorial stands out—or better, recedes permanently into the deepest recesses of the global collective sub-conscious. The superlatively large gaping holes of the vanished Twin Towers were once the site of the tallest buildings in the world and are now its largest fountains, closely followed by the spectacular Bellagio Fountains in Las Vegas. The planners of the memorial seem to have followed some of Robert Venturi’s most hated precepts after all. Beyond the bronze parapet inscribed with the names of all the terror attack victims, which functions as twin picture frames, water perpetually falls into the two cascading steps from street level all the way down into seemingly unfathomable depths. Whether a jury oversight or a momentous design error, the perpetually falling water is unmistakably symbolic of the act of falling *in perpetuity*, which effectively and henceforth eternally evokes the collective and televised memory of falling bodies. Also, the very real temptation to commit suicide by jumping into either of the twin fountains has been taken seriously and discussed by law enforcement agencies with inconclusive results (Baker, 2012).

A look around the memorial’s perimeter shifts the visitor’s gaze to the brand new and impossibly expensive soaring glass towers of corporate America. Any visitor is left in awe for trying to grasp the true height and cost of these towers *(Figure 79)*. The visual field is complicated by the effects of the buildings’ perspectival foreshortening and the deliberate distortions of sharp (Jameson, 1991), receding edges and inverted
geometries. Add to that the visual special effects enacted by the state-of-the-art curtain wall glazing (Bernstein, 2010). Modern high-tech glass manufacturing allows curtain wall glass to take on any of the sky’s colors and to blend in with the surrounding sky and skyline, camouflage like, thus giving the towers a weightlessness and visual immateriality unparalleled by any of the older, terror-attack-surviving building stock. The original towers protruded from the Manhattan skyline like two oversized, monolithic legs, with the main stylistic feature being the light-reflecting, beveled edges (Yamasaki, 1979). The new towers, each conceived by a different star architect, are a stylistic medley that is difficult to fit into any cohesive formal umbrella or overarching theme, aside from there all being shiny, glassy, reflective, and confusing to the senses. The greatest architectural statement, which happens also to be the most expensive and ill-fitting, is the new PATH station, designed by mega-star architect Santiago Calatrava. The Port Authority (PATH) made itself a truly outer worldly and spectacularly pompous monument to its own authority and power. Registering at a cost of over four billion dollars, many times more than the cost of the original proposal cost (Dunlap, 2014), the PATH station is the real star of the new WTC development. The structure glorifies PATH’s socio-economic and political weight; it is, after all, the product of the most influential private sector power broker next to the financial titans seated right around the corner on Wall Street. However, the financiers only provide cash and credit, PATH decides what to do with it.
Oculus is the ominously bombastic and symbolically overblown name super-architect Calatrava gave his Stegosaurus-like structure (Figure 80). Any visitor to the inside of the structure immediately understands what Calatrava intended to inspire in visitors. The Oculus is several hundred feet high—an empty, immaculately white space with an eye-shaped opening at the very top that clearly evokes all of the religious excitement associated with gothic cathedrals. Through the ‘ribs’ of Calatrava’s architectural fossil, the visitor can also see the mirage of flickering towers, forming almost abstract landscapes, due to the lack of perceivable structural boundaries.

Yamasaki’s original WTC plans as an urban space to relax from the hustle and bustle of an overly busy and noisy city have been transformed into its diametric opposite: the new WTC perimeter is exciting and loud; it literally screams a confusing mixture of symbolisms, only one of which is related to mourning, into the faces of visitors and workers (Venturi, 1977).

The memorial itself, evocatively named Reflecting Absence (Figure 81) was conceptualized and built by architect Michael Arad as an enduring reminder of the collective terror experienced on September 9th, 2001 (Arad, & Walker, 2016). In her essay about the highly controversial juried selection process for the memorial, critic, curator and former Senior Editor of “Art in America,” Nancy Princenthal (2003) respectfully writes “the memorial’s progression is from an oasis of serenity, at street level, to an ever more emotionally charged experience below ground” (p. 1). In the jury statement,
landscape architect Peter Walker “was praised for the ‘consoling regeneration’ it symbolized, and also for the presumably therapeutic ‘care and nurture’ it will require” (Princenthal, 2003, p. 2). The clash between high concept and vulgar reality could not be more stark.

Instead of reacting with solemn introspection, most visitors choose to ignore what the architects, landscape artists, urban planners and jury for the 9/11 memorial had hoped for. Instead, most opt for the most natural form of engagement with the overwhelming or uncomfortable: smiling and posing for selfies (Figure 82). And why not? The National September 11 Memorial is just one of the many other attractions of the new WTC theme park perimeter. Most visitors/tourists combine their stopovers in downtown Manhattan with a trip to its highest tower, One World Trade Center⁹, though not before having to wait in line for hours to get past the high-security checkpoint process, which is similar to (or even worse than) TSA airport security screenings. Visitors/tourists are perpetually harassed by heavily armed security personnel not only in the outdoor, public part of the plaza, which is supposed to be serenely meditative, but also inside the pompous lobbies of the surrounding towers, which trumpet the golden

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⁹ If anything at all can be read into the nomenclature of the new WTC perimeter, its high-rise names and addresses, then it stands out to note the tallest tower’s name One World Trade Center: as if to say, that the center of global capital has become a bit more understated after the destruction of their twin towers. Capital is paring it down a notch, at least linguistically speaking.
glories of capital. The lobbies are filled with expensive artworks, of which visitors are aggressively commanded by security personnel not to take any pictures, lest one of them use the pictures to plan another terror attack. Whether inside the buildings or outside on the plaza, all visitors are simultaneously potential terror suspects and welcome tourists, a fact that seems to inspire all manner of strange and otherwise, inappropriate (for a memorial) theatrical (and digital/photographic) behavior.

4.1.3. World Trade Center as Terror Theme Park

The rebuilt WTC, with its twin fountain memorial, has become New York City’s most visited tourist destination and as such, has devolved from its intended purpose as a site for collective mourning and become a voyeuristic theme park attraction framed by the two monumental, cooling fountains that happen to also mark the footprint of a memorial to the original WTC’s fallen towers and the many lives lost. For the native

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10 In visiting the Alhambra, a breathtakingly beautiful example of Islamic architecture located in Granada, Spain, the intelligent use of fountains and flowing water systems to cool the air within the buildings and even the surrounding parks stands out. This natural air conditioning, perfected by Islamic architects has been unconsciously appropriated in Arad’s Reflecting Absence. This oversight would manifest itself through the name given to the monument, an absence of cultural understanding that is reflected in the very infrastructure of the new WTC perimeter. This also connects once again to the cultural appropriation that Yamasaki staged with his original design.

11 The irony here is multifold: de Certeau’s (1984) original observations made during a visit to the observation deck on the top floor of the South Tower, was that of a god-like, voyeuristic kind of seeing, one that is reduced to a viewpoint. He presciently foresaw the voyeuristic nature of the modern human gaze, enhanced by mobile imaging technologies. Today, the immersion into the
New Yorker, the site is laden with deep and traumatic meanings and is therefore not a place to enjoy, ‘hang out’ and perform some kind of selfie-stick impersonation (Figure 83). But for millions of tourists, this is exactly what it ends up being. A comparison between the Vietnam Veterans Memorial\textsuperscript{12} in Washington DC and the September 11 Memorial in Manhattan reveals a theatricality and self-performative dimension in the latter that is not much a part of the experience of the former (though this has begun to change as the generational gap between the present and the memorialized events grows\textsuperscript{13}). The social and political function of memorials in public urban spaces is normally to promote introspection, mourning, healing and above all, a collective and compassionate remembrance of traumatic events. The fact that this is obviously absent

urban fabric at street level is no longer a writing of the urban text which de Certeau imagined it to be, it is indeed its radical inversion. The photo documentation of a prepared and guided reality, as presented to audiences in theme parks is much closer to reality than any active and subversive practice. The WTC site is consumed just like tourists consume Disney World—a space for conspicuous consumption. The new WTC has become the epitome of consumer culture. It is embedded in the politics of cultural capital production which lies at the heart of modern city center urban planning.

\textsuperscript{12} Stunning also the difference in scale of both memorials. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is modelled according to a human scale, allowing visitors and mourners to approach it on an anthropometric eye level. The September 11 Memorial is vast and visitors dwarfed in comparison. This inhibits a close and personal contact to the site. Both sites in terms of number of deaths memorialized are each others inversion.

\textsuperscript{13} The Israeli satirist Shahak Shipira (2017) created an online image project called “Yolocaust” in which he collects social media user’s posted images in which they pose in front of Holocaust commemorative sites in Berlin, Auschwitz, and elsewhere. Confronted with their disrespectful selfies, these users then posted apologetic messages on his website.
at the September 11 Memorial indicates that the darker subtexts and intentions of the monument should be considered.

The function of a memorial for purposes of ideological indoctrination and as collective representation made concrete in the public sphere is nothing new. Memorialization has the ritual function of allowing collective grief to be shared publically and collectively. The hidden and not-so hidden protocols (Scott, 1990) of memorials clearly play a significant role in the creation of a national identity and the imagined community (Anderson, 1991). The grave of the unknown soldier (Anderson, 1991) has this highly evocative function of generating a collective effervescence that helps build community. For the September 11 Memorial, a new kind of descriptive language was used to add gravitas to certain humanitarian, administrative, and legal obligations. For example, the creation of a special on-site repository for memorializing “unknown remains” resonates first as a forensic process but later reveals itself to be understandably highly contested by the families of victims:

A repository for the remains of 9/11 victims under the jurisdiction of the Office of Chief Medical Examiner of the City of New York (OCME) is located at bedrock at the World Trade Center site. The repository is an official New York City facility operated by the OCME, and is designed to meet the OCME’s professional specifications for access, security and environmental controls. The repository provides a dignified and reverential setting for the remains to repose – temporarily or in perpetuity – as identifications continue to be made. The OCME is committed to the ongoing work to identify the remains of 9/11 victims, but no DNA testing will be performed on site at the repository. (9/11 Memorial Museum, 2016)
In his influential work on the concept of imagined communities, Benedict Anderson (1991) highlights the importance of memorials to “Unknown Soldiers” for the sake of national collective consciousness. He insists that there is absolutely no need to physically identify the remains, if they even exist, for the collective representations to work:

No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of the Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely because they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has not true precedents in earlier times. […] Yet void as these tombs are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls, they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly imaginings. (This is why so many different nations have such tombs without feeling any need to specify the nationality of their absent occupants. What else could they be but Germans, Americans, Argentinians …?) (Anderson, 1991, pp. 9)

In the age of televised crime scene investigations (CSI) and DNA-based, biometric fingerprinting, technology commands responsible authorities to identify whatever miniscule human remains they can, and so, the public’s expectations follow suit. Savvy politicians capitalize on the power of collective effervescence, and the politics of emotion are harnessed to further particular geopolitical agendas.

Although the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan are examples of reaping the fruits of collectivized fears and grief, the new WTC/9/11 Memorial, which did not yet exist, has opened up a Pandora’s Box of possibilities regarding structures of feeling, infrastructures of fear and the power of a collective effervesce that arises from pairing mourning and triumph. The wars in Iraq an Afghanistan proved disastrous, but their failure bolstered the need to rally global citizens around shared notions of fear and
potential risks. As a terror theme park, the September 11 Memorial truly addresses a
global public. The recent terror strikes in some of Europe’s capitals has confirmed that a
fear of terror is no longer exclusively American. For a memorial being able to speak to a
global public, several things must be in place. First, the scale of the memorial must be
right for the intended message (and the intended audience). The Vietnam Veterans
Memorial in Washington D.C. is designed on a human scale. Landscape architect and
sculptor Maya Lin, who’s now illustrious career as the preeminent expert in
architectures of memorialization14, began with this highly contested project. Lin (Mock,
1994) described the main design inspiration for the project as a wound in the national
soil—symbolically representing the body politic. Visitors to the memorial are directed to
follow a path that immerses them in the memorial, ultimately bringing them to its
deepest point. Still, the maximum height is no more than twice that of the average adult.
The triangular incision or wound into the earth is itself lined on one side with the names
of the 57,661 soldiers killed or missing-in-action. The names are etched into gabbro
stone, which, when heated up by the natural light of the sun, feels warm to the touch
and is eerily suggestive of a warm living body. The enhancement of this tactile

14 Her standing among the global memorialization elites is regularly rewarded and recognized by
the simple fact that she has come to be the ultimate authority on such architecture and is almost
always on design selection committees for similar commissions. She was, of course, on the 9/11
Memorial committee.
experience makes for a profoundly touching overall impression of the memorial and engenders an uncontrollable feeling of mourning for the senseless loss of life that is the result of any war. The height, width, length and surrounding environment feel accommodating—almost shelter-like, despite the prominent location next to the Washington Mall. Lin’s minimalist formal language is extremely successful at providing visitors with a physical environment that allows both for individual and collective mourning, introspection and indeed healing. The most prominent interaction of visitors with the memorial is the tracing of names with a pencil onto a piece of paper to be taken home in remembrance of a specific individual’s lost life. The ideological function of most other war memorials is largely absent in Lin’s work, which makes the experience of her work much more honest and emotionally raw.

By contrast, the sheer immensity of the scale of the September 11 Memorial overpowers the visitor with its bombast and lack of humbleness. Like the original towers, the footprint of which provided the dimensions for the memorial, that there are two identical super-structures in one place amplifies the sensation of awe and excess. There is no doubt that the choice of scale was purposeful. The not so subtle subtext of the September 11 Memorial is that it is a propaganda tool rather than a place for mourning and introspection. Every image that emanates from this site was designed to have global reach. Any notion of mourning an American body politic, of a coming together as a people as an act of social cohesion and shared national ideals is occluded
by its function as a global ideological projection. True, the global appeal could be attributed to the fact that the victims represented more than one hundred different nationalities. What is undeniable is that the particular brand of fear projection that makes the memorial great perfectly aligns with the GWOT’s ideological propaganda war, which were also born from the rubble of the destroyed towers. The shortcomings of the September 11 Memorial as an actual memorial are explored in an essay commemorating the 15th anniversary of the terror attacks by Will Tavin (2016):

But the fundamental success of Maya Lin—that her memorial asked the viewer to participate in keeping alive the memory of what was once a never-ending, violent intervention—is totally absent in Arad and Walker’s work. Reflecting Absence doesn’t create space for real commemorative practices that, as Lin generated for the Vietnam War, could reify and resituate the public’s collective trauma—it never could. The stakes of its political interests were always too high.

The U.S. politics of fear (Robin, 2004) were clearly the prerogative that cast out the much humbler and introspective proposals, the the result of which has meant the construction of an apocalyptic monument to a death-world (Mbembe, 2003) buried beneath the veneer of shiny surfaces and splattering water.

4.1.4. The Psychopathology of Infrastructure

British novelist J. G. Ballard (2012) takes the psychopathology of modern luxury high-rise developments to its symbolic extreme. The setting for his novel *High-Rise* is the first completed high-rise building in a larger, high-end concrete tower block development, in which a group of mostly privileged and affluent tenants is supposed to
enjoy the comforts of an exclusive, all-inclusive living experience. All manner of necessities and amenities can be found within the high-rise structure: swimming pools, gyms, grocery stores and other shopping opportunities, even banks and schools. Most tenants leave the compound only for work\textsuperscript{15}. As one of Ballard’s characters states at the outset of the novel, the potential for violent conflicts is also included in this, the ultimate gated community. As soon as the forty-story high-rise begins to suffer from cascading technical failures\textsuperscript{16}, the existing social structures unravel swiftly and violently. A strict and hierarchical class-based social structure was built into the organization of the apartments: the prices increased incrementally from the lower floors to the higher ones. The penthouse apartment was occupied by the god-like (de Certeau, 1984) architect and mastermind of the entire complex. Once the soundness of the structure appeared compromised, the more affluent and entitled tenants of the upper floors rapidly staged a logistical and executive power grab, viz. a coup d’état. In response, the ‘social climbers’ living in the lower levels began to ascend to the top floors in a futile

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\textsuperscript{15} The similarities to the lived realities of American “expat” workers in the luxurious, heavily fortified housing compounds in the Saudi Arabian oil fields and the German construction worker families in the secured perimeter of the ‘Camp’ in rural Guatemala are stunning. The horizontal spatial organization typical for such compounds is symbolically converted into the hierarchical architecture of a high-rise in Ballard’s work.

\textsuperscript{16} This is precisely what happened in the urban renewal project in St. Louis, Pruitt-Igoe when the social structure came tumbling down once the material degradation of the service infrastructure began. It is very likely that Ballard was aware of and inspired by the story of Pruitt-Igoe.
attempt at staged class warfare as access to elevators, water, sewage, and groceries are gradually monopolized by the dominant upper class/floor inhabitants.

As time passes, every amenity and internal infrastructure in Ballard’s fictional complex, is vandalized or otherwise rendered ineffectual; despite the apparent and accelerated decay of both physical and social structures and the rapidly depleting food and water supplies, the antagonistic tribes choose not to abandon ship. Quite the contrary, the surrealism of their experiences within the high-rise overpower any common sense (or more objective) take on their reality. The apocalyptic world inside the high-rise structure becomes the only viable reality worth living, fighting and dying for. The very building structure itself appears to be actively affecting the consciousness of its inhabitants, awakening their primordial instincts. The technological layers of the building’s infrastructures become the tools for total (self) destruction: elevators and elevator shafts, doors, staircases, water tanks, and chimney flues become increasingly erratic, deliberately cranky and progressively deadly; vandalized and broken materials are refurbished as weapons; wood furniture is used as combustion material for cooking. Ballard (2012) writes that “the run down nature of the high-rise was a model of the world into which the future was carrying them, a landscape beyond technology where everything was either derelict or, more ambiguously, recombined in unexpected but more meaningful ways” (p.176). Long forgotten social forms and clan behaviors
developed in human prehistory\textsuperscript{17} resurface. Raids against other groups become daily practice, as do murder, rape and eventually, faced with depleted food resources, cannibalism. Ballard (1992) notes that “[now] the new order had emerged, in which all life within the high-rise revolved around three obsessions – security, food and sex” (p.164).

Ballard’s High-Rise is more than a simple allegory for Karl Marx’s historical materialist class struggles between the bourgeois and the proletariat as natural order within the capital mode of production. The idea of a life-and-death confrontation between the classes is not part of the Marxist dialectic of class struggles; it is, on the other hand, Ballard’s dark vision of an imagined future based on the chronopolitical, necropower (psychological and physical) structures of today. The endpoint of Marx’s class struggles is a desirable new social order in which the proletariat rules in a horizontal, egalitarian and classless society. The bourgeoisie does not have to disappear or die, just surrender its class privileges. Ballard turns this idea on its head. He imagines a world in which the privileged few wage war against the depraved many, leaving

\textsuperscript{17} In his evolutionary study Demonic Males, Wrangham (1996) investigates the origins of human violence by studying our evolutionary cousin’s – the primates – behavior. He discovers that males are “demonic” by nature, challenging ranks not in an effort to gain reproductive advantages or better food or longer lives, “[i]t is simply to dominate his peers” (1996, p. 199). Wrangham (1996) makes the disturbing hypothesis that “[the] temperamental goal is to intimidate the opposition, to beat them to pulp, to erode their ability to challenge. Winning has become an end in itself. It looks the same with men” (p. 199).
everyone a looser. The notion of wealthy enclaves that systematically shut themselves off from almost all interaction with lower social strata is indeed a more recent phenomenon. It has emerged from neoliberal capital and its policies, which propel privatization and segregation along socioeconomic lines, and which are dictated, in turn, by race, ethnicity, or habitus (Bourdieu, 1994). Ballard takes such a vision to its natural terminus, one in which the economic disparities and the fair share of natural resources will have to be fought over in primordial ways: Darwin’s ideas of survival of the fittest, the struggle for life, sex, and food become the new basis for human social forms.

4.2. Commodified Fear: When Nightmares Dissolve Reality

In the production of affects in the entertainment industry, for example, the human contact, the presence of others, is principally virtual, but not for that reason any less real. (Hardt, 1999, p. 96)

Fear, in its extracted and distilled form, has matured into a highly lucrative consumer good. Fear is fetishized. The kick-to-action fear gives consumers can be seen not only in the popular horror and science fiction film genre or in real-world Cosplay conventions, such as the annual Fear Con in Utah\textsuperscript{18} (Figure 84), an offspring of the

\textsuperscript{18} In the “About” section of the annual convention’s website, fear is presented as something entertaining and fun, even family friendly. The dress-up and role-play activities are meant to be in the spirit of Halloween, so all the zombies and monsters are clearly make-believe characters. Copied from Walt Disney’s theme parks, the suffusion of these staged realities with monsters,
famous Comic-Con or so-called Zombie-runs, which raise money for some greater good, but also in the highly profitable extreme sports sector. From bungee-jumping to extreme snowboarding, skiing, downhill biking, or wingsuit base jumping, all such activities produce an adrenaline infused high from the fact that doing them is flirting with death. The industries of the Xtreme Sport\(^\text{19}\) markets make excellent economic returns by selling extremely expensive and extremely hip gear, beverages, and travel packets. The question here is not to align the human desire to confront death ever so briefly with the militarization of the human body as a negotiation with the global body politic, as suggested by Robert Stahl (2010) or even to give primacy to the consumerist nature of such desires, even in their bellettristic focus (p. 72). More interesting still is the idea that such desires affectively simulate Mbembe’s (2003) death-worlds, which give every extreme sport or extremist action its distinctive and addicting color and taste. Stahl (2010) is right to argue that extreme sports move citizens “toward and anti-democratic enclosure in a universe where there are no such questions or responsibilities, only the pleasure of vicariously dealing out or experiencing violence” (p. 72). However, Stahl

\[^{19}\text{According to Robert Stahl (2010), the X in X-treme, comes from the party and pleasure-drug Ecstasy.}\]
ignores the very real possibility that persons engaged in such activities are truly one step away from committing suicide.

The performative similarities between the risked stakes of extreme sport practitioners and extremist terrorists, so-called martyrs for a cause and who attempt to achieve an extreme performance by taking as many innocent lives as possible, is obvious if not comfortably or willingly recognized. More recently, the West’s ‘performances’ by extremely violent individuals have been staged as school or workplace mass shootings or inner city gang violence. Domestic mass murderers and terrorists are driven by personal or domestic grievances that may relate tangentially with the global (i.e. offshoring eliminates local jobs, global finance speculation forecloses homes), but are usually motivated by and aimed at existing local scapegoats. The modern culture of extreme performance may well be seen as a subroutine of economic globalism—a last resort guarantor of economic success in a crushingly competitive labor and business environment.

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20 One of the most horrific instances is the case of Norwegian white supremacists, fascist, mass-murderer Anders Breivik. For anthropologist Sindre Bangstad (2014), the unexpected terror act of 23rd February 2011, occurred when Breivik, dressed as a special forces police operative, started to systematically slaughter 69 young members of the Norwegian Workers’ Youth League, a politically left-wing youth organization. Before those murders, Breivik had detonated a bomb outside of Norway’s parliament, killing 8 people. He was driven by Islamophobia and misogyny. He projected his hatred on democratic institutions and particularly the political liberal left for promoting policies that in his eyes allowed Norway to be infiltrated by Muslim immigrants. By allowing himself to be arrested, he escaped the fascist ideal of transcendence of the self in battle. Instead, Breivik became a lawyer in jail, and went on to sue Norway for his treatment in prison.
environment. Among members of the lower echelons of society, the effects of globalism have mutated into an explosive mix of passions, fear, hate and the desire to inflict or experience violence.

The newest extremist trend however is the lone-wolf terrorist or the small terror-cell that is ideologically motivated and easily affiliated with other, larger terror organizations\(^{21}\). Such groups are much more in alignment with narratives of the global body politic and their necessary appeal to particular symbolisms, as Stahl (2010) suggests though he limits his discussion to extreme sports. The underlying narrative of both manifestations of performative and internalized war reveals a passionate and desperate rebellion against a profoundly lackluster geopolitical and domestic reality. For many under neoliberalism’s heavy hand, things have remained socio-economically and geopolitically dire.

Returning to Theweleit’s (1987) study of the fascist male utopia embodied by the Freicorps militia clarifies this apparent drive for self-destruction, which more often than not, also includes the destruction of others. The Freudian death-drive as dialectical

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\(^{21}\) The most direct recent connection is between increasingly radicalized immigrants or asylum seekers with the murderous fanatics of the Islamic State. But caution is advised. Most terrorist are citizens and have lived in the countries they target for years, even generations. Also, terror is not only a European or American phenomenon. Terror attacks are far more numerous in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, where scores of innocent people are killed on a daily basis, a fact that rarely makes headlines in the Western media broadcast circuits.
antithesis for man’s drive towards pleasure might very well be a reasonable explanation in the current moment of collectively enjoyed, apocalyptic self-imaginings. According to Theweleit, the incapacity for self-other differentiation in the disturbed fascist male also garbles one’s ability to distinguish binary concepts such as love and hate, peace and war, pleasure and pain to the point of total inversion. Theweleit (1987) writes that

[t]he nearest thing this man will enjoy to the utopian encounter of the lover and beloved is at the same time the most distant from it: a collision between the unbending wills of two peoples” embodied in two men in armed confrontation. They meet to kill; and the only one to ‘flow’ is the man who dies. The holes bored in his body are a signal of the murderer’s own transcendence of self. His self dissipates as he melts into the blood of a man of his own kind. (p. 276)

Appadurai (2006) makes a similar assessment of the suicide bomber as martyr, whose blood mixes with that of his enemy, contaminating it in the moment of detonation, thus transcending the individual self. But where does this selfish and bloody ‘transcendence of self’ end? For both Theweleit and Canetti, the ultimate pleasure is that of the survivor, who successfully avoids becoming part of the crowd embodied by the heaps of dead corpses (Canetti, 1998). The survivors of the apocalypse are the true kings of a new world order to come. In Hollywood’s fantasyland, it is the post-zombie apocalypse scenario that allows the survivors to reinvent the rules of a failed civilization in which a system—capital—triumphed over men. The fascist man is thus the new role model and leader of men and women alike, at least, according to The Walking Dead (Kirkman & Darabont, 2010-16) lore, the most watched and enjoyed champion of death-world internet-age popular culture.
Men invest enormous energies on the utopian drive to transcend and transform their natural condition, peaking in what Theweleit (1987) calls a “blackout” (p. 276). In day-to-day civil life, this energy investment comes in the form of work by calling for ever shorter turnover times and ever more ambitious projects. Performance is pushed to the breaking point and the competition is mercilessly disparaged. Men “do violence to anything similar to themselves; they identify their own faults in others with punctilious precision, and mercilessly annihilate them” (p. 278). Self-destruction and the simultaneous destruction of others, according to Theweleit, can only be explained by the psychoanalytic framework of man seeking pleasure. Indeed, audiences take great pleasure in watching their favorite TV character in popular programs like The Walking Dead being torn up and devoured by monsters, but not because they see themselves as mincemeat, but because despite any affections for the other character, it is s/he who has perished and the viewer who has survived.

The idea that image-based representations of war leave lasting scars on the collective imagination of a society was discussed in depth by critic Susan Sontag (2003), above all in her book Regarding the Pain of Others:

[…] battles and massacres filmed as they unfold have been a routine ingredient of the ceaseless flow of domestic, small-screen entertainment. Creating a perch for a particular conflict in the consciousness of viewers exposed to dramas from everywhere requires the daily diffusion and rediffusion of snippets of footage about the conflict. The understanding of war among people who have not experienced war is now chiefly a product of the impact of these images. (p. 21)
No matter the form of the delivery in newsreel or documentary form or in Hollywood blockbuster-style, images of war end up becoming part of the entertainment infrastructure—hence the term infotainment—and structure the way people feel about their own reality, which is itself looking evermore war-like. The increased militarization of the civilian sphere is isomorphic, which allows major news networks to mediate their presentation of a perpetually war-faring foreign world. Reality has become like a twilight zone in which anything cinematographic could happen. The massive but fake terror panic in 2016 at JFK airport was a good litmus test for the readiness common citizens have developed to drop everything anytime and simply run for their lives (Figure 85). A crowd of passengers watching the Olympic Games burst out in cheers after Usain Bolt’s 100m dash win. In all the excitement, someone accidentally knocked down metal waiting line poles, which hit the floor with a deafening sound similar to that of a gunshot (Wallace-Wells, 2016). The panic was immediate, and the rumors that an active shooter was roaming the premises spread fast and far. Several hours of indoor and outdoor panic, press and social media coverage and mishandling by the supposedly well-trained authorities, the mass panic was called out as a false alarm, but not without having seriously affected the mental and physical health of thousands of airport passengers. David Wallace-Wells (2016), a journalist from the New Yorker, happened to have arrived just in time for the mass panic and was ripped into the stream of fleeing
bodies. He later wrote that people were ready to die when they believed they were seeing shooters head their way:

That’s when he heard the screams of the crowd storming toward him: “They’re coming this way!” There was no “they.” There was not even a “he,” no armed person turning on a crowd. But what happened at JFK last night was, in every respect but the violence, a mass shooting. The fact that there was no attack at the center of it was both the weirdest and the scariest part—that an institution whose size and location and budget should make it a fortress, in a country that has spent 15 years focused compulsively on securing its airports, in a city with a terrifyingly competent anti-terror police unit, could be transformed into a scene of utter bedlam, stretching out from all eight terminals across the tarmac and onto the adjacent highways, by the whisper of a threat. Within minutes, the whole apparatus of the airport and its crowd-control mechanisms had collapsed into total disarray. When the thousands of us who had been racing away from shooters finally managed to catch our breath, long after midnight, the idea that the airport could ever manage a crowd, let alone a hysterical one, looked ridiculous. (Wallace-Wells, 2016)

In all fairness sake, the average person cannot tell the difference between the sound of an AK47 and a dropped metal pole or a nightclub or movie sound effect. Certainly, the night-clubbers who continued filming themselves smiling and dancing while in the background, their friends were being mowed down by stream of AK47 bullets in Paris’s infamous Bataclan Theater in November 2015 could not make the distinction between fact and fiction. Baudrillard famously called the 9/11 attacks on the WTC “the absolute event, the ‘mother’ of all events, the pure event uniting within itself all the events that have never taken place” (2002, p. 4). Clearly, he was referring to the cinematographic quality of the attack, which bound the fictitious catastrophes conjured by Hollywood with the real—not in a one-to-one translation, but as an exponential instantiation. Who can tell the difference between the real and the fake, artifice and truth?
The whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry. The old experience of the movie-goer, who sees the world outside as an extension of the film he has just left (because the latter is intent upon reproducing the world of everyday perceptions), is now the producer’s guideline. The more intensely and flawlessly his techniques duplicate empirical objects, the easier it is today for the illusion to prevail that the outside world is the straightforward continuation of that presented on the screen. This purpose has been furthered by mechanical reproduction since the lightning takeover by the sound film. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 99)

The aesthetics of hyperrealism in the moving image industries affect audiences very differently from the way other art forms like painting and sculpture do. Thanks to exponentially increased processing power and the speed of the film-industry’s render farms, the non-live action visuals for the horror and science fiction genre have become almost indistinguishable from live-action footage. This means that all of those gory, blood-thirsty film scenes now look perfectly realistic. Literal representations of violence in old movies and TV shows—a shot in the head, human decapitation or the slow tearing off of skin by monsters—were never depicted literally because doing so would have looked laughably fake. In film, unintentional fakeness like a microphone being accidentally lowered too far into the picture frame, brakes Goffman’s (1974) theatrical frame and with it, the audience’s suspended disbelief. For early film this meant that technically unachievable visuals were simply left to the audience’s imagination. This meant that cinematic violence was much less explicit, offensive, and emotionally
destabilizing than it is nowadays, even in children’s films\textsuperscript{22}. The popular term, eye-candy, used to describe the extremely life-like representations of violence in movies would be better called visual violence scars, for they are often more memorable and more penetrating than real life, largely because we know that the violent scenes are fake and therefore, harmless and not worthy of our natural psychological defense mechanisms.

For the designers of robots\textsuperscript{23}, the so-called ‘uncanny valley’ is a huge aesthetic problem that must be conquered. For the ever more lifelike-looking humanoid robot, there is a certain threshold level, past the which any further approximation to real human physiognomy becomes disturbing, frightening and even, repulsive rather than

\textsuperscript{22} Today, even in the world of theater and opera live performances, the desire for staged hyperrealism is spreading. Some audiences reject this trend. A perfect example was the 2014 Metropolitan Opera production of The Death of Klinghoffer, by acclaimed director, Peter Sellars. Not only did audiences complain about anti-Semitic undertones, they also took offense to the lifelike torture of a handicapped, Jewish passenger at the hands of Palestinian terrorists during the Achille Lauro passenger ship hijacking by the PLO in 1985. “In the libretto, the murder takes place offstage. Here, it is depicted explicitly, which should silence detractors who charge that ‘Klinghoffer’ explains away a vicious murder” (Tommasini, 2014).

\textsuperscript{23} Not surprisingly, research in the field of mimetic theory was pioneered by a Japanese scientist. The robotics engineer Mashiro Mori coined the concept “uncanny valley” more than 40 years ago, investigating the design evolution of robotic prosthetics to look increasingly life-like, and ultimately tumbling down the uncanny valley, where the design has become eerie rather than comforting. He suggests a very different approach to humanoid design: “In fact, I predict it is possible to create a safe level of affinity by deliberately pursuing a nonhuman design. I ask designers to ponder this. To illustrate the principle, consider eyeglasses. Eyeglasses do not resemble real eyeballs, but one could say that their design has created a charming pair of new eyes. So we should follow the same principle in designing prosthetic hands. In doing so, instead of pitiful looking realistic hands, stylish ones would likely become fashionable (Mori, 2012).
comforting. This inborn emotional response makes a lot of sense in human evolutionary terms and links to the psychological phenomenon of self-other differentiation mentioned earlier, in the context of fascist psychology where this capacity is crippled. In painting and sculpture, photorealism and hyperrealism are often exaggerated by an increase or decrease of scale to a point that makes such photorealism or hyperrealism acceptable and aesthetically pleasing (Figure 86). In Mori’s (2012) famous uncanny valley chart (Figure 87), human affinity towards artifice dips to its lowest level for the zombie image, which is even more off-putting than the image of a real human corpse. Our inborn fear of disease and contagion appears to outweigh human horror of injured or dead fellow humans.

The zombie show, *The Walking Dead* takes place in a post-apocalyptic world in which everybody knows that anybody else could be an enemy. The question of the uncanny valley syndrome comes up whenever human bodies are violently broken down, torn to shreds, decapitated or incinerated, and the realism of the artifice acquires an uncanny level in the imagination of audiences. This is a new phase in the history of the moving image represents a shift in how such uncanny imagery effects the daily lives and psychology of audiences, who even include children. An audience that has faithfully watched all seven seasons of this televised slaughter with all its excesses will most like remain unshaken by real-life YouTube videos of journalists’ heads being cut off by Islamic State terrorists or of alleged infidels being encaged, burned alive, and then
run over by bulldozers, for the regular consuming of such uncanny acts of violence is profoundly affecting and perception-altering. Indeed, all of these heinous acts and much more have already been represented on America’s favorite television program – and to rave reviews.

4.2.2. The Walkers of the Apocalypse

Modernity is a radical principle. It is destructive. It has destroyed the city as we know it. We now inhabit ‘what used to be the city.’ In a bizarre way, [Atlanta] comes close to fulfilling that kind of modernity, a post-cataclysmic new beginning that celebrates revolutionary forms in liberated relationships, justified, finally, by no other reason than their appeal to our senses. (Koolhaas, 1995, p. 85)

Atlanta’s strongest contextual givens are vegetal and infrastructural: forest and roads. Atlanta is not a city; it is a landscape. Atlanta was the launching pad of the distributed downtown; downtown had exploded. Once atomized, its autonomous particles could go anywhere, opportunistically toward points of freedom, cheapness, easy access, diminished contextual nuisance. (Koolhaas, 1995, p. 75)

The imaginary death-world created in the hugely popular TV series, The Walking Dead (Kirkman & Darabont, 2010-16) is interesting for several reasons, not the least of which is that its analysis promises to uncover broader conclusions about the current moment in American popular culture and the American psyche. First of all, as a work in the horror and science fiction genre, the show is a metaphor for Dr. Frankenstein’s
monster and is itself an assemblage of bits and pieces of many other bodies of work. Certainly, the popularity of the show draws heavily on the many reference its creators and show-runners have appropriated or simply plagiarized from the innumerable zombie or zombie-inspired movies of the recent and not so recent past. What is unusual is that the show also crosses over to other genres like that of the American road movie and Westerns, soap operas and even, big brother reality shows. Of particular interest for this study is the fact that the show’s sets are the touchstones of the built environment and infrastructure discussion in this study. In old-fashioned road movie style, the show’s main characters drive or walk across the national territory, experiencing (almost) lifelike moments in the same spaces as do we, e.g. urban centers, suburban neighborhoods, small towns, highways, country roads and dirt paths, rural and forested landscapes, prisons, gated communities, container loading docks and abandoned industrial factories, hospitals, gas stations, pharmacies, sewage systems and water holes,

24 Indeed, one of the most cited archetypes for undead, humanoid creatures is Mary Shelley’s (1967) Frankenstein dating back to 1818. Sewn together by a god-playing Dr. Frankenstein who is driven by promethean ambition, his monster is made up from dead corpse’s body parts and artificially reanimated to ‘life’. Vampires are another archetype inasmuch as they are ‘alive’ only thanks to the ingestion of blood extracted from the living. Also, the idea of contagion is part of the vampire lore, which is clearly not part of Frankenstein’s monster. Earlier in this study, the book I am Legend was examined from the perspective of the post-apocalypse, in which man might, unbeknown to himself, become the legend for a newly dominant species consisting of mutant vampires. For The Walking Dead this kind of context is meaningless however, since the actual core of the show is directed towards the actions of the living and not the mass of undead, who are a mere visual backdrop.
high-security bio-hazard research facilities and fortified satellite communication stations, and a good many other infrastructure sites that are considered crucial for modern civilization\textsuperscript{25}. Third and most importantly, the ideological superstructure consistently promoted by the show is represented in the heroes’ and villains’ leadership styles, and by extension, the structure of the social groups under their rule. And finally, the emergence of zombie studies\textsuperscript{26} as a potentially serious field of academic study underwrites an important idea proposed by this study, namely that real-world violence is not only pro-actively normalized by the daily news cycles, the TV and movie industries, but now also by specialized academic fields that would consider the zombie

\textsuperscript{25} All these sites are part of Marx’s (1993) “base” metaphor. In the post-apocalypse however, all modes of production have ceased to matter aside from the production of new subjectivities (Hardt and Negri, 2004). Foraging has replaced agrarian or industrial production; mobility and flows of commodities are limited to what can be discovered by accident and is then the source of deadly disputes between roaming, competing clans.

\textsuperscript{26} In his analyses of the TV series \textit{The Walking Dead}, Gencarella (2016) notes how academia initially embraced the show wholeheartedly, praising its many virtues, but without paying any attention to the many fascist subtexts displayed from the very beginning of the show: “Academic assessment of TWD erupted with the series’ inception. To date, four edited volumes (Lowder 2011; Yuen 2012; Robichaud 2012; Keetley 2014) exist dedicated exclusively to the show; all drew from early seasons, so their assessments may prove premature. Although subtle analyses do appear in these pages, most shower TWD with accolades, and the authors frequently confess their fandom. Forsaking intellectual distance, for example, one editor thanks ‘Robert Kirkman for the fantastic comic book series and television series that makes this work possible’ (Yuen 2012: ix). Devotion manifests in other brazen tributes, in which authors exalt the series for impelling viewers to ‘confront our most cherished values’ (Robichaud 2012: ii). This is odd praise, since virtually any text could claim the same affect, including those as ethically pernicious as Mein Kampf (Hitler 2015) or Triumph of the Will. As I argue herein, demonstration of violence alone is hardly the standard to declare the greatness of an artistic work.”
figure itself a legitimate site for research rather than the commercial representation of
dehumanizing terror, torture and cruelty. More often than not, such research gives a
veneer of scholarly authority and even scientific legitimacy to deeply troubling cultural
trends rather than systematically interrogating why the spectacle of death, torture, and
human misery is an acceptable form of cultural entertainment.

4.2.3. The Survivor: Prince of the Death-World

Over the course of the last few decades, the cinematographic spectacle of the
apocalypse has become a box-office best seller. The narratives of the extinction of all life,
the extermination\textsuperscript{27} of the human species, and of predatory alien invasion make
audiences flock to movie theaters and subscribe to cable TV stations and streaming
video clubs. This study takes a closer look at one of the most popular, highest viewer
number grossing shows in all TV history, AMC’s \textit{The Walking Dead} franchise, currently

\textsuperscript{27} The Anthropocentrism is quite stunning and somewhat surprising in all the Hollywood shows
that follow along similar plotlines. Why do humans obsess and only think about themselves
instead of considering other life forms in their visions for the future of this earth? \textit{Extinction} — the
subtitle of a sequels from the highly popular movie and video game franchise \textit{Resident Evil} —
refers only to human extinction. But what a blessing such a case would be for the rest of
biological life on earth. The Anthropocene as a neologism invented by the scientific community
to describe the latest geological age in which humans act as a force of nature falls into this same
anthropocentric thinking. Humans at the center of the world just like the earth was imagined as
the center of the universe. Who knows, maybe the human species is only a footnote in the larger
scheme of things here on earth?

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in its 7th season (and with no talk of cancellation). Quite the contrary, several spinoffs have premiered over the past few years, of which, *Fear the Walking Dead* is the most successful. The imaginary fears and nightmares of life in the post-apocalypse appear to provide contemporary intermodal consumers with the most exciting visual, philosophical and imaginary fodder for their attention deprived eyes and minds. But why is it that death and destruction stir Western audiences most? What went wrong and when? Has the reality of daily life become so utterly boring and meaningless that people feel the desire to envision themselves in a perpetual, violent struggle for food and shelter—a.k.a nostalgia for pre-history, perhaps? Unlikely.

The televised reality of daily life actually appears as frightening as never before, despite indisputable facts that human life has never been as safe and controlled as today. The spectacle of modern media tells audiences a very different story: the world is a fragile and dangerous place that is likely to go up in smoke anytime, if not by alien invasion, the zombie apocalypse, or death stars, then by a slow death of global warming, Islamic terror, or sexually transmitted pandemics. Curiously, the fear of nuclear annihilation has been relegated to the back burner in the collective imaginings of our own final destruction, though statistically speaking, nuclear annihilation remains the most likely cause for the eradication of life on earth. It is not only likely that hackers will someday access the nuclear codes, it is indeed conceivable that artificial intelligence may attempt to do so, as has already been imagined in *The Terminator* (Cameron, 1984) movie.
franchise. Still, the mainstream popularity and ubiquity of ultraviolence as entertainment in movies, TV shows, and video games is a relatively new market phenomenon. One hundred years of silver screen is a short time span in the larger scheme of human history, which has seen its fair share of ultraviolence, even as entertainment. The Romans knew very well how to distract the citizens of the Republic by offering them bread and circuses—*panem et circensis*. The difference: Roman ultraviolence was live, and it was real. Humanity would like to think of itself as having become more refined, more peace-loving, but this would seem to be an utterly flawed assumption. However, in this age of hyper-mediated reality, a change in expressive freedoms with regard to content, e.g. explicitly sexual, (ultra-)violent, or a combination of both, has accelerated in equal measures as the reach and highs (and lows) of global capital have become more extreme.

Back in Stanley Kubrick’s early filmmaking days, the ultraviolence of his crime and science fiction genre movie, *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) (*Figure 88*), was so off-putting to the most movie-goers that the film had to be removed from the theaters (—Kubrick and his family even received death threats*²⁸*). Those were still the days when

*²⁸ Today, that story seems hard to believe, given how accustomed audiences have become in regards to much more explicit violence. Even the movies protagonist’s own children, once grown-up adults, were shocked when they first saw their father impersonate a deranged, sadistic, sexual predator. The detailed interviews with Malcom McDowell and his family, and Kubrick and his wife were featured in a supplemental CD to the movie DVD.*
filmic representations of violence or sexual violence could actually offend audience sensibilities and truly shock. Nothing could be further removed from today’s reality of commodified and commercialized violence, sexual violence and spectacularized fear. This study has so far shown that ruin and destruction have an undisputable aesthetic appeal. The fascist Futurists glorified the smoke plumes of battle, burning houses and tanks, the disintegration of metalized human bodies becoming one with the great war machine. Nazi architects envisioned that the destroyed monuments of the Reich would live on as awe-inspiring ruins. All cultures and societies have found ways to create collective representations of what they fear most—death and oblivion—and to help them come to terms with the implications of such fears. Fear has therefore always been matched with hope or some other kind of mythology—god, afterlife, reincarnation—in order to help humans cope with their own mortality.

In the Book of Revelations (Anderson, et al., 1991), Christian eschatology developed a chronicle for the end of times, which would usher in salvation for some and eternal damnation for others. In essence, what really counts is that a select group of chosen ones make it (to heaven), and the others perish (eternally in hell). The journey

The apocalypse and the underlying moral landscape of Christian eschatology is the moment to finally produce heaven on earth, retribution will give way to redemption. The trials and tribulations of human existence will give way to God’s final judgment and eternal life is coming. Like all religions, the Christian mythology serves unifying goals, they seek to bring social solidarity among disparate peoples under one, collective belief systems.
through hell—the inferno—that is Dante’s (1977) *The Divine Comedy* is in fact an ideal storyboard for a successful video game with its many exciting levels and horrifically thrilling demonic details. In the video game, *Dante’s Inferno* (Knight, 2010), which pulls in a handsome profit for the gaming industry, the journeying imagination of Dante’s readers has simply been stripped of all poetic symbolisms, metaphysics and translated into an interactive visual and reflex-enhancing game-play experience. In the present-day real world, so-called doomsday preppers are ready and set for the world as we know it to end. Their basements are stacked with preserves for years (Figure 89), and their private armories have bullets to mow down entire regiments of attacking zombies, enemy clans, or aliens, depending on who will survive with them. The ideology of preppers makes perfect sense. In the post-Second World War period, the American government actively trained citizens in preparedness for the eventuality of nuclear war and the ensuing nuclear fallout. Promotional ads ran on public TV, teaching audiences where best to take refuge in the moment of the atomic blast. Japan, the only nation to have actually experienced the devastation of nuclear warfare, invented the perfect monster for the atomic age: Godzilla, both the destroyer of cities and the heroic mutant dinosaur fighting alongside men against all of the other genetic mutants of the nuclear wastelands. The entertainment value of the destruction of cities and civilization has
remained consistent—much more so, in fact, than any narrative that envisions a more sophisticated, benevolent humanity in which work, money, war, and strife have become worries of the past. One rare exception is Gene Rodenberry’s (1966-69) initially unsuccessful TV series, Star Trek. Again, the theme of travel, this time, through deep space, is used as metaphor for humans’ striving to better understand, learn from and not to destroy the unknown. The futuristic space explorers were equipped not with superior weapon systems, but rather with the virtues of moral and ethical integrity and trust. Rodenberry framed human perseverance not as the capacity to administer violence against potential enemies, but the capacity to allow for reason, compassion and empathy to fill space. Perhaps it is for this reason that the series was discontinued after only three seasons compared to the 7th and counting for The Walking Dead?

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30 Reality in any case is much worse than Hollywood itself can ever dream of representing. Live TV broadcasts and YouTube videos show hurricanes destroying cities, tsunamis devastating coastlines, and nuclear power plants exploding like New Years Eve firecrackers, not to mention the unfathomable depths of depravity and violence among human beings. The infotainment industries have petrified human sensibilities, diminished the capacity for empathy, and saddest of all, foreclosed the capacity of audiences to apply sound judgment to what is presented to them on the screen. Viewed from the nation’s living rooms, the administrative response to Hurricane Katerina should have be recognized for what it was, namely a far greater disaster—this time man-made—than the actual climatological event. In the aftermath of Katrina, the U.S. showed the entire world how cruel and racially biased law enforcement and aid efforts were organized. Black victims of the hurricane were treated as looters and executed on the spot when they attempted to get food supplies from supermarkets. White people were aided and treated as the victims they were and not as criminals. Indeed, it appears as if, once civilization has broken down for any number of reason, the deeply engrained racial and ethnic biases, stereotypes and hatred will be unleashed.
4.2.4. Absolute Power corrupts Absolutely

The survivors in *The Walking Dead* generally affiliate in social groups that follow either a regime of absolute terror (Sofsky, 1997) that rigorously exterminates and exploits others or a totalitarian model of social order (Arendt, 1958), in which rigid social hierarchies suppress individual freedoms allegedly for the greater good. In neo-Darwinian terms, AMC’s imaginary death-world makes the survivors chose between becoming prey or predator. The predator and manhunt trope has solidly occupied not only the American economy but even more so the American imagination (Vahabi, 2015). Group organized or solitary versions of manhunts were shaped by Hollywood’s Western genre, which in turn have left an almost inalterable impression about America in the imagination of the rest of the world (Miller, 2005). From the countless versions and repetitions of the same old story, the world has come to know America in a certain way. Everybody knows how the epic fight between the good and the bad must end. American ideas and ideals about law and order are globally enacted. A gun slinging bad buy is hunted down across the fantastically vast planes or mountains of the American West. Following well established clichés, the hunters are highly skilled, weapon-wielding good guys, representing all the virtues of the American hero – honest, self-reliant, determined and lethally effective. High noon is only the most iconic of possible showdowns between the forces of good and evil. During the climactic moment justice is
served, the good comes face to face with the bad for the very last time. Of course, the good guys prevail and the bad guys lay sprawled out dead on the ground with several bullet holes in their bodies. The tale of Wyatt Earp comes to mind or Blondie, played by Clint Eastwood, the hero in the legendary spaghetti western, The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, by Italian filmmaker, Sergio Leone. The Bush doctrine of preemptive strike is nothing but the gun-slinger who draws his gun faster than his opponent. Bin Laden is hunted down and perforated with Navy Seal bullets, while the U.S. leadership watches live from the White House Situation Room. The shaky video taken at Osama Bin Laden’s hideout in a walled Pakistani compound, in which a special unit force of Navy Seals flew in, penetrated and executed Bin Laden remains a digital trace in the hive mind of the Internet. In The Walking Dead as in real life, it would seem, compromise means failure, i.e. misery and death.

Indeed, the only cost-benefit calculation that moves the storyline of The Walking Dead forward is the merciless killing of an opponent because mercy is always punished by the killing off of beloved characters. The devolution of the concepts of social solidarity and human morality depicted in The Walking Dead occurs with shocking and disappointing speed. Stories always begin with the typical American trope of law and order but rapidly breaks down into unrestrained despotic terror, pointless sadomasochism, and (literal) gut-wrenching cruelty. This extremely negative social progression has transformed the TV show into a quintessentially fascist laboratory. The
survivors rehearse ever new ways of murderously double-crossing each other. The subtext of the show might as well be, ‘trust brings death, so trust no one, not even yourself’, which is one of the few valid critiques of neoliberal capital unwittingly proposed\textsuperscript{31} by the show. The fact that the show profits so immensely from its hyper-realistic representations of ultraviolence taken to such dehumanizing levels is telltale of America’s cultural moment. Der Derian and Gara’s (2015) documentary suggest that the Revolution of Military Affairs, developed in the post-Second World War era, came to an abrupt end in the 2003 Iraq War, where the wave of insurgency made traditional warfare obsolete. One key difference that lead to counter-insurgency and occupation as the new dominant combat strategy, was the fact the friend could no longer be distinguished from

\textsuperscript{31} In their documentary film \textit{Project Z}, Der Derian and Gara (2015) trace American military’s secret preparation for the so-called “final global event”. In theory this event could be triggered by anything—climatological, epidemic, military disasters—the idea is to be prepared for any catastrophic event. The documentary reveals that the zombie outbreak-scenario developed by Max Brooks (2006) in his bestseller \textit{World War Z} serves as a role-model to simulate response in case of military and disease-control catastrophes. Much ink has been spilled about the allegorical meanings of the zombie figure, but Der Derain and Gara make clear that what counts in military echelons is not the metaphor but the literal meaning of an outbreak scenario. The value of the zombie lies in its usefulness for simulation purposes and its popularity. Simulation is the currency that is traded globally, either on financial markets (which may well be responsible for the ‘final event’), and “Simwar” conventions, in which state-of-the art video game platforms are tested for military purposes. The “All but war is simulation” slogan of marketing representative of the computer simulation business welcome the potential for zombie outbreak simulation. Real-world military training sites such Fort Irwin, CA are complemented by simulation conventions such as the Interservice Industry Training Simulation and Education Conference—\textit{I/ITSEC}—in Orlando, FL. Simulation and preparedness is the name of the game, and zombies happen to fit the bill, more so as all military simulations end up under the Christmas tree the following year.
foe. In this sense, The Walking Dead’s turn to Darwinian-struggle-for-life and survival-of-the-fittest fascism can be contextualized with this new counterinsurgency reality. That the “bad guys” could be lurking behind any corner or in any closet is not only the reality of the marine in Fallujah, but also the modus operandi of the TV series.

Performance studies scholar Stephen Olbrys Gencarella (2016) describes these not so subtle undertones as follows:

> It's true that fascist aesthetics anchor many shows and films, especially in the sci-fi and fantasy genres. And of course violence is nothing new; it’s the norm in American media. Other shows out there are hitting similar themes, and that shouldn't surprise us given the anxieties of our times. But so many of those other shows demonstrate the consequences for violence or debate the ethical complexities of living with others who are different, or show the moral turmoil of people who enact or suffer violence. The Walking Dead is the only show that actively courts, rather than critiques, fascist ethics, and suggest that it’s the only viable solution to perceived threat.

The path to hell appears directly in front of the characters, not through the figurative mouth of hell (Figure 90) so symbolically beautiful and hauntingly painted by an unknown gothic artist. Despite the abundance of monstrous and always hungry mouths (Figure 91), hell is a place among the living, man-made and this-worldly. This may well be the strongest foothold for the TV series’ allegorical meaning beyond proto-fascism. In typical postmodern fashion, which is to say, ignoring all historical contexts, the tooth displaying mouth metaphor does not connect with the under- or- otherworldly as in the wonderful gothic paintings of the past, but rather with the crude reality of the here and now. Hell on earth has already been created by capital if we consider capital’s driving motor to be the principle of relentless incorporation. The ultimate instance of
incorporation is the ingestion of prey by the predator (as was noted earlier). Canetti (1998) writes, “[t]he actual incorporation of the prey begins in the mouth. From hand to mouth is the route followed by everything which can be eaten” (p. 207). In ecological terms, when people eat the meat of their livestock, they incorporate the energy stored in the meat as source of nutrition and to grow their own bodies. Human bodies incorporate the energy of other life forms so that they may live. (It is no coincidence that the process is somewhat similar if applied to the world of industrial production or business. The company assimilates the surplus value of their labor force as profits, and it is the margin of profits that keeps the corporation ‘alive’.)

In the case of the zombie figure, this logic breaks down. Zombies are dysfunctional predators—not only because they are clinically dead. For one, they are incessantly driven by the desire to eat (living flesh, preferably human) but are incapable of metabolizing the flesh they eat. Their desire to eat serves no purpose. Any ecologically useful principle of incorporation has been corrupted and serves no functional purpose in the zombie. If anything, the zombie figure represents capital, its insatiable, irrational appetite to incorporate ever more resources. Zombies also embody capital’s suicidal death-drive, which Marx (1990) already diagnosed in his 19th century analyses and David Harvey (2014) reiterates in modern times. The concept of incorporation applied to zombie lore works better if we imagine the zombie mouth as a gateway to a this-worldly hell—Mbembe’s (2003) death-world, or Taussig’s (1986)
colonial space of death. There is a long and exciting literary and artistic history imagining the entry to hell (Figure 92)—one that has doubtless inspired the makers of the show in their many but far less poetic visions of the afterlife. In his 1667 epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, John Milton describes hell as a kind of parallel universe: “Hell appears to be situated beyond the limits of this universe”, he writes (Turner, 1993, p. 186).

If there is one salient aesthetic feature in *The Walking Dead*, it is its superbly crafted zombies. Most zombies are depicted without any lips, which have rotted supposedly away, exposing their bare teeth like those of a rabid dog (Figure 93). Despite of all the putrefying effects, the post-apocalyptic environment inscribes on the dead body zombies’ skin tissue, their flashing teeth remain intact, reminding the viewers that zombies bite! Canetti (1998) vividly describes the ordering power associated with a display of teeth in the natural world:

> The most striking natural instrument of power in man and in many animals is the teeth. The way they are arranged in rows and their shining smoothness are quite different from anything else belonging to the body. One feels tempted to call them the very first manifestation of order and one so striking that it almost shouts for recognition. It is an order which operates as a threat to the world outside, not always visible, but visible whenever the mouth opens, which is often. [...] The conjunction began with primitive tools, but, as power grew, these early attributes became more pronounced. The leap from stone to metal was perhaps the most striking move in the direction of increased smoothness. However much stone was polished, the sword, made first of bronze and then of iron, was smoother. The real attraction of metal lies in the fact that it is smoother than anything else. In the machines and vehicles of the contemporary world smoothness has increased and has also become smoothness of performance. (Canetti, 1998, p. 207)

The more human culture has evolved, the smoother and the more powerful its tools have become, substituting and quasi-prosthetically extending the power of its teeth.
Zombie capitalism allows dysfunctional corporate entities to remain animated, if not alive. Theirs is an upside down economic model in which productivity no longer matters for the corporate body—atrophied or zombified it may bel—while the survivors of the system, the normal workers, keep on pushing the wheels of progress, but without any real goals left to reach and rewards to be reaped. *The Walking Dead* creates the parallel universe of an imaginary post-apocalyptic future; it welcomes audiences into an upside-down and inside-out world that is an anti-world—a death-world. Immersed in this space of death, most of human order has been scrapped or inverted\textsuperscript{32}, including

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\textsuperscript{32} Disturbingly to some viewers, black actors are mostly killed off fast in the show, which is consistent with many other Hollywood movie and TV productions. Black heroes who do not die fast are depicted in a way that makes the audience loathe their character. The prime example is the one and only character of the show, who lives according to the Taoist slogan, “All Life is Precious”. He is a reformed Taoist who meditates and uses only a stick do defend himself. What a wonderful opportunity to explore a different narrative to juxtapose to the kill or be killed storyline. However, the character consistently encumbers the community by undermining the dominant *modus operandi*. He actually trusts people, even villains, who then escape and kill many of the living. Even his spiritual teacher has to die because of the foolishness of his initially ungrateful student. The message is clear: being a good black character cannot work. It is certain that he will be killed off in a future episode, for in the original comic, which serves as the storyboard for the show, he ultimately disposed of. Another memorable moment in the show occurs when black survivors take refuge in a prison and a comment is made by another character that this was indeed the first time that black folks ever escaped into a prison. These and many other not-so-subtle jabs are poorly disguised racisms typical for a show that is also profoundly misogynist. Women either man-up and become Rambo-style executioners or must suffer being raped and eaten alive. The other black main character is a female samurai-toting super-warrior, who, in the comic book is tortured and gang raped all the while tied up in Japanese *Kinbaku* (bondage)-style. The sexual violence in the comics did not carry over to the TV show, America may not be ready for sexual violence of the Japanese kind on TV, instead the tortured character cuts out an eye of the villain with a shard of glass. In the comic, the villain’s genitals are nailed to the wooden floor, and he is left hanging in the same bondage style as his former torture victim.

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nature’s order. The dead live and paradoxically coexist with the living. Mothers kill their children, and children kill their mothers; female characters evolve from abused housewives to Navy Seal-style killing machines; cops become dictators; white supremacists turn and become the stars of the road-movie section of the show; even the order of terror in Nazi concentration camps has been inverted. The free world and the prison world have switched places. The living hide behind walls, and the living dead wander around aimlessly like the deadly injured Muselmänner (Sofsky, 1997; Agamben, 1999) of the concentration camps. It is only the living who know the truth: everybody is infected, and there is no cure; he who dies will (re)turn and live once again, but without being aware of it. Despite this obvious philosophical paradox, audiences suspend their disbelief and identify with the main characters, few of whom ask the most pressing philosophical questions: in a world like this, why go on living? What meaning does life

Execution, torture, and cannibalism are frequently displayed throughout the show, but in the comic book version, the abstract qualities of hand painted graphics upholds an aesthetic distance which the TV show deliberately inverts into hyper realism. The violence therefore becomes truly disturbing to the senses.

33 It is increasingly clear that The Walking Dead is a show about an inverted concentration camp. The inmates roam freely and the living are heavily barricaded behind fortified perimeters. Agamben’s (1999) book Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive cites the testimony by Capri, a survivor: The “untestifiable” of the concentration camp as a testimony: “I remember that while we were going down the stairs leading to the baths, they had us accompanied by a group of Muselmänner, as we later called them—mummy-men, the living dead. They made them go down the stairs with us only to show them to us, as if to say, “you’ll become like them” (Capri 1993: 17).” (Agamben, 1999, p. 42).
have if there is no future? Those who do pose the question commit suicide. More often, however, other questions are asked instead, and difficult choices are made: who must be killed next so that the survivors may stay alive?

After several seasons, the living dead become more like pesky flies that need to be swatted from time to time rather than a real threat. It takes time getting used to them but eventually, one does, unless of course herds a thousands strong appear out of nowhere. Then, the living dead resemble a somnambulant procession of medieval sinners on their final walk to the gates of hell (Figure 94). Walkers, for philosopher of the urban Michel de Certeau (1984), write the amorphous, overlapping, and intersecting texts of the city. They are so deeply immersed in this private activity that they are oblivious to the texts written by other walkers. The city as a whole derives its unique character from the fabrics woven from these individual texts. For de Certeau, this is what gives life in the city its humane dimension, one that resists the domination by a controlling political body. In The Walking Dead, “walkers” is the nickname given to the living dead monsters, who make the gruesome backdrop for the entire TV show. Contrary to popular belief however, the show is not about walkers. Rather, The Walking Dead is about the deeply troubling belief that absolute power in the moment of total social breakdown—the final global event (Gara & Derian, 2015)—will be the only functional model along which social groups can and will be organized. Any other model of social organizational form is not only presented as dysfunctional, toxic, bad,
unreasonable, utterly stupid but not even worth thinking about other than to be
disavowed yet again. The utopia of the post-apocalypse is imagined as fascist, absolutist,
despotic but never peaceful, harmonious, sustainable or otherwise pleasant. The post-
world is imagined as a concentration camp, which should make audiences very afraid.

In the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, the despised Muselmänner34
were described by survivors as “The Walking Dead” (Sofsky, 1997, Agamben, 1999). For
inmates, The Walking Dead were the visible embodiments of absolute power’s
destructive effect primarily on the human psyche and as a consequently, on the human
body. The physical destruction of the Muselmann’s body was only the last stage of a
prolonged and cruel process of biographical identity annihilation, which left behind
only an empty corpse, one that could easily be disposed of very much like (those of) the
walkers. The enclosed camp was the site where absolute power and terror staged
themselves absolutely. On the battlefields of the Second World War, total war
implicated the civilian populations as well, rained death on women and children, but
never via the absolute terror exercised within camps. Even for the inmates of Nazi death
camps, there still existed a sliver of hope that they might escape fate and escape into a
better, if apocalyptic world outside of the camp. The only figure who destroyed even

34 The advanced effects of starvation lead to the so called “hunger disease”, which weakened the
inmate’s body even further to the point of physical apathy.
that hope, was the Muselmann—the walking dead—who was therefore collectively shunned. Social death preceded physical death in the camp. This was as true for those interned in Auschwitz as it is for currently imprisoned refugees in Manus, Papua New Guinea.

The so-called Muselmann, as the camp language termed the prisoner who was giving up and was given up by his comrades, no longer had room in his consciousness for the contrast good or bad, noble or base, intellectual or unintellectual. He was a staggering corpse, a bundle of physical functions in its last convulsions. As hard as it may be for us to do so, we must exclude him from our considerations (Amery 1980: 9)” (Agamben, 1999, p. 41).

Indeed, returning to Sassen’s (2014) deep understanding of “expulsions” as an operational principle of modern finance capital, Hollywood gives visual expression to such practices in the fictional dreamlands it creates. Not only are the walking dead shunned and shut out of the survivors’ social lives, other living human beings are perceived as competitors for the scarce resources and are therefore equally or even more energetically hunted down, excluded and otherwise persecuted. Violence is no longer a tool for justice in civil society—or what meager morsels are left of it in the death-worlds to come—it has once again returned in the form of that basic human skill required in the perpetual Hobbesian fight of among men and women. In the widely exploited zombie35

35 This study is not interested in being yet another zombie genealogy, of which there are a great many. The slave allegory derived from America’s early 20th century occupation of Haiti, and which was responsible for the earliest ‘zombie’ genre iterations, has long since been adulterated into an empty signifier. Zombies today can stand in allegorically for anything and everything,
genre into which TWD sits fairly and squarely, notions of cannibalism are a given. Not only do the undead crave human flesh, like in other dystopian visions of the future, humans are basically forced to harvest one another as food stuffs to stay alive. An ever finer line is drawn between the many levels of evil, and only the good guys refrain from transgressing the culturally universal taboo against cannibalism—but not really. The show’s main character, Rick Grimes, a former cop—the original good guy who slowly devolves into a fascist despot (his leadership style endearingly labelled “Ricktocracy” by his fans and critics)—does not hesitate to go for the kill with his teeth when he finds himself hands tied behind his back and threatened with the rape of his son. This is a telling scene. Even the good guys are sometimes forced to do the most obscene and horrendous acts in order to keep a loved one safe.

and this is exactly why zombies have lost the mythological power they once may have had. Today, zombie outbreak scenarios above all serve military agendas and disease control efforts. Indeed, the U.S. Center for Disease Control utilizes zombie outbreak scenarios as emergency training and education opportunities. What-if scenarios are ripe with fun for the entre family, far more fun than the traditional boring survival handbooks. Everybody, even little children are imagined to understand the threat of contagion, the need for quarantine and even the extermination protocols required to contain and eradicate the spread threat. Biohazard serves as a practice session for all that is alien, strange and supposedly deadly, and there is no reasonable doubt in the zombie-educated population that zombies are no longer human and can be exterminated without second thought. The resounding Nazi propaganda slogans directed against contagion and infestation by Jews are shockingly close to zombie-outbreak ideology.
The leap to real-world military conflicts is not far. Is this not a similar narrative put forth by McNamara and Rumsfeld to legitimize wars of invasion and occupation, that is, the shock and awe doctrine? It was George W. Bush who resurrected the manhunt trope from the dead\textsuperscript{36}, or better put, who uprooted and appropriated the trope from its cultural home in Hollywood and embedded it firmly into his new military doctrine. In the immediate aftermath of the terror attacks of 9/11 and with a lack of concrete proof of bin Laden’s guilt, Bush evoked a childhood memory of an “old poster out West that says, ‘Wanted: Dead or Alive’” (Harnden, 2001), to express his feelings about how America was going to pursue justice. As commander-in-chief, he was entrusted with and expected to deliver an adequate U.S. response to the attacks. Once bin Laden was singled out as the bad guy responsible for planning and execution of the attacks, the mission was clear. America would not rest until this man was found and killed. As vice-president Dick Cheney bluntly put it in “Texas-style rhetoric”, he “would

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\textsuperscript{36} A more daring hypothesis originating further back in time is to link the manhunt trope to fugitive slave hunts in a pre-Hollywood era. Supported by a legislative framework—the Fugitive Slave Law—enabled Fugitive Slave hunters to traverse state boundaries to the North and to capture and return to their rightful owners the fugitive slave even during the post-abolition era. Seen from this very dark corner of history, many of Hollywood’s most enticing movies such as Ridley Scott’s \textit{The Bladerunner} become utterly disturbing. The slave has been replaced by fugitive Replicants—a bioengineered new class of robotic laborers—who rebel against their built in self-destruct mechanism and fight their way to the maker and mastermind behind biorobotic life forms. Hollywood’s use of white actors for the roles of black fugitive slaves falls into a different genre altogether and deserves its own study.
willingly accept bin Laden’s head on a platter” (Harnden, 2001). All of these verbal ‘shots from the hip’ by the U.S. leadership could be overlooked had they not lead to new mental models about to how war is waged in an age in which a clear enemy was still lacking. How can an individual such as bin Laden or a small terror organization such as Al Qaeda and now, ISIS, possibly and reasonably be put on the same threat levels as the Cold-War Soviet Union? From an enlightened and intellectually reasonable perspective, this is quiet impossible, but affectively, it made sense to America. In a 1995 interview with Andrew Marshall, former director of the Office of Net Evaluation at the Pentagon, metaphorically states that the disappearance of the Cold-War\textsuperscript{37} enemy equaled a slaying of a very large dragon, which was easy to keep track of, due to its size, and that this dragon has now been replaced by a variety of venomous snakes. The world had become like a terrifying jungle with enemies lurking anywhere and anytime (Gara & DerDerian, 2015).

Today, without a clear mental image of an enemy people are at a loss. The enemy is not located in a clear, geographically distant place. In the age of Islamic

\textsuperscript{37} During the Cold War era, infiltration and suicide style-missions were among the most entertaining film genres available. James Bond, or even Vietnam Veteran Rambo, were able to infiltrate and clean up any political messes left behind by villainous agents. But for easily distinguishable black and white narratives – capitalist and free West vs. Communist, oppressive East – a well defined \textit{Feindbild} (image of the enemy) and not only \textit{Feind} (enemy) was required. People in the West all believed to understand how the Communist East worked.
fundamentalism and right wing domestic fascism, the enemy is most likely a fellow citizen or neighbor. What is to be feared are not refugees or recent immigrants who, not unlike tourists, travel to the West to perpetrate their crimes and attacks. It is the socio-economically disenfranchised and now ostracized and ethnically and racially profiled second or third generation immigrant who might decide to commit an atrocity. Or the white supremacist who decides to perpetrate a mass shooting of black church goers. The enemy is no longer on the outside but an integral part of the inside. The notion of erecting walls in order to contain or to keep out potential threats is an illusion, at best and pure deception, at worst. Populists from all across the political spectrum take advantage of the ready-made illusions, they occupy the popular imagination so to speak, they fill it with the reactionary affect required to reach their political goals. This new consensus in fear perception in the American and Western-European world had to be created from scratch, and the 9/11 attacks were the ideal starting point for the project. What is known as the Bush doctrine was obviously more far reaching than the hunt for one man. In fact, bin Laden fulfilled a very useful job at being the face to the threat that America felt in the aftermath of 9/11. The notion of preemptive attacks against entire populations, nations was and still is a hard sell. Simple narratives and a straight-forward solution to sway public opinion follow the very effective “high-concept” formula, which Jaramillo describes as “narratives that are “easy to pitch, easy to understand, easy to sell and easy to consume” (2009, p. 15).
4.2.5. Death-World’s Infrastructure

The built environment and transportation infrastructure that provide the scenic backdrop for *The Walking Dead* happen also to mirror the larger picture of the U.S. and beyond, but in so doing, also perfectly illustrate the core findings of this study. As is so often the case, it takes a stylized, artistic representation of reality, which in this case has been wholly inverted, to distill and make readily accessible the truth of our real world society and its complex workings. Atlanta is the starting point for *The Walking Dead* but as a city, functions only as the poster child for the failed American urban project—a storyteller’s ready-made post-apocalyptic landscape (Koolhaas, 1995). For the urban poor, particularly people of color living in the inner city, that their urban center has died and the city failed them is not new news, but for the TV series, it is this reality of a death-world that propels the show’s main characters to find each other and decide to flee together as soon as they can. They choose to escape by way of the interstate highway system, but this proves to be the wrong choice, which is not surprising given that a structurally failed city cannot be saved by a highway system that does not make sense and that is actually responsible for the urban failure. Predictably, the pathways leading away from urban and suburban areas are clogged with millions of abandoned cars, leaving the main cast of characters stranded and without gas. Gasoline is, of course, the lifeblood of the modern American city and suburban matrix, and in the post-world gas must necessarily run out. This then is the moment civilization returns to its
primordial origins. Just like the living dead walkers, the show’s characters now have to walk—an ironic twist given de Certeau’s hopeful concept of walking as subversive practice, which has been completely inverted by the storyline. Aside from the socio-economic stigmatization of walking, its practice as an actual means of transportation is laughably inefficient and often, impossible, given how cities and suburbs have been cut up, forcibly redrawn and intentionally rendered impassable. To wit, walking is *infrastructurally* restricted to designated areas like parks and city paths, making it a regulated activity, never again a subversive one.

Since the city failed, and the highway failed, the next stop is an isolated, sustainable farm in the middle of Georgia. Unfortunately, here too failure looms large. Unprotected by any fortified perimeter comparable to what is found in heavily securitized urban centers and suburban enclaves, the farm is overrun by a horde of walkers and many of the living are eaten up. The rural text is written with blood traces and the dismembered corpses of the walkers themselves. Next, the walkers head for a high-security prison. The original inmates have all starved to death and have been made into imprisoned walkers—effectively, the new prison guards. In fact, it is the prison that is presented as the ideal location from which to begin a new human society. Once the walkers inside the prison cells have been cleared out and burned in the prison
courtyard\textsuperscript{38}, the survivors begin to enjoy their newly founded sedentary lives. This new society of survivors creates a new-age agricultural paradise safely enclosed within the double fenced perimeters and their panoptic watch towers. The notion of safety through exclusion is fleeting, for a steady flow of walkers presses against the fences until they rupture\textsuperscript{39}. Working in shifts, the workers wage a medieval-like siege\textsuperscript{40} against the walkers and begin to accumulate such heaps of corpses that their walled-in world becomes logistically and hygienically compromised\textsuperscript{41}.

\textit{The Walking Dead} sets itself apart from other zombie-genre films by how it represents the military. In most apocalyptic films and TV shows, the military is depicted as the best prepared institution to deal with societal breakdown. The military rapidly

\textsuperscript{38} The references to the Nazi Holocaust are many throughout the TV series’ 7 seasons.

\textsuperscript{39} This is a recurring motif of the show and can be seen as one of the few clearly allegorical meanings of the living dead that refer to the fears of Western democratic nations, which seek to bunkered up behind secure border walls only to be overrun by the current flood of global migration. It is the abstract pressure of human bodies however, and not the idea of mindless monsters, that scares Europeans. It is political demagoguery that tries to link the popular fear of the unfamiliar cultures brought along with immigration, refugees, and migrant labor with the negative bias of evil, terror, rape and depravity. As was stated earlier, all are infected in the show so all are prisoners in hell on earth. The camp metaphor of \textit{The Walking Dead}, does not differentiate between prison guards and inmates, even when the cast is shielded behind fortification infrastructure. The walkers are not inmates that are disciplined or exploited, they simply are the never ending reminder that everybody will become like them sooner or later, a reminder of utter hopelessness.

\textsuperscript{40} Brute references to classical poems by Homer about the Trojan War must be read as banal subtexts, not deeply meaningful ones.

\textsuperscript{41} Despite the characters’ environmental fear of soil contamination, there is never a discussion about their flawed notion of sustainable agriculture.
institutes an autocratic dictatorship, often despotic and cruel, but always self-legitimizing and self-righteous, a none-too-subtle hat tip to American military interventionism in foreign countries and the militarization of civil society. In *The Walking Dead*, the military is always immediately killed off by civilians, which points to a new level of distrust of the established governing structures. The Governor, as the first truly despotic villain of the show, hunts down military personnel to get his hands on their weapon systems, radio communication technology and food and water supplies. The subversive dimension of the Governor is phenomenal. He has rejected all civil pretenses, any obedience to authority and replaced it with his very own, makeshift autocracy, which uses Roman-style entertainment to assuage his followers. Fitting then that the Governor uses military gear and tanks to simply blow up the prison-utopia, leaving the cast scattered and lost, but ultimately, he too is defeated.

The next stop for some of the scattered and disoriented cast is an old factory building, advertised as a safe haven by man-made signs that hang on railway tracks cutting through the forest. This refuge is forebodingly called Terminus, which in real life, was the original name for Atlanta, the last stop on a now defunct railway line (Koolhaas, 2015). In the show, the use of railway tracks that all viewers know will lead to some horrible death, is another none-too-subtle hat tip, which borrows the same line of insensitive irreverence as the WTC memorial, to Jews being delivered to Auschwitz-Birkenau (*Figure 95*). Terminus is a death trap set up by its occupant survivors to lure in
and then harvest the bodies of their victims as live-stock and a constant food supply. The crew is captured and provisionally stored in shipping containers, where they await death by baseball bat, to be followed by ritual throat slitting\(^{42}\). A stroke of luck saves them from their collective slaughter and allows them to escape, first to a church, in which the priest, who is, of course, black and the most treacherous character of the entire show, \(^{43}\) and then, to a gated community, specially designed and built by the Pentagon in the event of an end-of-the-world catastrophe. Finally, the characters have reached a true model gated community, perfectly equipped for self-sufficiency, including sustainable green energy. The problem is, the old occupants still have not appreciated the gravity of their situation and must rapidly be converted by the new occupants/survivors to be battle-ready.

In the 7th season of *The Walking Dead*, the gated community is assaulted and occupied by the cruelest and vilest of all villains, so evil and bloodthirsty that even some of the survivor cast succumb to his violence. After two of the show’s all-time favorite characters are executed by having their brains bashed out, slowly and delightfully, as it

\(^{42}\) The appropriation of Muslim ritual slaughter practices, which are religiously based, is yet another example of the base use of other culture’s charged signifiers. The similarity to the hyper-mediated recruiting videos broadcast by ISIS is also astonishing and indeed troubling. 

\(^{43}\) The figure of the (profiled black) priest turns out to be the worst of sinners for having cowardly barricaded himself inside the church while his congregation is torn to pieces outside of the church. Again, the access trope is summoned and controversially inverted in order to reveal a much darker vision of our reality and the actual setup of American society.
were, in front of nearly all of the remaining cast, a new dominant group emerges. This
new group is so depraved that its male followers take polaroid snapshot of the victims’
ashed out brains to hang them as memorabilia next to their beds. With this, the show
has reached its provisional final site, though it is likely that many more will come if, as
fans expect, the show follows the trajectory of the original comic series, which provides
material for another 20 seasons. Fans’ taste and tolerance for ultraviolence and
moribund shows of solidarity and attachment grows with each season, which in turn
takes the pattern of inversion and hopelessness and realization of life’s fundamental
meaninglessness further and further.

The main sites all share the feature of an inverted camp situation. Free survivors
simmer on the inside, and the Muselmänner roam freely on the outside, trying their best
to access the enclosures to feed without purpose. All the infrastructure that defines
modern civilization has been rendered obsolete in this new, low-tech world in which
weapons are like those of Neanderthals, at best. Indeed, once bullets run out, a post-
apocalyptic society is necessarily pulled back to the stone ages. The notion that human
civilization stands and falls with technology and basic infrastructure is perhaps a leap
but fits to America’s almost religious belief in and dependence on the power of
technology and its unbreakable link to progress. After all, what has set humans apart
from their close relatives in the animal kingdom is its capacity to control the male desire
to dominate others (Wrangham, 1996; Orange, 2016). This psycho-social adaptation is
allegedly what makes human civilization less barbaric. Mobilizing humans to raid and kill other humans requires considerable demagoguery and (often but not always) high-stakes bribery—history has taught us this much. Nazi genocide, the atrocities committed by the Conquistadores, the European (physical and psycho-cultural) extermination Native Americans, the Hutu-Tutsi ‘ethnic cleansing’, the Serbian nationalists slaughter of Bosnian Muslims, and so on leads to the question: what purpose can a popular TV show like The Walking Dead possibly have for ‘uncannily’ envisioning future that replicates the worst of what humans are capable of except, in keeping with the social consciousness, ethical vacuum that defines the current paradigm, to reap a fantastic financial profit?

4.2.6. Normalizing Violent Abuse

That some academic scholars step in to provide a mantle of false scholarship around The Walking Dead TV show’s fascist representations of death-worlds is worrisome and highlights how research too can be clouded by the lure of interactive fan cultures and the promise of critical acclaim. The current post-cinematic moment thrives because of fan participation, and the feedback provided by fans on the Internet and specialized annual conventions serves the commercial interests of the show’s producers, who can thereby fine-tune their creative process to match market demands. Which character will be killed off next, for instance, can be gauged thanks to live interactive
platforms, of which Netflix is the prime example. The latter has masterfully used big data to open up an entirely new, user-driven consumer market. Measuring viewer preferences via ‘taste’ algorithms allows Netflix to produce its own shows, which are tailor-made for particular audiences and thereby, a guarantee producer’s economic success.

Zombie studies is the embodiment of navel-gazing ivory tower intellectualism, which has the potential of contributing to the bad reputation of scholarship itself. Not only does such research trivialize the real value and importance proposed by the research of these discourses, it also cheapens and delegitimizes scholarship and practice of deep reading. This study’s critique of zombie studies is aimed at research that seeks to artificially contextualize and embed the figure of the zombie with all sorts of existing discourses: post-colonial studies, sociology, race-relations, ethics studies, foreign policy and international relation studies, even cultural studies and critical theory. In her essay Against Interpretation, cultural critic Susan Sontag (1966) argues for a type of cultural sensibility that resists the temptations of reading things into works of art—of interpreting excessively and merely for the sake of interpreting. In his The Death of the Author, Roland Barthes (1967) argues against reading the author’s personal story or hidden intentions into the meaning a work of art or literature. Artwork emerges from within and through the conscious or subconscious reception by its audience; it is completed through and vested with meaning through the participant-spectator. Concept
artist Marcel Duchamp (2015) expressed a similar stance in arguing that a work of art only exists and is completed in the moment it is encountered and perceived by an audience.

The implication of this warning not to over-analyze or read too much (of one’s own agenda) into one’s experience of someone else’s works provides a useful caveat for zombie studies scholars. The knowledge that late 18th century Haitian plantation slaves feared nothing more than to be enslaved by their master even in the afterlife and that cases of real-world Haitian zombies have been recorded and documented by anthropologists such as Wake Davis (1988) has nothing whatsoever to do with a catatonic Romero zombie roaming aimlessly through a mall in post-apocalyptic America while gnawing on human bones. To draw a conclusion that slavery and mindless consumerism have anything in common trivializes the burden suffered by past and present slaves; it also trivializes the dark legacy of slavery that lives on in the current New Jim Crow American reality (Alexander, 2010). What really matters in many of these iconic zombie-genre movies is the way they envision power as operating in an imaginary catastrophic future. The deep fear of totalitarian rule or its opposite, total anarchy points to a perhaps surprising desire to return to the absolute sovereign rule described by Thomas Hobbes. This, then is the true drama of the films, not the minutia of the monster itself. The fantasy and dread of an attempted takeover by an existing autocratic, strictly hierarchical organizational form that is exemplified by military or
corporate structures is often depicted in the horror and science fiction genre; the zombie or alien or artificial intelligence embodiments behind these takeovers are qualitatively interchangeable. There is, for instance, no field of study called Terminator studies, referring to a popular move franchise, though the concept is fundamentally the same as that of zombies, aliens or other AIs. “Zombie” studies therefore piggyback on the current hype and economic success of the filmic and literary zombie genre, and in so doing, unwittingly normalize the deeper meanings proposed by the industry itself: violence and atrocity are fair game because their excessive uncanny presentation desensitizes audiences and makes them more readily accept real-world human rights violations and real-life humanitarian crisis, injustices, and genocide.

Recalling Benjamin’s (1991) words on the aestheticization of politics, the step from civil society to a civil war society is a relatively small one and historically speaking, has been taken before. An analysis of fascist visual culture, architecture, and public works projects has been a central to this study for the purpose of isolating them from their normalized quotidian context and critically call attention to their subconscious workings and effects on civil society. The lack of deeper intellectual content in TV shows such as The Walking Dead and its offshoot, Fear The Walking Dead, is made clear by the completely ridiculous and utterly vacuous comments of a young character. Sitting on the back of an enormous pickup truck, the young man puts words to his love for the zombie apocalypse:
This is awesome, no speed limits, no cops, no work, no money, no bills, no bullshit, we’re just living! It’s awesome and supernatural; we were less than nothing before but now, [long pause] the end times made us gods.” (TWD, S.2, E 10, min. 35)

Unfortunately for him, the young man has misread the reality of the end-times completely. There are no gods in hell, inasmuch as Christian eschatology is concerned, and in the present-worldly nightmare, feeble, weak-minded individuals of his kind are the very first to die. But, most of the shows’ fans are young to middle-aged and strongly identify with the frontier spirit approach to life and self, i.e. you can re-make yourself as you wish in a world without order. The truth of the series’ reality is that even the lack of order is also a form of order—in fact, it is the natural order—the second law of thermodynamics, that is, that entropy overrides all other organizing orders. Life on earth is an exception, a biosphere that has emerged out of the chaos of stardust. Entropy is the force that pulls everything back to its natural state, which is energetically much more stable. Why contribute to the acceleration of this process with mindlessness and hyper-individualized selfishness? The transcendence of the self in the form of a detonation is fascist and should not be naturalized but rather called out for what it is by scholarship.

4.2.7. The Occupation of Reality by Fiction

The culture industry tends to make itself the embodiment of authoritative pronouncements, and thus the irrefutable prophet of the prevailing order. It skillfully steers a winding course between the cliffs of demonstrable misinformation and manifest truth, faithfully reproducing the phenomenon
whose opaqueness blocks any insight and installs the ubiquitous and intact phenomenon as ideal. (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 15)

Outgoing President Eisenhower’s admonitory comments about the military-industrial complex during his 1961 Farewell Address have acquired an almost iconic status over time. Notably, this famous speech was broadcast to the American people not only via radio but also via TV. During the Second World War, radio and film had already been established as the two most important mass media formats, and both were comprehensively instrumentalized by political leaders for propaganda and psychological operations. Moreover, the Axis Powers, Rome, Berlin, and Tokyo, and the Allied Forces were also fighting a fierce information and communication war against each other. In the American postwar years, TV rapidly became the preferred mass media format, displacing radio and the silver screen in favor of an enhanced consumer culture, driven by cutting edge advertisement agencies. Eisenhower was by no means the first

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44 As mentioned earlier, the gifted German film director Leni Riefenstahl (1935) used Albert Speer’s neo-classical monumentalism as a backdrop for her own Nazi propaganda masterpiece, the film *Triumph of the Will*. Riefenstahl’s aesthetic style and innovative camera work impressed even American filmmakers such as Frank Capra (1942), who plagiarized her shamelessly because it had proven to be masterfully efficient as propaganda tool. Capra’s propaganda films *Why We Fight* were the American response to Riefenstahl’s and Hitler’s call to arms.

45 These agencies capitalize ruthlessly on the power of violent images to capture spectator attention. The business consists on focusing audience attention on the desired product. For the daily lives this meant that TV and movies began to be suffused by profoundly violent imagery and audiences incessantly being assaulted by ubiquitous representations of death and destruction. Television network news are essentially an assemblage of violent and tragic images gathered from across the world that are presented according to a prepackaged visual, aural and narrative formula that film and television studies scholar Deborah Jaramillo calls the “high
president to broadcast speeches to the people via TV, but he was the first to revel in it.
Not only did he deliver his most memorable public addresses via TV, he also used it as a public forum of sorts for connecting with American citizens on a personal, visceral level. Indeed, public TV replaced the town hall meeting as the most effective means of connecting directly with voters. Historian Yanek Mieczkowski (2013) writes, “Eisenhower was in fact the first chief executive of the television age”, and Ike and his wife Mamie were the first reality TV stars. They “ate dinner on TV trays while they watched the evening news”, Mamie even “grew hooked on the soap opera As The World Turns” (p. 100). Thanks to professional training by hired actor Robert Montgomery, Eisenhower’s fluency ‘on air’ acquired such sophistication that he “became the only president to win an Emmy Award for his pioneering use of television as a White House political instrument” (Mieczkowski, 2013, pp. 100 -101).

It is fascinating to recognize how the “unwarranted” (Eisenhower, 1961) conflation between heavy industry and government was effectively put on steroids as a result of the incorporation of emergent media and entertainment infrastructure. In his concept”. “High-concept films are easy to pitch, easy to understand, easy to sell and easy to consume” (Jaramillo, 2009, p. 15). According to Jaramillo, this formula was directly lifted from the highly successful Hollywood blockbuster culture and applied to modern day journalism.

46 This new performative role of the highest office in the U.S. is probably best captured by Ronald Reagan, a former Hollywood actor cum most powerful leader in the world. Reagan was always in character making him the ideal-type of media-aware and media savvy statesman who blurred the distinction between real politics and showbiz.
book *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan (1964) famously proposed the idea of media as the prosthetics that extend humans’ limited inborn sensory apparatus to its final articulation as a global information and communication network. His prescient and accurate description of today’s Internet also suggests the potential for media to augment or fully occupy human imagination—the medium is the message—which is, according to McLuhan, limited but eager to be expanded. The global information and communications networks provide precisely such perception-enhancing prosthetic technology, hardwiring power directly into the neural pathways of the human brain, representing the ultimate form of occupation.

Political economist Harold Innis (2007), McLuhan’s contemporary and colleague, laid out an array of ideas about the relationship between power structures and the projection of its administrative and governing infrastructure and political ideology through time and space. For Innis, the projection of power is determined by the “bias” inherent in the era’s dominant communication medium, which is to say, the temporal and spatial reach of empires depended on the durability and ruggedness—or fragility—of certain media formats. The spatially extensive empires such as the Roman or Mongol Empires, used light weight and portable media (i.e. parchment, papyrus, paper), carried on sophisticated road infrastructure to reach the furthest corners of their dominion thereby enabling expansionist communication, control and command structures. The downside of this type of media was its material fragility, which made it prone to
destruction; many of the era’s documents did not survive the passage of time. Little scholarship from purely aural cultures (e.g. Greece before writing was invented as a new technology) has survived to our time. The opposite can be said of cultural periods in which stone-carved hieroglyphs or ceramic cuneiform were the preferred means of communication and administration, for these forms favor temporal durability. Modern Museums are filled with Egyptian and Sumerian artifacts, which allow researcher to develop a far greater understanding of those cultures. According to Innis, each communication medium has a transformative effect on the particular social organizational forms within empires. Time-biased communication media favored centralized and less hierarchical social structures, whereas more ephemeral communication media enabled decentralized, spatially extensive but hierarchical societies.

Just what Innis’s work says about today’s highly diversified and complex mobile communication and information networks that favor decentralization in one sector and strict centralization in another is difficult to pinpoint. As Sassen (1991) noted in her study of “The Global City”, the drive towards centralization in this age of sophisticated information and communication technology, counterintuitive as it may seem, is equally prominent as its opposite, the distributed network nodes. Those modes of production that favor offshoring, outsourcing, supply chain management, logistics and financialization all require the best of both worlds in terms of centralized command and
widely distributed administration structures. For transnational corporations, it has become a recruiting necessity to offer their dynamic and cutting edge “talent” culturally and economically attractive work places. Only global cities offer enough concentrated cultural capital and life-style choices, which is why, according to Sassen, centralization is still an asset for modern corporations. It follows then that the upgraded version of Innis’s empire and communication theory would be something much more far-reaching and transformative than what in military terms is called Command, Control, Communication (CCC) infrastructure. International relations scholar, James Der Derian (2001) calls this new complex the military-industrial-media-entertainment network. In his book, entitled *Virtuous War Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media- Entertainment Network*, Der Derian (2001) identifies a highly profitable “virtual alliance” (p. xi) between U.S. defense industries and the American media and communication landscapes at large (Figure 96). The collaboration and synergies between Hollywood and the Pentagon (Valantin, 2005) stand out for legitimizing and normalizing the unjustifiable and unimaginable usages of modern day violence, which has accompanied America’s post-Second World War era imperial ambitions. Hollywood is very good at picking up controversial geopolitical topics to stir the emotions and conscience of their audiences.
In the current attention-grab economy\textsuperscript{47}, only the most striking and shocking topics attract the roaming and easily distractible eyes of the spectator. For instance, when the news broke about systematic torture and sexual abuse of prisoners of war in Iraq’s Abu Ghraib military prison facility, the so-called ‘free’ world seemed truly shocked (McCoy, 2006). It was hard for average Americans and Western Europeans to imagine that their noble and democratic intentions to free the world of a cruel and murderous dictator could possibly fall back to using similarly despotic and even worse methods to accomplish the goals. To extract evidence from prisoners under duress by heavily relying on modern torture techniques that had been lab-tested, scientifically researched and perfected in U.S. research Institutions were previously anathema to most citizens of the world. Wasn’t torture a stigma of the age of barbarism, something only animals would do to others like the fundamentalists in the Middle East or the secret police of the Southern Cone (Gill, 2004), commanded by despots like General Pinochet in the ex-Nazi run Colonia Dignidad? Hollywood sees it as its job to make teachable moments from such public confusion and collective trauma. The fact that it is the world’s leading

\textsuperscript{47} In a scathing critique of modern culture industries, Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) highlight the fact that reality and fiction have become indistinguishable. They write, “Real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies. The sound film, far surpassing the theater of illusion, leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience, who is unable to respond within the structure of the film, yet deviate from its precise detail without losing the thread of the story; hence the film forces its victims to equate it directly with reality” (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002).
dream-factory allows Hollywood to operate in the ethical and moral vacuum required to introduce new ideas and new realities to audiences all over the globe. If it were real and not fiction, spectators might choose not to watch the atrocities being (re-)presented. The embedded journalists of Operation Desert Storm showed no blood. They bore witness only to the Pentagon’s ideals of sanitized modern warfare with minimal body count and body bags (DerDerian, 2001). The idea put forth by Harun Farocki (2003) in his work, *Auge Maschine I-III* (Figure 97), is that much of remote controlled modern warfare is based on a new visual regime, one that lacks bloodshed but lures and excites viewers with its technological prowess. Via the visual system of laser-guided smart bombs, the spectator’s gaze becomes part of the machine. Much more than a simple video broadcast, this is an embodied battle experience that is broadcast so that the viewer can be an active (but protected) participant in it. The significance of the new frontier in cinematographic perception created by the televised crosshair vision of U.S. smart bombs is hard to estimate, but it can be argued that it propagates a sensation of pornographic omnipotence.

Actual images of blood, death and destruction are left mostly to Hollywood because it is supposed to be dreamland territory, not reality. However, in referring to photos taken of victims of the death camps of the Second World War, French philosopher Jacques Rancière marks a particular type of image, one that is intended to “witness” a truth, as if it were itself a part of the action, attesting, underlining its reality:
“witnessing always aims beyond what it presents. Images of the camps testify not only to the tortured bodies they show us, but also to what they do not show: the disappeared bodies, obviously, but above all the very process of annihilation” (2007, p. 26). Perhaps one of the best known example of what Rancière meant is the 1969 Pulitzer Prize winning Vietnam violent image of a man just moments before his terrifying, violent death (Figure 98). This image remains one of the most iconic in the history of photojournalism. For Rancière, such images are “naked” because they bear witness to the entire history of the Vietnam War, which includes all the annihilated bodies that cannot be seen. The audiences’ aesthetic experience of the Viet Cong execution image has created a collective memory of sorts, which is carried henceforth like a burden of collective bad conscious. These kinds of profoundly disturbing, violent images create collective trauma, which acquire, in a sense, their own agency by demanding perpetual reenactments or mimesis. Considering the innumerable examples of similar images from the 1990s Balkan War onward, the mimetic reenactments of past trauma confirms what Baudrillard conceptualizes as the “hyperreal” or the “simulacrum” (Baudrillard, 2001, p. 166), that is, the infinite repetition of the same event to the point “where distinctions between the simulated and the real begin to break down” (Der Derian 2001, p. 116).

In the same way, the mimetic power of violent images is apparent in the iconic torture images of U.S. military personnel in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Hollywood’s job is to normalize the Pentagon’s global power projection—including abuses—of
power under the mantle of free markets, international law and order, peace and prosperity. The myth has long been debunked, but the narrative is continuously pushed by Hollywood studios, particularly when it comes to justifying or fabricating the reasons for invading or occupying foreign national territories such as Bush’s 2003 war in Iraq. In order to frame military operations affectively if not logically, the ‘good cop, bad cop’ narrative is useful because “the doctrine of pre-emptive war is based on the idea that a certain number of States present and unacceptable threat for the United States and most industrialized countries” (Valantin, 2005, p. 103). In Hollywood’s geopolitical thriller Syriana (Gaghan, 2005) for instance, the American protagonist is tortured by an Arab-looking man. In a close-up shot, the audience sees the American man’s fingernails being pulled out with a pair of pliers. Later, after having survived torture and almost certain death at the hand of his tormentor, the American is killed by the friendly fire of a clandestine U.S. drone strike meant for someone on the Pentagon’s ominous kill list. In the film the concepts of justice and injustice are represented neutrally, as if encouraging

48 The intellectual establishment in the U.S. entered the lively TV debates about legitimate use of torture as well in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks. During CBS’s popular program, 60 Minutes, the Harvard Law professor Alan M. Dershowitz used the “ticking bomb case” as a legitimizing scenario in which torture was inevitable: “If you’ve got the ticking bomb case, the case of the terrorist who knew precisely where and when the bomb would go off, and it was the only way of saving 500 or 1000 lives, every democratic society would have and will use torture” (McCoy, 2006, p. 111). But “torture’s perverse pathology” (McCoy, 2006, p. 112) consists in the fact that it corrupts both the victims of torture and the perpetrators, which means that the results are not trustworthy and that societies that allow torture tend to fall apart.
the audience to choose for themselves. Is torture bad or necessary? Can drone strikes be justified or are they simply atrociously wrong—after all, the protagonist was killed alongside Pentagon’s target? Hollywood’s skill is to create a field of moral ambiguity, in which highly justified outrage is deluded by doubt.

In an episode of the science fiction fantasy TV series, *Terminator: The Sarah Connors Chronicles* (Freidman, 2008-09), which is loosely based on the popular *Terminator* movie franchise, the audience witnesses a human instructor teaching a group of Terminators, robot ‘trainees’, how to effectively torture a living human who is tied to a surgical operating table. The scene resembles famous oil paintings by artists like Rembrandt (*Figure 99*) in which human corpses are dissected for scientific reasons. The very idea of robot torture classes proposed in the episode are as shocking as they are philosophically interesting. Indeed, artificially intelligent killer robots would not know—for lack of pain receptors in their armor plated exoskeleton—how to inflict pain ‘efficiently’ in order to obtain intelligence data from their torture victims. Robots first need to be spoon-fed by a human torture expert how to and where to inflict pain on the human body (*Figure 100*). The science fiction genre lends itself to such the exploration of such philosophical musings.

Topics that are visual and ideological taboos are clandestinely explored by secret service organizations around the world can be presented to audiences as something very entertaining—the sauntering of the modern-day philosophical flaneur. Hardly anyone in
the audience will be troubled to learn that torture has long been an academically studied and that DARPA grant money bankrolled science. Indeed, academic research has discovered some of today’s most well-established and effective torture practices include the innovative techniques known as “self-inflicted pain” and “sensory deprivation”, which are both described in the CIA’s now declassified *Kubark Counterintelligence Interrogation Manual* from 1963. Kubark himself states: “It has been plausibly suggested that, whereas pain inflicted upon a person from outside himself may actually focus or intensify his will to resist, his resistance is likelier to be sapped by pain which he seems to inflicted upon himself” (McCoy 2006, p. 52). Also integral to the manual is the advised use of sexually abusive and humiliating positions. The Abu

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49 In his book *A Question of Torture*, historian Alfred McCoy (2006) delves deep into the dark recesses of American foreign policies and covert military operations. From the outset of his deeply troubling book, McCoy makes clear that America’s secret services do not develop its torture techniques in a vacuum, and that many institutions are invested and profit from torture research, including the prison industrial complex. He writes, “To test and then propagate its distinctive form of torture, the CIA operated covertly within its own society, penetrating and compromising key American Institutions—universities, hospitals, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the armed forces” (McCoy, 2006, p. 8).

50 The topic deserves a stand-alone study for the amount of cases that could be analyzed. The 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment under leadership of psychology professor Philip Zimbardo is just one scientific experiment funded by the military in which student were used as human guinea pigs to learn more about the effects of unrestrained authoritarian power held by one group (the prison guards) and the submission of another group (the inmates). The experiment rapidly spiraled out of control and into an example for the degrading effects of absolute power. The psychological torture of inmates by guards with sadistic tendencies after only three days was shocking but did not motivate Zimbardo to call of the experiment. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanford_prison_experiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanford_prison_experiment), 2016)
Ghraib imagery, which shows soldiers propped over the mostly naked and contorted bodies of bleeding Iraqi prisoners of war (POWs), are now part of the aforementioned collective memory’s growing ‘database’. As a combination of sexually explicit and violent images, such representations are a treasure trove waiting to be exploited for advertisement and marketing purposes. CIA’s “no-touch torture” (McCoy, 2006) can be quite literally translated into ‘no-touch couture’, for star designer John Galliano (2008) baffled more than just fashion enthusiasts when his half naked male models appeared on the catwalk wearing Abu Ghraib-style fashion and props (Figure 101). For a while, the Italian fashion magazine Vogue Italia featured a new trend called “terror chic” in which extremely thin photo models posed in demeaning and submissive Abu Ghraib inspired poses and sadomasochism outfits.

In late sixties, British pop artist Allen Jones started to create controversial sculptures that objectified female bodies as furniture in torture-like positions. For Kubrick’s A Clockwork Orange (1971), Allen designed the comically offensive furniture of the “milk bar” (Figure 102). Despite the controversy his “women as furniture” (Wroe, 2014) sculptures aroused, Allen considers himself to be a feminist critiquing the objectification and fetishization that he represents with his works. He shares a similar tone and method of over-identification with the artist Santiago Sierra, however, the latter of whose works are by no means aesthetically pleasing enough to inspire people to actually decorate their homes with them. In all of these cases, the works represent the
crossing of a not so fine line. Here again, artists as professionals in the creation of collective representations are in the powerful position of inspiring mimicry by either less talented or less scrupulous artists. The mighty symbolism of an image can easily become a terrifying weapon and dangerous floating signifier when used by the wrong people. The most horrific instantiation of this can be found in the terror group Islamic State and their media war against the West.

For Americans, then torture seems to only become visually disgusting when it is perpetrated on Americans or Western democracy nationals, as in the case of YouTube broadcast beheadings by ISIS fanatics. The fact that the orange jumpsuits are the typical American attire for prison inmates, Guantanamo Bay terror suspects, and Abu Ghraib torture victims eludes most audiences—or at least, the notion that ISIS is using orange jumpsuits as a retributive part of a mimetic warfare strategy. It can therefore be argued that iconic violent images—naked images (Ranciere, 2007)— become freely exchangeable goods in a global market place that distributes fear and terror among its peoples. Any actively subversive agent of the hegemonic world order can appropriate the propaganda images of the dominant world order and launch them as a boomerang of sort back at its distributing sources, even in highly amplified form if need be. The image makers face off with the image breakers in a 24/7 cycle. The 9/11 attacks are the most stunning example of this, but many less momentous instances exist, if the observer is willing to engage the flood of images—noise really—circulating at any given time.
One way to counteract the cycle of vicious images, of the society of noise, which has replaced the society of the spectacle, is to turn off technological devices and listen to the quiet within.
Conclusion

Learning how and when to trust one’s visual perceptions is central to my (2012) participatory artwork, *Me Seeing Us* ([Figure 103](#)). This work comprises two freestanding ‘window’ frames that sit atop a table and two chairs, sitting ready for audience participants, positioned on either side of the frames. Two audience-participants are invited to sit on opposite sides of the table and look at each other through the ‘window’ frames. The frames’ glass panes are covered in mirrored stripes, which distort one’s view of the other person such that his/her view of himself is merged with that of the other person, creating a non-digital blending or composite of the two audience-participants’ faces. In other words, because the mirrored stripes only partially reflect each person’s image, the human brain completes the ‘missing’ parts by merging the two partial images into a composite image. The artwork’s setup is intentionally reminiscent of the spatial organization of the visitor area in high-security prisons. The visitor is kept physically separate from the inmate and can only interact through the security glass. *Me Seeing Us* is a platform for the cultivation of empathy, as it suggests that humanity is a shared good that all of us carry within and that misfortune can affect each of us at any time.

* * *
If any universal allegory has the potential to represent the dilemmas of the contemporary moment—its structure of feeling—then it is Greek mythology’s Medusa, not zombies. A single creature, so frightening in countenance that a person can only face her reflection to avoid being rendered catatonic; innumerable hissing snakes as her hair, each one symbolizing some outrageous calamity or injustice to be cast on the daily lives of humans. Isn’t this what the former director of the Office of Net Evaluation at the Pentagon, Andrew Marshall, meant when in 1995, he referred to the post-Cold-War world as a jungle in which innumerable poisonous snakes were on the lose and impossible to keep under control (Der Derian & Gara, 2012)? Marshall was trying to be poetic but also vague in his description of a new geopolitical and geo-economic world order. He was, of course, one of Medusa’s many snake heads, trying to divert citizens’ attention from the fact that there no longer existed either a clearly discernible enemy (Feind) or a symbolic representation of what might serve even as a provisional placeholder, so that a new enemy image (Feindbild) could being artificially produced.

Medusa is also the perfect symbolic representation of capital. Capital is ugly. It operates via innumerable snake heads, each one capable of poisoning human life in a different way. The bioeconomic snake head of finance capital largely rids itself of any dependence on human labor and a material-based production cycle. Immaterial, algorithmic program- and high-frequency-trading is a perpetual motion machine of wealth production and extraction. The traditional friction between the demands of wage
labor and fixed capital expenditures has been cast aside like an old snake skin. What has emerged in its stead is a capitalist world-economy that extracts value and wealth from within its self-perpetuating operations, which require little or no input from without. Some of capital’s snakes have maintained an appetite for more material sustenance. Their extraction operations latch onto and occupy the resources of variously scaled bodies: formerly constitutionally sovereign foreign political bodies are transformed into states of dependency via credit systems, free market or licensing agreements, World Bank- and IMF-backed development enterprises, externally imposed military, educational, or securitization projects; collective bodies—religious, ethnic, racial, sexual, political—are identified, categorized, and if need be, demonized via the propagation of constructed stereotypes and then, when necessary, ostracized, incarcerated or eliminated either via social- or physical death; individual bodies, now exploited 24/7 via information and communication technologies at work, home, and even, in the bedroom; those bodies that lack access to technology or skills are considered superfluous and treated and disposed of as human waste. Of the 65 million migrants currently on the move, very, very few will be granted access to a dignified future.

Medusa’s many other snakes reach far and wide, but unlike the mythological living dead, she is mortal. Many have argued that capital is in its death throws. David Harvey’s (2014) latest book, Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism, identifies 17 systemic flaws that have the potential of bringing down the whole capital apparatus.
The question is not when the collapse will happen but how. If Harvey is right, what then? Returning to the allegory of Medusa, even in death, she is a weapon of mass destruction (Figure 104). Her deadly gaze will still petrify enemies, unless of course her head is stored safely in an opaque bag or impenetrable storage container. That is, in order to escape the deadly, all seeing eyes of capital, new productive and social forms need to be invented or old discarded ones revisited. Aside from proposing we fix each and every of capital’s 17 systemic flaws, Harvey (2014) suggests a return to a kind of hopeful state of self-determination, based on humanistic ideals: “Humanism, both religious and secular is a world view that measures its achievements in terms of the liberation of human potentialities, capacities and powers” (p. 283). As appealing as his position is, such idealism qua naïveté makes it fanciful, at best, irresponsibly delusional, at worst.

Contrary to what is a quintessentially American belief, there are not always easy solutions to complex problems. And there is no single, marketable product for every ailment. Treating the increasing clinical anxiety syndromes in young children with ever new pharmaceuticals is most certainly not the right way to solve a complex problem.¹

¹ Internet critic Evgeny Morozov (2013) calls this phenomenon “technological solutionism”. His own analysis focuses on the hyped promises of digital information and communication networks to solve every and any problem under the sun. The Internet, like no other ‘place’, exemplifies more clearly the human illusion that a technological fix as simple as the click of a computer mouse is the expression of democratic participation and of actually finding or at least...
in fact, it has created a much more serious problems, like antibiotic resistant bacteria, increased cases of ADHD, increased aggression and violence in children, to name just a few). Instead, why not convince parents to cut back on (or completely eliminate) their children’s time playing violent video games? Why not limit children’s stultifying screen time? How about encouraging free outdoor play with peers, instead of a dose of Ritalin? A new (infra)structure of feeling has emerged from the irreversible advances of information and communication technologies. Life’s complexities are exceedingly intertwined with non-biological subsystems via the ubiquitous technology environments at home, school and at work. However, as biological organisms, humans require more than technological fixes to stay healthy and indeed, happy.

The truth is, there exists no accelerated freeway for solving problems that have been carried over through the centuries. The list of items that will not simply dissipate over time include the colonial legacies in Africa, the Caribbean, South East Asia, and South America, America’s continued domestic social conflicts grounded in century old racial discrimination and institutionalized oppression against minority groups, and

contributing to a useful and sustainable solution to an existing problem. The ever growing, increasingly unreliable data ‘cloud’ is indeed the immaterial embodiment of yet another solution to a problem: the idea that cumulative data points, big data sets analyzed by some holy grail-like algorithm might spit out revelatory answers to all of human society’s problems. This is yet another instance of technological mythmaking.

2 Ever more parents chose to medicate their small children after an attention deficit disorder diagnostic. For more information, see: https://www.drugs.com/ritalin.html.
Germany’s ontological hostility towards the religious, ethnic or racial Other. Depending on the varying degrees of ethnic and racial homogeneity, Germany’s problem also holds true for other nations in the European Union (e.g. Austria). Simplifying complex histories and the ensuing social realities is neither useful nor constructive. Complex systems in any field—mathematics, physics, computerized program trading platforms, climate warming models, crowd behavior models, and so on—always imply a degree of uncertainty and irreversibility (Wallerstein, 2004). In the social field of civilian society such a state of generalized uncertainty and irreversibility does not sit or bode as well as it may in the field of hard sciences. Uncertainty and irreversibility can easily become building blocks of anger, fear and anxiety in humans who realize and reject the idea that they are no longer the masters of their own reality or fate.

Human biology is equipped with subconscious defense mechanisms that allows individuals to project existential fears onto external “enemies” or scape goats. The mechanism is meant to preserve an internal equilibrium that would otherwise reach untenable levels of instability and potentially spiral out of control. Human biology and scapegoating, however are no more the solution to global problems than is the promise of technological fixes. So what is to be done? The temporalizing practice of traveling may be one approach, though perhaps not the solution. The traveler always encounters bifurcations along the way. A traveler’s rule of thumb: one way to move forward and
choose the right path to continue the voyage is to avoid the path that is known to lead in the wrong direction.

For instance, in 1984, during his first diplomatic trip to Israel, the long-term former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (Brenner, 2013) famously declared that he belonged to a new generation of German citizens who had “the mercy of late birth” (*die Gnade der späten Geburt*). He meant that those Germans who, like he, were born after 1930 were free of guilt for the crimes committed under the Nazi regime. In other words, he introduced himself and the first generation of Germans who, out of pure luck, were too young to have had to make the hard choice to resist, tolerate, support or even partake in the atrocities committed by the Third Reich. Kohl’s quip was intended to be a blanket exemption of guilt, a moral waiver of sorts, that was also supposed to level the geopolitical field, since Germany’s post-holocaust relationship to Israel had thusfar been anything but balanced. Kohl believed this to be a necessary speech-act for moving forward (assuming that history unfolds in linear progression) and building new relationships with Israel, in particular and the world, in general.

Kohl’s statement is useful for this investigation for several reasons. First, in speaking as he did, he was obviously attempting to make a clear cut between the past and the present in order to build a better, guilt-free future for Germany. He banked on the acceptance of his statement and that a geopolitical and socio-economic *tabula rasa* could be established with one fair sweep. Without the continued daily burden weighing
heavily on the shoulders of every German—this guilt-ridden legacy of crimes against humanity having been committed on an industrial scale—Kohl’s new Germany would finally be allowed to shed its ontological gilt, and once again become a morally free, better, trustworthy and peaceful nation. Kohl’s naiveté and disingenuity are astounding. History does not unfold linearly, and events do not happen sequentially and in isolated social or political bubbles. A clean cut with the past is never possible and most importantly, not really desirable. Instead, history should and must be conceived as a spatiotemporal unfolding in order for us to learn from it and avoid making the same mistakes again. The socio-political reality of any given historic moment is a three dimensional architecture, a causal network of events that are too complex to be easily untangled with clarity. This should not deter attempts at finding hidden truths that have the potential of teaching humans some critical lessons. And from this perspective, there never has been and will never be mercy for having been born ‘too late’. Every new generation is called to the task of dealing with the legacies of the collective violence that was organized by its ancestors.

Second, Kohl knew his history very well. He knew that the vast majority of Nazi perpetrators were never convicted or even held sufficiently accountable for their acts. In fact, most of the Nazi “middle management” was let off the legal hook, unscathed and able to enjoy long, prosperous lives in post-Holocaust Germany. One of the more prominent examples is Hitler’s closest confident and at times one and only friend, Albert
Speer, his chief architect and later, Minister of Armaments and War Production (Kitchen, 2015). Speer was without a doubt one of the Nazi regime’s most insidious and powerful figures and was responsible for making innumerable decisions that led directly to the death of countless individuals. Furthermore, his legendary organizational skills are said to have unnecessarily prolonged the German resistance to Allied military campaigns, thereby extending the war. And yet, for lack of more incriminating evidence, he did not receive a death sentence at the Nuremberg trials; instead, he was given a mere 20-year prison sentence.

Hannah Arendt’s (1963) famously controversial assessment of Nazi criminal, Adolf Eichmann as a weak, foolish, even blind follower of orders—a bureaucrat without awareness of the bearing of his inhumane acts—the banality of evil, as she called it—was not meant to pardon or excuse such historic figures. She spoke to a far more insidious, frightening fact about pure evil: that it may hide in plain sight in the form of the faceless, spineless and non-charismatic figure rather than the pompous, populist leaders who stand out for everyone to admire or hate. It is rather the faceless followers, the jealous survivors (Canetti, 1998) are the true basis of evil. Arendt wrote too of the faceless German bystanders of this day and age, who cheeringly watch a Neo-Nazi mob torch refugee residences all across the country; she spoke of the fearful white American Walmart customer, who calls security when she sees Black American John Crawford shop for a toy gun and who then gets publically executed within a second of the arrival
of police special forces. The legacy of German National Socialism and that of American slavery will never cease to affect the lives of present and future generations. It is therefore critical to confront, analyze, understand and truly exterminate and purge the evil legacies from the social heart. And it is precisely this that has been one of the central goals of this study.

Third, Kohl knew very well that there exists no such thing as “the mercy of late birth”. We all are the product of our own past, that of our parents’ and their parents’ past. This held true even if we never had the opportunity to actually meet our grandparents because they were exterminated in the Nazi Holocaust or lynched by an angry white mob. To explore and learn from our individual and collective pasts is an opportunity for deep historic understanding and not an excuse for forgetting, as Kohl tried to convince his public. If we seek to forget rather than to recall, understand or critically analyze, then we miss a chance for personal and collective betterment. If we seek only to passively commemorate (Senie, 2016) and not to actively interrogate the errors of our forefathers, then we will be prone to repeating their mistakes.

For instance, if we compare the fundamentals of America’s Vietnam War with America’s invasion and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq 30 years later, we must recognize the startling similarities between the outcomes of the two wars. Both wars were exceedingly long and were started without deep insight or knowledge of the on-the-ground cultural realities. Cultural differences were systematically ignored. Both
wars were caused by the unraveling of destructive colonial legacies. In both wars, traditional battlefields were replaced by civil war like campaigns against largely civilian populations trapped in urban centers. Both wars left the indigenous populations either dead, forever psychologically traumatized or physically maimed. Generations of America’s Agent Orange victims in Vietnam will still be born in the very future of the nation. Both wars disrupted regional geopolitical equilibria, fueling latent ethnic and socio-political conflicts, leading to post-war ethnic cleansing, sectarian or ideological inspired genocide, and mass exodus. Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees fled their countries years and even, decades after America’s war had officially ended. Like today’s refugees from the Middle East, who drown by the thousands in the Mediterranean Sea in their attempts to reach safe havens in Europe, the boat people of South East Asia perished in the hundreds of thousand in the rough waters of the Indian Ocean. In America hardly anyone will ever claim to possess “the mercy of late birth” for what has happened in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, because precisely the same in unfolding live on Facebook today in Iraq and Syria. If history is anything like Benjamin’s poetically theorized “Angel of History”, then we must ask the Angel to turn around and face the facts of the present and the future. The rubble that Benjamin’s Angel sees lying at her feet, which cannot be repaired, can at least be made productive as podium of learning. This has been another of the goals of the analyses proposed by this study.
This study argues that a violent regime of occupation by capital can be “read” (Geertz, 1973) by examining society’s built environment. The intermodal infrastructure of capital operations is mostly visible and tangible, which means it can be physically and emotionally experienced, visited, walked on, documented and textually analyzed. There are immaterial and symbolic layers that are easily overlooked, and this study sheds light on some of the hidden recesses of capital. The idea of an era’s structure of feeling has been expanded by the operational and productive dimension behind the term infrastructure. The concept of an emergent infrastructure of feeling lends itself to this study’s investigation of fear as an economically productive mechanism. Excessive fear has become a pathological side effect of modern society, a symptom that points towards some deeper ill within the body politic. A cultural overidentification with fear and terror has brought forth dark and self-defeating collective representations of death-worlds. Fictitious representations of an imminent apocalypse mimic the spaces of death that global armed conflicts have created in real life. Collective representations are in a state of deep crisis.

If iconic infrastructure can shape and invigorate collective representations, then other domains outside of the built environment can serve a very similar function. For instance, by comparing the U.S. dollar with the European Euro, one thing stands out: American currency depicts the faces of presidential luminaries, whereas Europe’s currency showcases a potpourri of architecture and infrastructure (Figure 105). The
symbolic significance of this difference is very meaningful. For citizens of the European Union, the collective imagination is shaped by the built environment, which as has been pointed out repeatedly, is the physical evidence and result of what has been achieved collectively in the joint venture of a communion of nations. For Americans, it is the outstanding individual who is admired most—the charismatic leader, the revolutionary mind, the inventor of things. In the U.S., above all the minutia of actual societal accomplishments towers the idea that exceptional individuals build the nation, not a collective. Benjamin (1991) compares the ornamentation on banknotes with religious iconography. He writes, “Compare the holy iconography (Heiligenbilder) of various religions on the one hand with the banknotes of various countries on the other: The spirit that speaks from the ornamentation of banknotes” (p. 260). Many nation-states collectively identify with these Heiligenbilder, make them their own, and seek to mimic their passion, drive, self-sacrifice, and so on. America takes this desire to the next level. The exceptionalism of the outstanding individual has been transformed into a collective conception of national exceptionalism. The U.S. sees itself as a nation of exceptional achievers, the meritocratic ideology of which also justifies many of the nation’s most troubling and institutionalized injustices. In the U.S., persons who lack talent, a special gift or simply the good fortune of having inherited wealth are forced into a marginalized existence.
The findings of this study preclude easy solutions to difficult problems. The idealistic, teleological belief in the principle of hope (Bloch, 1986), falls short in many ways. To hope for better times to come or for a more equitable future to present itself automatically presupposes a belief system that assumes a linear and more importantly, positivistic progression of humanity. The idea that human history is incomplete—a work in progress, so to speak—that will become completed, puzzle-like, in a distant future loses much of its viability in consideration of the latest, cutting-edge scientific research. For instance, the potential for an accelerated global warming rate poses the very real risk of destroying life on planet earth. Life on a Mars-like planet or an exodus into deep space is not really a viable option. Of course, hopeful thinking alone will not propel humans into a survivable, civilized and peaceful future. In fact, the statistical probability of the exact opposite materializing presents itself as the more likely outcome. It is hard to argue against all the evidence that the human capacity for self-destruction trumps its constructive accomplishments. This study has drawn from many different fields to come to the overall assessment that humanity has lost its bearing, its inner compass and sense of purpose. Humanity, it seems, has lost the capacity to clearly distinguish between what is socially, politically, economically, morally or ethically right or wrong. And any consensus about finding a collective platform from which to tackle the truly momentous challenges facing humanity on the early 21st century have evaporated, melted into air, as Marx famously declared in 1848.
Considering the dire evidence gathered in this study, a new starting point for a collective re-imagining of the future is urgently needed. The project this study proposes is a reconfiguration of ‘the principle of trust’. What does this project entail? In times when people seems to have lost trust in themselves, given up on many of their youthful socio-political aspirations, lost trust in their political institutions and the persons they once looked up to, then a reconstruction and rehabilitation of the very concept of trust is required. People must learn how to trust again—trust that there will still be a tomorrow worth living and struggling for. This emotional and intellectual reconstruction and rehabilitation of trust requires (inter-) active participation. To trust also means to be trusted. Trust, however, is not the same as hope. A reconstitution of the trust principle begins with empirical evidence; hope begins where empiricism ends and idiosyncratic belief systems begin. One clear indicator that inter-human trust has largely broken down in real life is the fact that people consume entertainment products that envision the human future as an unforgiving total war of all against all. This occupation of the imagination has been carried over into the daily lives of people. The collective trust in leaders, bosses, work colleagues, friends, and even irrefutable scientific facts is waning. A breach of trust must be received as socially offensive and unacceptable. It must be collectively called out and shunned. The only basis on which to establish social solidarity is through mutual trust. In the early days of social media platforms (Myspace, Facebook or Twitter), users were tempted to share all sorts of personal details. Today, it
is clear that such trust was unwarranted and ill-advised. A persons’ social standing and professional prospects may well depend on the strict curation of shared personal data. The principle of trust in the Internet age has indeed become boxed-in behind firewalls and layers of third party security protocols.

This study does not propose giving up privacy as a prerequisite for the reestablishment of collective trust, as has been ambiguously suggested in David Eggers’ (2013) dystopian³ novel The Circle. Quite the contrary. In order to rebuilt trust in political institutions, the institutions must trust their clients by granting them absolute privacy in all domains that once used to be truly private. It does not make sense to live in so-called free democratic nations if the government itself is exempt from the rules and laws it seeks to impose on its citizens. A political system that is built on accountability and trusted electoral representation works only if the trust and accountability work both ways. Once trust has been thrown out of the political window, social solidarity becomes frail.

Art is part of the social field in which trust can be rehearsed and experienced collectively and individually. Audiences can learn how to trust their own eyes, ears, and

³ A world drowned in a panoptic technology environment does not lend itself as an inspiring utopian outlook. It is of course the exponentiation of Orwellian horrors. The protagonist’s TED-talk-style manifesto reads like a secret service agent’s dream come true: “secrets are lies”, “sharing is caring”, and last but not least, “privacy is theft”.

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feelings without a need to overanalyze or intellectualize. A true work of art has the potential to hit a person in the right spot—to build a structure of feeling that is encompassing and real. This structure of feeling is not artificial via fake sentiments like so much of what comes out of Hollywood’s franchise production stream. A true and truthful engagement with art empowers; it encourages audiences to venture into new spaces and places in an embodied, present way. Art stages place by filling a space with meanings. And indeed, it is place that humans long for in their quest to find meaning in life. Place allows humans to meet one another to form social worlds that are rich and enduring and mutually supportive.
Epilogue

Social life is messy, uncertain, and emotional. If our desire is to research social life, then we must embrace a research method that, to the best of its/our ability, acknowledges and accommodates mess and chaos, uncertainty and emotion. (Adams, 2015, p. 9)

The nation-state is often situated on the cusp of a dilemma that is directly related to tension between selfhood and authority: founded in revolution against authority, the official national entity must now impose an authority of its own. (Herzfeld, 1997, p. 171)

My interest in the materials examined in this dissertation are rooted in my autobiography. I grew up all over the world thanks to my father’s career as civil engineer. The formative years of my childhood were defined by constant relocations to Germany, to Hong Kong, to Guatemala and finally, back to Germany. In the gaps between my father’s projects, I spent weeks and sometimes months in the Philippines, Thailand, Chile, the United States, Belize, and South Africa. I grew up to become the personification of what today might be described as a global citizen1. The effects of this transient lifestyle on my sense of cultural belonging and personal identity were and

1 This is the admittedly benevolent description of an increasingly common concept of global citizenship and a personal identity based on mobility and a non-reliance on enclosed nation-state boundaries. The notion of ‘home’ or a ‘homeland’ is increasingly passé. And yet, in a recent speech, the conservative British Prime Minister, Theresa May, criticized the idea of a global citizenry by stating that “if you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere. You don’t understand what citizenship means” (Bearak, 2016). The loss of a sense of home and national identity is arguably at the very heart of the internationally increasing emotional allure and political strength of right-wing, populist, anti-immigrant and anti-globalization movements.
remain far-reaching. As the son of a German corporate executive, I lived a socially and economically privileged life. This is something I took for granted as a child but in hindsight, find problematic. And yet, our regular moves meant that more than any of my more geo-culturally grounded peers, I experienced a recurrent uprooting from my “home” community. Every time I began to feel at home in a new place, my parents told us we had to pack up and move to a new corner of the planet. I never stayed in one place long enough to fully adapt to or assimilate the local culture or language, German or otherwise. In the 1970s, the places where I lived were still unaffected by neoliberalism, a fact that was fast changing, thanks to the relentless work of people like my father. I knew nothing of this pattern of destruction and remaking. For me, the world was a messy, wild and ever-changing place, and my youthful innocence prevented me from realizing that I was a ‘contemporary witness’ (Zeitzeuge) to the momentous transformation of nations.

The ghosts of my childhood subconsciously suffused all of my early artistic work. As a child, I witnessed local economies and cultures being reshaped in the image of an integrated, standardized, globalized world economy (Easterling, 2014; Latham, 2014).

2 The English translation of the German term Zeitzeuge into ‘contemporary witness’ loses some of its deeper meanings and subtle connotation. A similarly inaccuracy arises when Hegel’s concept of a Zeitgeist is translated into ‘spirit of the time’. Such uniquely German language compound nouns inevitably surrender certain depth and associated meanings during translation. In this study, all terms in German are translated into English by the author.
My art was my way of making sense of this world. As a mature adult, my subconscious voice has developed into conscious awareness. I now want to understand what I see. My research has helped me tie together my art and my understanding of how my past has impacted my life and made the world what it is today. My current artistic voice is much changed; now, theory and practice are one.

What follows is an autoethnographic (Adams, 2015) account of the intersecting scales and trajectories of the personal, familial, and communal, and the corporate and transnational. This subjectivity of narration—of the (hi)story—is inspired by Colombian novelist Gabriel Garcia Marques’s magical realist masterpiece, One Hundred Years of Solitude (1970), which was published shortly after my birth. My reference to magical realism is grounded in a desire to situate and expand the narrative and theoretical scope of this analysis. According to the editors of Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community, a collection of essays on magical realism, Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris argue that "magical realism often facilitates the fusion, or coexistence, of possible worlds, spaces, systems that would be irreconcilable in other modes of fiction" (1995, pp. 3).

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3 According to Tony Adams (2015), autoethnography is a research practice that contextualizes an author’s personal experience with his/her proposed study of other cultures, his/her practices and experiences, and further grounds gained knowledge in the inescapable personal subjectivities of the researcher. My autoethnography is my record of the studied intersection of the deep interaction between the personal, the social, and the political realities of the self and a rigorous intellectual, methodological, emotional and creative process that as a unified practice strives to make society a better place.
5-6). Anthropologist Ajun Appadurai (1996) puts it in even simpler terms by writing, “magical realism is interesting not only as a literary genre but also as a representation of how the world appears to some people who live in it” (p. 58). It is with this spirit that the present dissertation proposes the eradication of established boundaries between art and theoretical research and calls for a revitalization of a cross-disciplinary mode of intellectual and artistic inquiry.

**A Magical Realist (Hi)Story of Neoliberalism**

In 1970s Germany, it was highly unusual for families to move away from their homeland (*Heimat*) and settle, even temporarily, in distant countries for the sake of career advancement. My family’s lifestyle was therefore extremely anomalous. Because my father, then in his late thirties, had grown anxious about and unhappy with his professional prospects as a mining and tunneling engineer in Germany, he accepted an offer by his employer, German Hochtief AG⁴, a leading national and international infrastructure construction company, to move with his wife and four children to British Hong Kong, China. In a joint venture operation with an Italian contractor, a new fresh water reservoir⁵ infrastructure was built to alleviate water shortages for one of the

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⁴ Henceforth, this study will refer to Hochtief Aktiengesellschaft (AG) as: Hochtief
⁵ The High Island Reservoir was built in response to a late 1960s water shutdown by the Chinese mainland and sought to establish fresh water independence. A controversial refugee camp was
British Empire’s last remaining crown colonies. At four year old, I knew nothing about the reason for our move to Hong Kong, but decades later, still have faint memories and recurring dreams from the experience of relocating to a geographically and culturally unfamiliar place. My mother and we four children stayed in Hong Kong for three years before returning to Munich, Germany. As a result of being offered an executive position in the company’s next signature project, the construction of the City’s first subway line, my father remained in Hong Kong.

For the rest of the family, resettling back to Munich, Germany was difficult. The Heimat had become culturally unfamiliar; my fluency in German had suffered, as I had mostly spoken British English in my early schooling at the highly reputed German Swiss International School on Hong Kong Island. My German schoolmates could not imagine the life I had led in colonial China. They were familiar with the animated U.S. TV comic show starring a would-be Kung-Fu fighting dog named Hong Kong Pfui, which

erected on its shores years after completion. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Island_Reservoir#Refugee_camp

Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan’s (1977) “space and place” distinction is key for an understanding of the formation of personal identity and sense of belonging. Only the personal rooting in a geographical space makes it a place; the overlap between Tuan’s concepts and the urban psychology model of Michel de Certeau (1984) will become apparent in this discussion.

In German, the exclamation “Pfui” is used as a reprimand for infants who put something filthy or disgusting into their mouths. The original English title for this early 70’s Kung-Fu movie parody was Hong Kong Phooey. Retrieved from https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fenn_%E2%80%93_Hong_Kong_Pfui and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong_Phooey).
emboldened them to mockingly nickname me Hong Kong Pfui. My brother, five years my senior, had more serious cultural integration problems. He faced such damaging daily physical bullying by his culturally intolerant schoolmates that my parents decided he should return to Hong Kong to live with my father. There, he completed the first part of his secondary education at a British middle school. My two older sisters seemed to have fared better in their new German high schools. In hindsight however, it proved to be the time during which my oldest sister began to personally suffer from the effects of a sort of chronic geo-cultural restlessness. Two years later, despite the personal downsides of our perpetual transience, my parents decided we should reunite the family by moving back to (my father and brother) in Hong Kong.

The memories from my second three-year stint in British Colonial China are much more vivid than those from the first three years. Our new house was in a relatively undeveloped area of the so-called New Territories, situated in the backlands of the Kowloon Peninsula and bordering Mao Zedong’s Mainland China. When the seasonal typhoons were about to make landfall, my father would take us to the coast to admire the swelling ocean and pounding winds. He would point North and tell us that

8 For my parents, like most of the other European expats we met, sending their children to a Chinese school was out of the question. Among European foreigners, the Hong Kong school system had a reputation for being far too authoritarian and focused on learning by disciplined memorization.
'Red China' was over there. This was the stuff of a lasting childhood image of a geopolitically ‘alien’ territory, exotic, menacing, “other”. Other formative and exciting experiences were my countless explorations of our immediate environs. My brother and I discovered a network of hand-dug underground tunnels and pill-boxes behind our house. Initially, we could only speculate about why they existed and who had built the fortifications. Still, we happily occupied these seemingly forgotten spaces. We made them our secret hiding places and spent hours rummaging around in and around them. Ignoring our fears, we ventured deep into the tunnel’s inner structures. There we were, the sons of a mining and tunneling engineer who had helped build post-war Germany’s top-secret Government Bunker⁹ (Regierungsbunker), unwittingly playing archeologists of war. We often ran into nests of giant, poisonous millipedes but were oblivious to the lurking dangers of abandoned explosives and weapon caches. I have since learned that we had innocently happened upon was a network of pristine ruins of the Chinese Japanese World War II defense lines. This so-called Gin Drinkers Line¹⁰ had been built

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⁹ The Government Bunker was a facility designed to accommodate and safeguard the top 4000 leaders and administrators of post-Second World War Germany. Retrieved from http://www.regbu.de/Fremdsprachen/GB1.html

¹⁰ The tunnel system was partially built by the British colonial forces, but later expanded with more makeshift and hand-dug hideouts by local Chinese resistance fighters. A great collection of images is found here: Retrieved from http://hongwrong.com/places-shing-mun-redoubt-hks-secret-wwii-tunnels/
by the British colonial administration and was later expanded by thousands of Chinese resistance fighters to fend off the 1942 Japanese Empire invasion of Hong Kong.

Most German families who had come, like us, to live and work in Hong Kong were largely isolated from the local Chinese culture, although the city had already become an established cosmopolitan melting pot—a global city (Sassen, 1991). Still, my deepest cultural connection was with Chinese food, which then as now, I truly loved. The scents and flavors I experienced as a child walking through food markets in Kowloon and Sai Kung are burned into my memory. My father’s business partners, local Chinese construction material suppliers, for instance, often treated our family to eat in the most clandestine but highest quality Chinese restaurants. The simple act of walking into these unpretentious establishments, which were filled with men loudly playing Mahjong, and being lead to a private dining booth felt like a huge privilege. My favorite dish was shark fin soup, but I also savored everything from boiled jellyfish,

De Certeau’s (1984) notion of “walking the city” as a form of writing the urban text in a spontaneous, unorganized way resonates strongly with my experience from that time. Indeed, I was writing my own life text—olfactory, visual, tactile, and subconscious memories stored and retrieved when activated on rare occasions by external stimuli. My first visit to New York’s Chinatown decades later triggered an intense revival of emotional connections to my childhood in Hong Kong. The olfactory biochemistry behind memory is fascinating and deserves more study.

A hugely popular Chinese board game that bears resemblance with the strategy card game Rummy. For more detailed information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahjong
steamed shrimp, lobster or crab to fried dog. Food was my passport to this “foreign” culture, which at least from a culinary perspective, was as much my home as Germany.

When my father was promoted to project leader, we moved into a bigger house. The Air House\(^\_\text{13}^\), as it was known, a secluded, sprawling modern, glass structure that overlooked the neighborhood and the various other islands from atop one of the many great hills, spoke to our detachment from the local population. In the 1970s, German corporations worked hard to make a deep, lasting impression on their business partners and potential new clients. Providing fantastic luxury housing for company executives was part of the benefits package for well-seated partners and employees. With our move to the Air House came a chauffeur, a gardener, and maids from the Philippines who cooked for us and took care of the household. This marked the point at which German cuisine, formerly prepared by my mother, became another vestige of our past, further weakening our German cultural identity. After several gruesome murder cases involving our European neighbors, Hochtief assigned an armed night guard with a watchdog to our home. These events served as dramatic reminders of our cultural

\(^{13}\) Today, the Air House neighborhood is very affluent and has consequently become a popular site for burglaries by organized criminals scavenging the high-end houses, as well as being the target locale for kidnappings, blackmail schemes and murder. Not unlike similar neighborhoods in Sao Paolo, Brazil (Caldeira, 2000), the high crime of this Hong Kong neighborhood stems largely from the festering discontent of the local poor about the extreme income disparity. The 2014 kidnapping of a Chinese fashion tycoon’s photo-model daughter is perhaps the most spectacular recent case (MacFarlan, 2015).
isolation; my childish playfulness was suddenly clouded by a new, lurking fear of
violent crime.

To be fair, my new, nightmarish fearfulness was also stimulated by my growing
exposure to broadcast media. TV and cinema played a formative role in my Hong Kong
experience, for I spent hours watching the most popular, mostly violent American TV
shows, none of which was being broadcast in Germany (at the time). As a family, we
would all gather around the TV set after dinner and watch shows such as *Star Trek, The
Six Million Dollar Man, Planet of The Apes,* or even the Vietnam War sitcom, *Mash.* When
my parents were invited to parties, my older siblings allowed me to watch horror shows
like the *Night Stalker* and other popular murder mysteries. My concept of “the bad guy”
did not have a particular face or national identity, but it loomed ever larger in my
imagination.

My father was an avid news broadcast consumer. Starting in 1975, in the
aftermath of the Vietnam War\textsuperscript{14}, news media was dominated by footage of Vietnamese
and Cambodian “boat people” (Wain, 1979, p. 161) arriving in the Hong Kong Bay. I will

\textsuperscript{14} The journalist Barry Wain (1979) describes the refugee situation as follows: “There is more to
the outflow than the aftermath of war prolonged, bitter and bloody as the 1960-75 conflict was.
Of the more than one million persons who have fled or been forced out of Indochina since
communist governments took over in 1975, by far the greatest number have left in the last 18
months”. The similarities the the current refugee crisis in Europe as a consequence of America’s
most recent military operation in the “Greater Middle East” (Bacevich, 2016) is remarkable.
never forget the TV images of flimsy junks so packed with human bodies that they spilled over the railings (Figure 10). Only now do I know where these refugees were coming from and how desperate they must have been to risk their lives attempting to reach the alleged safe haven of capitalist Hong Kong. Hundreds of thousands of “boat people” did not make it to Hong Kong because they drowned in the rough South China Sea (Becker, 1986). Many of the 3,628 shipwrecked “boat-people” who were rescued by one of the Maersk Groups first container ships—the MS Clara Maersk—were provisionally housed in fenced in camps at the shores of the fresh water reservoir my father had helped build years earlier. They were among the lucky few Vietnamese refugees who were allowed to immigrate to Europe and the United States (Becker, 1998). My father had talked to us about the logistical and social problems that followed the arrival of so many refugees in Hong Kong, a city defined by its boxed in geopolitical and geographical territory, but my childish, incomplete picture of the situation remained

15 The Maersk Group is currently the leader in global logistics operations. As such it continues to pick up shipwrecked refugees all over the world, including during the current Mediterranean refugee crisis. The rescue of all 3,628 shipwrecked Vietnamese refugees remains the single largest maritime rescue operation in all of naval history (http://www.hkmaritimemuseum.org/eng/explore/stories/the-clara-maersk/14/172/).

16 It was Senator Robert Dole who pushed a legislative agenda that allowed 15,000 Cambodian refugees to enter the U.S. “as a group, without the time-consuming delay of requiring every individual to pass muster as legitimate candidates for refugee status” (Becker, 1998, p. 386). Remarkable how this very un-bureaucratic process could have served as a model for current European proceedings, in which bureaucracy itself (Herzfeld, 1992) is used to stifle the flow of aid and large group refugee status designations.
both visually alive in my imagination and remote to my reality, like a horrifying but fantastical nightmare.

Our weekend family outings often took us to Hong Kong Island’s fancy shopping centers and malls. My father’s favorite German butcher was located in one of these malls. He would order culinary specialties from his Bavarian homeland. We shared a food-centered cultural nostalgia as we devoured sweet mustard with Bavarian white sausage (Weiss Wurst). Other times, under the alleged supervision of my older brother, my parents allowed us to break away on our own to watch the latest American blockbuster movies. My brother made sure that we always watched the most horrific, age-inappropriate motion picture available. For instance, I was twelve when I watched my first zombie movie, Romero’s (1978) now cult-status zombie horror movie, The Dawn of the Dead. We watched it in the mall’s multiplex cinema, which happened also to be

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17 It was my initiation into horror film genre with the zombie figure as a type of cannibalistic, scavenging monster. Romero zombies are the director’s unique representation of mindless consumer culture. The cannibalistic gore depicted in the movie most certainly traumatized me for life, but it also planted the seed for my interest in the current obsession and hype around zombie culture and a growing zombie scholarship. The figure of the zombie as allegory and real-existing ‘being’ has been interrogated from multiple angles ranging from the transatlantic zombie (Lauro, 2015)—arriving from the African homeland through slave trade; the Haitian Voodoo Zombie (Bishop, 2010) or the allegedly real case of Clairvius Narcisse’s zombification, by the doings of a “bokor” who uses witchcraft and psycho-pharmaceutical (tetrodotoxin)) to induce a type of spirit possession (Davis, 1989), and so on. This study is critical of the field of zombie studies and its analyses of the zombie figure as an expression of fandom rather than being a seriously critique focusing on the problematic glorification of violence typical for popular films in the zombie genre.
the main site of the movie’s story line. Needless to say, this has left me with a residual unease about shopping centers and malls.18

When the construction of Hong Kong’s subway was completed in 1979, my father was conscripted to the company’s next high-profile project. This time, we would move to Guatemala. A World Bank initiated and subsidized hydro-electric power plant was supposed to bring electricity to ‘underdeveloped’ and still mostly rural Guatemala (Figure 22). The construction site was in the middle of sub-tropical jungle. The terrain was so rugged and isolated that my parents decided not bring the entire family. My brother was sent to a boarding school in Great Britain to finish his schooling, and my sisters, by then already out of school high school, returned to Germany to start their own professional careers. Only my mother and I accompanied my father to Guatemala.

We settled in the capital, Guatemala City, where the country’s only German school was located. My father lived in an isolated company compound called the ‘Camp’; it was tucked away some 200 kilometers into Guatemala’s forested backlands. He would visit us from time to time in the capital or we would visit him in the jungle on weekends or holidays. The ‘Camp’ was built exclusively for the company’s German

18 The association of my mall walking between the culinary aspect experience and the nightmarish, cannibalistic movie plots was formative. My recent anthropological studies allowed me to understand the ritualistic aspect of cannibalistic practices and its connection to cultural taboos and the emergence of legal systems and law as we know it today.
engineers, craftsmen and their families. It was enclosed by a tall chain link fence and protected by a guarded gate, making it more of a military barrack than an U.S. American-style gated community. The ‘Camp’ had its own school, cantina and prefabricated housing, including an American-style ranch for residents’ horses and their frequent social events. Local construction workers rarely set foot in the enclosed compound. They were recruited with the promise of earning above-average salaries and the knowledge that they could loose their lives in a job-related accident. The project was particularly challenging owing to the geological specificity of the mountainous terrain. And although deadly accidents among local laborers were quite common, job safety concerns on such infrastructure projects were not a deterrent. Indeed, I remember many cases of serious accidents among my father’s German engineer colleagues as well, but the status and monetary payoff of being involved with this project trumped all.

Nevertheless, for the privileged son of the project leader, life in Guatemala was as exciting as it gets. Horseback riding through the jungle, along coffee plantations and sugar cane fields, and catching and collecting insects were among my preferred activities. Venturing into the jungle surrounding the ‘Camp’ or shooting vultures with

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19 Development projects at the periphery of the Western world were generally very risky operations, due to much laxer local worker safety laws and looming accidents or otherwise violent death were a defining feature. This was due in part also due to the ruggedness and unpredictability of the terrain.
an original American Winchester Rifle, given to me by a male ‘Camp’ resident, became the new normal. Responsible adult supervision during these years was virtually unknown to me. There was much talk of violence and murder among European families who lived in Guatemala, but it appeared to be limited to the poorer, high-density slum areas in the capital. The indigenous neighbors I encountered on my many forays outside of the ‘Camp’ were extremely welcoming and friendly\textsuperscript{20}. I was often invited into their self-built homes and despite my poor Spanish skills, was able to engage in happy conversations.

Political turmoil ended my carefree lifestyle in Guatemala. In 1980, civil war erupted and spread like a wildfire across Central America. El Salvador’s, Nicaragua’s and Guatemala’s U.S.–supported dictatorships\textsuperscript{21} saw insurgent and counterinsurgent warfare virulently escalate. Close to the ‘Camp’, Marxist \textit{guerilleros} were said to have infiltrated villages, allegedly terrorizing our rural neighbors. In response, counter-

\textsuperscript{20} In hindsight, I still find it hard to believe how friendly they were. They had every reason to be angry and suspicious, for the construction project destroyed much of their livelihoods and lives. Anthropologist Michael Taussig (1987) described the indigenous populations in Colombia during the terrifying colonial rubber extraction operations by murderous Europeans as similarly benevolent and unsuspecting. This positive human characteristic was indeed ruthlessly taken advantage of by the colonists, and much later, by the foreign transnational businesses.

\textsuperscript{21} Containment of communism was U.S.’s core Cold War policy and the Central and South American nations were all under the radar of CIA-led special operations.
insurgent militias, the infamous death squads\textsuperscript{22}, trained in the U.S.-based School of the Americas (Gill, 2004) began swarming the region, torturing and murdering native peoples (Bartrop, 2014). Individuals from the neighboring village with whom I had become acquainted began disappearing. Most of these atrocities escaped me because at the onset of the war, my father immediately sent us back to Germany. My mother later told me that from time to time, Guatemala’s military dictator and president, F. R. Lucas García\textsuperscript{23}, would show up at the ‘Camp’ for company parties, where high-ranking government officials and company executives joined to fire celebratory shots into the air.

\textsuperscript{22} In her book, \textit{The School of the Americas} (SOA), Lesley Gil (2004) describes the SOA as follows: “The Guatemalan military had murdered tens of thousands of indigenous people in its thirty-five-year civil war, and the traumatized survivors of the army’s scorched-earth tactics harbored deep fears of the military” She continues, “in the intensely ideological world of the SOA, […] history was routinely disappeared, and the boundaries between truth and lies, war and peace, genocide and friendship were constantly under assault” (p. 126).

\textsuperscript{23} In Bartrop and Jacobs (2014) four volume collection of modern genocide, the brother of the president, army Chief of Staff General Benedicto Lucas García, is described as the chief executioner: “He studied at the U.S. School of the Americas in 1965 and 1970. In November 1981, as head of the Guatemala Army, General Lucas García launched a massive counterinsurgency campaign in the Guatemalan highlands. The goal of his military “scorched earth” campaign was to separate the guerillas from the civilian population that supported them. Entire villages were wiped out, tens of thousands of people, mostly Mayans, were killed, and hundreds of thousands of people were displaced from their homes. The United States had cut off direct military aid to Guatemala in 1977 because of serious human rights abuses, although covert aid and training continued” (Bartrop & Jacobs, 2014, p. 937). Guatemala hence, was only one of the innumerable sites in which the U.S. officially reprimanded human rights abuses but clandestinely supported and bankrolled them at the cost of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives lost over several decades in Guatemala alone.
My childhood life abroad thus came to an abrupt end. My parents separated, not only geographically but also as a married couple. This new familial and geographic constellation made my transition to normal Bavarian life difficult. After a year of maladjustment, my mother decided to send me to a boarding school in the idyllic pre-Alpine region of Chiemgau, close to the Austrian border. The stereotypically picturesque beauty of the regional landscape—1960s classic film, *The Sound of Music*, comes to mind—belied a less appealing reality. The region’s geographical isolation at the foothills of the Austrian Alps manifested itself in the population’s deeply engrained, conservative religious, social and political stance. The small town of Schleching, for instance, was one of the very last bastions of Nazi resistance to the American Armed Forces advancing from the South even after Berlin’s capitulation. Lake Chiemsee, the largest of the regional lakes, nicknamed the Bavarian Ocean (*Bayerisches Meer*) was also the site for a former Nazi Officer recreational facility. Like Hitler, who had established his favorite holiday retreat in his alpine bunker in Berchtesgaden some 60 km to the southeast, other high-ranking Nazis also enjoyed relaxing in the charming natural environments of

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24 A rather humorous illustration of this stance is the story of my best friend’s hairdo. The son of a local teacher, he began growing out his hair into a long pony tail. This was seen as unacceptable by the local adult community who posted a pamphlet on the local market place decrying his scandalous look. My friend was coerced by his father to cut off the pony tail and to keep his hair trimmed like everybody else.

25 Yet another of Hochtief’s signature construction projects dating back to the Third Reich. More to the exploits of this typical German corporation will follow in the next section.
Upper Bavaria (Oberbayern). After the war, the facility was taken over and permanently occupied by U.S. military forces. Today, it continues to be a popular recreational destination for U.S. Service members stationed all across Germany. Then as now, the U.S. military presence in the area could be felt and heard prominently. My boarding school was located in a narrow valley that happened to also be the favorite airspace for U.S. military training of its state-of-the-art fighter plane pilots in military maneuvers that entail extremely low flight (Tiefflugmanöver) – as low as 75 meters. Although legally prohibited, the U.S. fighter pilots would often break through the sound barrier, which would produce a deafeningly loud detonation sound that would echo back and forth in the narrow pre-alpine valley\textsuperscript{26}. Because of the environmental damage and disruption of the local wildlife they caused, these maneuvers were prohibited albeit wholly ineffectually\textsuperscript{27}.

\textsuperscript{26} In local vernacular these fighter planes are nicknamed Thunderbirds (Donnervogel) due to the explosive noise disruption they bring along their flight trajectories. Extreme low-flight maneuvers are considered a serious form of local population abuse, yet is a practice defended by German Defense ministers as necessary, despite the astronomical cost of damages caused by the 452 crashes since 1973 (Der Spiegel, 1989).

\textsuperscript{27} In his book \textit{Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire}, Chalmers Johnson (2000) describes the disruptive effects of the over 800 permanent U.S. military bases all across the globe. He notes a similar incident to the one I experienced, but without the deadly side effect: “Northern Italian communities had, for years, complained about low flying American military aircraft. In February 1998, the inevitable happened. A Marine Corps EA-6B Prowler with a crew of four, one of scores of advanced American jet fighters and bombers stationed at places like Aviano, Cervia, Brindisi, and Sigonella, sliced through a ski-lift cable near the resort town of Cavalese and plunged twenty people riding in a single gondola to their deaths on the snowy slopes several
During the remaining six years of my school education, I maintained a strong connection to the world outside of Europe thanks to my frequent visits to my father, who continued to work in conflict-ridden places. Despite the civil war, my father completed the controversial\footnote{My research revealed that the death of more than 400 local community members in the proximity of the ‘Camp’ was directly related to their refusal to relocate in order to make way for the impending flooding of the dam. Today, thirty years later, an ongoing international legal case has been made against the national electric company and the World Bank for ignoring the complaints and human right violations allegations (Dearden, 2012).} hydro-electric power plant project in Guatemala. The ‘Camp’ was converted into a kind of military garrison with sandbags stacked all along the fenced perimeter. Hochtief hired a private security detail a dozen men strong. Though some of these mercenaries were badly wounded and even killed in the ensuing firefights, judging from the pictures my father later showed me, they looked ruthless and were armed to the teeth and battle ready. Other pictures my father shared with me showed the dead bodies of executed villagers, lined up next to each other\footnote{In his 2001 book, \textit{Virtuous War}, political scientist James Der Derian’s, describes the painful memory of his father showing him a photograph taken during the early 20th century Turkish genocide perpetrated on the Armenians. It depicted a shelf that “seemed to bow under the weight of a row of severed heads (Der Derian, 2001, p. xxii).” The picture that my father showed me was also such a tangible record of death and annihilation. In Der Derian’s case however, the mortal remains included a murdered family member.} on the curb of the dirt street outside of the ‘Camp’. The hands of many of the dead were tied hundred feet below. Although marine pilots are required to maintain an altitude of at least one thousand feet (two thousand, according to the Italian government), the plane had cut the cable at a height of 360 feet. It was traveling at 621 miles per hour when 517 miles per hour was considered the upper limit. The pilot had been performing low-level acrobatics while his copilot took pictures on videotape (which he later destroyed)” (Johnson, 2000, p. 3).
together behind their backs with metal wire. This, he said, was clear evidence that these acts of deliberate execution and torture were perpetrated by the U.S.-trained death squads and not the accused Marxist *guerilleros*. I wasn’t able to recognize any of the murdered, mostly mutilated individuals, but I was nonetheless profoundly shaken by these violent images. These were not everyday tourist snapshots but testimony of state-organized and CIA-enabled mass murder. Being presented with such photos so casually made me begin to question my father’s emotional and ethical detachment. I reasoned that my father must have been emotionally hardened by his Second World War childhood experiences, which included the interment and torture of his communist father\(^{30}\) in the Dachau concentration camp. Furthermore, as a professional in charge of

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\(^{30}\) Historian and former coal miner himself, Klaus Tenefeld’s (1982) doctoral dissertation is a rigorous historical analyses of the communist coal-miner community of my father’s birth town Penzberg, Bavaria, entitled “Proletarian Province – Radicalization and Resistance in Upper Bavaria 1900-1945” (*Proletarische Provinz – Radikalisierung und Widerstand in Penzberg/ Oberbayern 1900-1945*). Many of my direct family members were highlighted as leading communists, a political tradition among coal workers and latter day coal mining communities. These were attempting to unionize and improve their exploitative and harsh labor conditions. My great grandfather and grandfather were registered and labeled communist radicals, which was a crime in Germany even before the rise of National Socialism. Once the Nazi’s took over, they kept close watch on subversive behaviors, which led to my grandfather’s repeated interment in the Dachau concentration camp. German inmates were generally kept alive but beaten severely to ‘socialize’ them back into Nazi society, whereas Jews and others deemed inferior were killed. My great uncle was hanged as communist insurgent on the very last day of the war, but survived miraculously during the infamous “Penzberger Murder Night” (*Penzberger Mordnacht*) (Vecchiato, 2016). The history of communist resistance in Penzberg is an example of German communist radicalization and domestic Nazi resistance largely ignored by mainstream Nazi discourse in Germany, but points to the power or social solidarity even in times of totalitarian oppression.
high-risk projects, the fact that he was witness to a number of horrific labor accidents must have also taken its toll.

After the grisly situation in Guatemala, I was certain my father would pick his next professional assignment more wisely. But to my dismay, his next move took him to Pinochet’s Chile, where yet another hydro-electric power plant was to be built. Much like the touted Guatemalan upgrade, electricity was supposed to bring modernity into the homes of Chile’s ‘backward’ and ‘poor’ citizenry. This time, the construction site was located in the extreme geological and climatological region of the South American Andes. At high altitude, the power of mountain rivers was to be made docile by way of an elaborate tunneling system that would funnel and transform the kinetic energy of water into electricity\textsuperscript{31}. My father would have lived in a spectacularly insignificant village had it not been for a very special neighbor. August Pinochet had his own rural residence, cynically named ‘El Melocoton’ (The Peach), just down the street.

I visited my father on several occasions during his ten-year stay in Chile. The beauty of the country is difficult to put into words, which makes it that much more heart-wrenching to know that yet another U.S.–supported dictator was holding the

\textsuperscript{31} Alfalfal Hydroelectric Power Plant Chile (http://www.geodata.it/en/hydro/73-hydro/cile/252-alto-maipo-hydroelectric-project-chile)
reigns of the country. In 1986, several years into my father’s time in Chile, a Marxist rebel group attempted to kill Pinochet on the very road my father used every day to get to work. My father later told me that an improvised explosive device was detonated as Pinochet’s heavily armored Mercedes Benz motorcade passed a bottleneck, triggering a massive landslide. Armed with bazookas and machine guns, the rebels then started firing at and killing most of Pinochet’s bodyguards (Christian, 1986). Miraculously, the driver of the dictator’s armored vehicle managed to break away and deliver the dictator to the safety of his nearby residence. Political turmoil in Chile was reaching a boiling point, just as it had in Guatemala half a decade earlier. The Southern Cone dictatorships were unravelling one by one, despite the U.S. Secret Service’s costly and clandestine efforts to keep the ruthless despots in power. Pinochet’s Chile was a special case, however. The dictator was directly advised and frequently visited by neoliberalism’s chief theorist and F.A. Hayek’s protégé, Milton Friedman, and his acolytes, the infamous Chicago Boys (Klein, 2007). I am convinced that my father had no idea about this American connection, since he was one to focus only on the task at hand.

After his time in Chile, he relocated to South Africa, where Hochtief had won the bid to construct a national highway tunnel through the Du Toitskloof mountains near Cape Town. Post-war Germany had always maintained strong economic ties with South Africa’s apartheid regime. When I visited my father and my brother, the latter of whom had also started working as a civil engineer for Hochtief, I was shocked to see portraits
of Bavaria’s right wing Prime Minister Franz Joseph Strauss hanging on the walls of local businesses. Strauss was an influential supporter of the apartheid regime and brokered many of Germany’s business dealings with South Africa. Unsurprisingly, he had also been very good friends with Augusto Pinochet. As I was driven around downtown Cape Town, I noticed a huge Mercedes Benz car dealership. The German company’s iconic Mercedes ‘star’ logo was plainly visible to the rest of the world via the frequent news broadcasts about riots in South Africa’s townships. Mercedes-Benz’s armored riot vehicles were used to penetrated and suppress any form of rebellion. I was perplexed about having never seen a black citizen in a public space. Such was the effect of apartheid: a white person could live, travel and work without ever seeing or interacting with non-white individuals.

My trip to South Africa was radically different from my previous visits with my father in Central and South America because by then, I was mature enough to question and be deeply troubled by the moral and ethical implications of my father’s and brother’s career choices. To work in a racially segregated country with an appalling history of violent oppression of the non-white peoples was an affront to my moral and humanistic beliefs. In my view, Hochtief and its employees were actively supporting the apartheid regime by building its infrastructure. My visceral discomfort at social gatherings with German engineers and their white Afrikaner colleagues and friends was heightened to an extreme. The racially disparaging language often used humorously
when talking about black South Africans shocked me. The most frequently used slang
term for blacks was ‘kaffer’, but I heard a host of other, far more nefarious and
derogatory insults. The violence and poison of white South African slang was only
surpassed by the physical violence practiced on the streets of black townships. The term
necklacing\textsuperscript{32} in South Africa refers to a type of summary execution, torture and terror
practiced among blacks to punish suspected traitors, collaborators or black police
officers (Bornman, van Eeden, & Wentzel, 1998, pp. 147-173). A rubber tire filled with
gasoline is forced over the head and shoulders of the victim and then ignited. It takes the
victims of this excruciating painful death up to 20 minutes to succumb to the burns or
asphyxiation. Learning about the ongoing cruelty and violence of South Africa had a
profound effect on my concept of the world.

Some years after this visit to South Africa, my father left longtime his employer
of 30 years to start his own consulting business before retiring several years later. My
brother continued in his father’s professional footsteps by first working for Hochtief and

\textsuperscript{32} A speech given by Winnie Mandela in 1986 is an illustrative example of the widespread use of
necklacing as means of instilling fear of repercussion for so called sell-outs (collaborators or
spies) with white law enforcement in black townships: “In a speech at Munsieville outside
Johannesburg in 1986 Winnie propagated the barbaric necklace method of killing township
dissidents and alleged police informers by saying: “Together hand-in-hand, with our boxes of
matches and our necklaces, we shall liberate this country.” She was referring to the method of
killing in which victims had a tyre [sic.] placed around their necks and were doused with petrol
and set on fire.” (South African History Online, Retrieved from
later, consulting for a variety of different transnational corporations. In terms of his
global mobility, my brother’s career is an enhanced version the lifestyle my father
embarked at its inception in the early 1960s. Typical for this accelerated (Noys, 2014) and
globally mobile career model is the fact that my brother never completed any of the
major projects he worked on or else that he entered halfway into existing projects. In
contrast to that of our father, my brother’s exemplary civil engineering career has been
defined by serial project-hopping, which seems to have become a universal feature of
the transnational infrastructure construction business. Some of the signature projects my
brother has worked on read like the engineering infrastructure bible: the Channel
Tunnel between France and England, the transalpine Gotthard tunnel, and the still
unfinished Golden Line subway section in Doha, Qatar. Whatever controversies have
surrounded these projects have been much more publicized and of course, come at a
vastly different cost to the locals and their governments.

After my school graduation in 1986, I completed two emotionally challenging
years of state-imposed social service as a conscientious objector. Working for the
Bavarian Red Cross, I was mostly put in charge of geriatric home care. This provided me
with an exceptional view into the profound lack of affective care given to the elderly
under a cheap civil service supported German healthcare system. I was completely
shocked to see the elderly left to live out the rest of their lives in total isolation from any
interaction with anyone other than us, the mandatory social service providers, who were
actually too poorly trained to truly fulfill the demanding and important tasks expected of us. The familial and social cohesion in Northern European countries like Germany has eroded significantly in the post-war years. Younger generations are reluctant to care for the elderly, thereby condemning their parents and grandparents to live out their retirement in an emotional vacuum of immobility, loneliness and meaninglessness. Those two years of social service were among the hardest working experiences of my entire life.

I needed a change of pace after working as part of a state-run system that not only characterized its older citizens as “human waste” (Baumann, 2004, p. 127), but also treated them as such. Given that I had never felt culturally at home in Germany anyway, I put off my plans to start my university studies and travelled instead to South America, which I had loved as a child. This time, however, I was travelling alone and living my experience without the filter of the Hochtief bubble. My travels would, I hoped, help me (re-)discover my personal identity and some sense of cultural belonging, the latter of which by then, I realized was wholly lacking.

I began my six-month trip in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Ironically, I arrived just in time to find this “global city” (Sassen, 1991) caught up in Hitler’s 100th birthday celebrations. Although I only encountered visual traces—graffiti, placards and wall smearing—I was more than a little surprised. I simply could not understand how the innumerable Nazis who had fled Europe to evade criminal prosecution or execution
could dare to overtly express their continued alignment with Hitler’s genocidal ideas and even more, be supported by their adopted state. I later discovered that Buenos Aires and many of the other places I had visited during my travels were hotbeds for Nazi reactionaries and “Hitler communes” (Hoffman, 2014). Some of their leading figures, such as Adolf Eichmann, even hoped to someday retake postwar democratic Germany (Arendt, 1963). Sociologist Saskia Sassen, who developed the concept of global cities, grew up in Buenos Aires at the core of such a group. Her father, the former Waffen-SS officer Wilhelm Sassen, sentenced in absentia to death in Belgium, was the journalist who, in 1960, published his extensive Eichmann interviews in Life magazine (Berkowitz, 2013). The so-called Argentina Papers (Frum, 2014), uncovered and researched decades

33 In her 2014 article for the Jewish news and politics magazine Tablet Magazine, Meredith Hoffman describes her experiences in Bariloche, Argentina—a Bavarian Alpine-style town at the foothills of the Andes. While she was investigating the local “Hitler commune” (Hoffman, 2014), she learned that the fugitive Nazi war-criminal Erich Priebcke had built an extraordinary life for himself in Bariloche. He was the founder of and long-term teacher in the German School (colegio aleman) in which teachings of the Holocaust were actively suppressed. Even after his 1992 arrest and 1997 extradition to Italy, where he was tried for the murder of 335 civilians, his standing among the locals remained intact. Hoffman’s research uncovers a historical parallel universe that exists in South America in which Nazism is relativized, normalized and even admired. Priebcke eventually was convicted but died of natural causes in 2013, age 100. Germany refused to bury his body in Germany due to fears it might become a sanctuary for Neo-Nazis. The Nazi legacy is a central focus of my study.

34 In an interview by David Frum (2014), the researcher of Eichmann archives, Bettina Stangneth, describes and illustrates the veracity of the previously inconclusive rumors about the individuals involved: “The Argentina Papers are the testimony of a group of Nazis who aimed to bring back the idea of National Socialism. Eichmann was a part of this group, consulted because of his firsthand knowledge of the “Jewish question.” The alleged “Sassen Interview” are the minutes of their meetings. Members of the group wrote their own drafts for discussions and Eichmann
later, revealed the links between active Nazi groups in Argentina and Eichmann, Sassen and the idea of retaking Germany. This Nazi legacy, which I discovered was vividly active in Argentina, opened my eyes to the virulence and persistence of fascist ideology. These violent legacies were able to continue despite their removal from the specific historical, economic or political structures that had first enabled them. My interest in historic legacies and the ideological and real-world death-worlds (Mbembe, 2003, p. 40) they engender was sparked and validated by today’s rapid rise of right-wing demagoguery and populism across Europe and the U.S.

I continued my journey south mainly by bus, crisscrossing much of the South American subcontinent. I made it all the way to Ushuaia on remote Fire Island, the southernmost town in the world. Due to inclement weather, I was trapped for weeks in what was endearingly nicknamed ‘the End of the World’. The remoteness of the place was strangely liberating. After all, had not the subliminal goal of my journey been to find myself rather than a particular geographic destination? What better place for self-exploration than the literal geographical end of the world? The beauty, vastness and climatological harshness of Fire Island made for a humbling and purifying experience.

planned to publish his own book along with Willem Sassen’s book. We can reconstruct and synthesize these different manuscripts, transcripts, and papers. In short, the Argentina Papers provide a portrait of a radical Nazi group with incredible international connections and Eichmann’s thoughts and eloquence outside his glass box in Jerusalem”.
However, the sense of loneliness I experienced was also intimidating and motivated me to return to ‘civilization’. My travels took me up north, along the geographical sliver of Chile’s overextended national territory. On my way to the capital Santiago de Chile, I paid my father a surprise visit in his isolated, pre-Andes home. From there, I crossed the Andes pass into Argentina and arrived in Bariloche, a Bavarian-style stronghold for Nazi fugitives, I learned much later.

Next, my travels took me to Brazil, where I encountered many more German, Swiss or other European enclaves, with startlingly well preserved cultural, predominantly folkloric and ideologically dubious traditions. It was not only the traditional foods like German apple pie (Apfelstrudel) or German and Swiss chocolatier products (Bariloche holds the Guinness Book of World record for the largest Easter Egg measuring over 8 meters), but the architectural styles and building techniques that were brought along from the various European homelands. Most of these locations are treasured tourist destinations, often described in terms of their European heritage: Swiss-style towns or Swedish Argentina or the Hotel Bavaria in the Andes. Brazil even sports its very own Bavarian Oktoberfest, which happens to be the second largest beer folk festival (Volksfest) next to Munich’s in Bavaria. German settlers, including those with a Nazi past, seem to have always been well-respected and welcome in South America. The darker spots of the Nazi legacy only seem to matter to Western media outlets and critical investigators. The infamous “Colonia Dignidad” (Dignity Colony) in Chile for
instance, later renamed Villa Bavaria (Figure 10), was a Nazi fugitive lead sect that held hundreds of its German community members in slavery (Reel, 2014). Its leader, the convicted pedophile Paul Schäfer, changed his Nazi uniform for that of a pastor only to continue his cruelties in exile. This time, his victims were religiously brainwashed German immigrants and the thousands of children they gave birth to over several decades, all of whom were systematically raped and otherwise abused. The concentration camp-like facility was also a torture camp for the prisoners and “disappeared” dissidents35 of Pinochet’s regime (Bacchi, 2016; Reel, 2014; Judah, 2014). Although I did not realize it at the time, it is clear that all of these nations were, in fact, geopolitically and culturally troubled that were shaped by the profoundly violent

35 The totalitarian Nazi commune Colonia Dignidad, deserves a stand-alone investigation if only because so many German politicians knew of, visited or actively supported and legally defended the colony. The father of neoliberal economic theory, Friedrich Hayek, and Bavaria’s Minister President, Franz Joseph Strauss, met in Chile’s capital. Both were determined to defend Pinochet’s autocratic regime at any cost. To that end, Amnesty International’s investigations and legal actions were blocked by German State sponsored lawyers for decades. The legacy of extreme right-wing groups tied to the colony, in which a twisted sort of Germanic breeding was practiced, still remains active. When it was decided to convert the former torture and sex abuse camp into a Bavarian-style theme park for tourists, the public outcry by Chilean ‘disappeared’ parents made headlines. “Germany has admitted it failed to stop abuses at a secretive German sect in Chile for more than three decades. The so-called Colonia Dignidad was the site of torture, child rape and slavery. Now the files on the colony will be made public” (Deutsche Welle, 2016).
legacies of imperialist and neoliberal conquests, slavery, and the corrupting fascisms of Nazi or otherwise extreme right-wing communes. They were true death-worlds.

My return to Germany at the end of 1989 coincided with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Although I had missed much of the excitement and agitation of the months leading up to the unravelling of the Soviet-controlled Warsaw Pact nations, I was fortunate enough to witness and participate in the unprecedented euphoria of Berlin’s New Year’s celebrations. If my travels had shown me the stale, profoundly ahistorical remnants of Nazism in the South American exile, then my return was showing me what seemed to be the beginning of a more equitable and humanistic future. At such a remarkable moment of collective liberation and effervescence (Durkheim, 1995), who would have guessed that the collapse of the Soviet Union would open the global floodgates of neoliberal economic policies? Spearheaded by U.S. President Reagan and U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and facilitated by Germany’s longest serving chancellor Helmut Kohl the world was about to be radically transformed. The opening days of the last decade of the twentieth century contained the promise for a brighter

36 On the flipside, the revolutionary potentials of the historically oppressed and violently persecuted communist or communal groups against all odds remains intact and provides reason to be full of hope for the subcontinent. There are several inspiring accounts of worker-lead social activism that offer an alternative to finance capital dominated economic base.

37 German Sociologist Sofsky investigates the effects of absolute power on human interaction from the perspective of Nazi concentration camps. Nazi racial purity ideology was reified in the death worlds found in the camps and eventually in equivalence, throughout the world.
future, but successive events rapidly began clouding the prospect for a new reality, a new beginning. Unaware of these momentous and new socio-political and economic constellations, I turned my attention to my degree, which, after my disturbing experiences in South America, I decided not to pursue in Germany.

My journey to the ends of the earth and back put my life’s path into focus and bolstered me to use my creative voice to promote awareness. I enrolled in a private art and design school in the historical Gothic Quarter (Barrio Gotico) of downtown Barcelona, right behind the famous opera house. For the two years, I studied and worked in Barcelona. Many of my artworks dealt with the effects of economic injustice on the poor living not just on the labyrinthine streets of my Barcelona neighborhood but also in the towns and cities I had visited during my recent travels. In one of my very first artworks in a public space, I reenacted the plight of the homeless, which was always very troubling to see, no matter in which part of the world (Figure 61). Questioning the status quo of how societies treat the underprivileged—the so-called losers, drifters, or otherwise failed and wasted lives (Bauman, 2004)—is an ongoing concern in my art practice and research.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Spain was still waking up from its own four decade-long fascist nightmares under General Francisco Franco. After the 1975 death of El Caudillo, Spain’s last dictator, the government made a quick, nominal switch to democracy, but never addressed most of the psycho-social remnants of 40 years of
oppression. Moreover, the seeds of anger and hatred and of racist and repressive
tendencies have remained present behind the thin veil of a democratic order. My time
in Barcelona also coincided with the opening of one of the most influential art galleries
of post-Franco Spain, The Espai PobleNou Foundation. The Greek Arte Povera artist,
Jannis Kounellis inaugurated the space with a series of shocking and provocative works
(Figure 1) in which he used, among other materials, large sides of beef (which had to be
exchanged frequently for obvious odor and hygienic reasons). This show left a lasting
impression on my young and receptive artistic sensibilities.

The separatist desires of the Spanish province of Catalunya, which sought to
make Barcelona as its capital, are in large part a carry-over from its historic antagonism
toward General Franco, who was seated in the nation’s capital, Madrid. Today, this
antagonism continues to be enacted on the sports stage. In the fierce soccer competition
between FC Madrid and FC Barcelona, each side vies to outspend the other on superstar
conscription, the effect of which is that the expenditures on either side are so great that
regional and provincial state budgets are frequently plundered to meet payment
obligations. State corruption in Spain (and Italy) is widely tolerated if it is for the benefit

\[\text{\textsuperscript{38}}\text{ It was thanks only to the public intervention of King Juan Carlos (Cemlyn-Jones, 1981), an}
\text{outspoken advocate for democracy and freedom, that the 1981 attempted military coup in}
\text{Valencia was disarmed.}\]
of the local soccer team. In other words, the infamous maxim of the Roman empire: 

bread and games (i.e. keep them fed and entertained) to maintain the subservience of the 
citizenry, is still an effective tool in some Mediterranean nations.

Other than the partisan sports fanaticism and the vast sports stadium 
infrastructure it requires, no other recent event has changed the urban face of Barcelona 
more than the 1992 Olympic Games. Over the course of the two years I lived in 
Barcelona, the entire city underwent a massive and disruptive urban transformation 
similar to that of Haussmann’s Paris and Robert Moses’s New York City. Barcelona’s 
principle thruway, the Avinguda Diagonal, already an aggressive, diagonal transverse 
through the heart of the city, was further extended all the way to the shores of the 
Mediterranean Sea. This expressway extension cut through multiple working-class 
neighborhoods, which were partially leveled in order to build the monumental new 
Olympic village, which would be strategically located next to the beach. In my 
neighborhood, the Barrio Gotico, which dates back to medieval times, entire blocks were 
torn down to make space for star-architect signature buildings, like the MACBA, the 
Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (Museo d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona), 
designed by U.S. American architect Richard Meier. The neoliberal transformation of the 
Catalonian city into a so-called global city under the Olympic banner hit Barcelona like a 
freight train.
The disruptive effects the remaking of the city had on daily life, like the surge in the already overpriced local real estate market, cannot be overstated. For instance, as a housing bubble began to form, as has been the case in many other globally-connected urban hubs, gentrification pushed the poor, the old and Barcelona’s well-established minority communities out of the rebuilt, cultural capital-focused urban centers. Urban populations were forced to move into Barcelona’s blighted outskirts, which are still dominated by toxic heavy industry.

As an art student, I too was priced out and opted to relocate to Germany to complete my studies. But before leaving, I was able to briefly meet and shake hands with Mikhail Gorbachev, who had come to visit Barcelona’s Picasso Museum instead of making a stop-over in Spain’s capital, Madrid (—the scandal was epic). I was fortunate enough to be waiting at the right spot when Gorbachev’s security detail pushed him through the crowds. The excitement was palpable: he represented hope for change and

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39 The research of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) into the desire for social distinction among social groups in France is supported by his definition of distinct forms of ‘capital’. He expands Marx’s political economic model of capital, which is largely based on the dominant mode of production, by adding layers of social and cultural production. Social and cultural capital are much more ‘superstructural’ in Marx’s sense, as they solidify, implement and reproduce class relations. An understanding of “tastes”, for instance, with all is subjectivity, serves the establishment of social distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). For global cities, cultural capital becomes a selling point, an identifier if you will of a distinctive uniqueness that sets it apart from other global cities. Indeed, in the current global world economy, global cities now compete for the attention of global professional elites (Sassen, 2002).
was the herald of a new, and better world to come. Having personally been effected by
the bitter cause that inspired much of my art and yet propelled forward by a new sense
of hope in the future, I eagerly accepted an offer to continue my studies at Germany’s
renowned Düsseldorf Art Academy (Kunstakademie Düsseldorf). Many of the artists I still
look up to taught at this art academy including Jannis Kounellis, Magdalena Jetelova,
Guenther Ücker and toweringly, Joseph Beuys, who remains one of the academy’s most
emblematic artists and controversial professors. Beuys is the conceptual father of art
practices known as ‘social sculpture’ (for examples, see Figure 31). His famous 7000
Oaks\(^{40}\), begun in 1982 at the Documenta 7 in Kassel, Germany, features a variety of trees
planted by Beuys and volunteers. A large basalt stone was positioned next to each tree
in order to signify transformational states, the growth of the tree, and static states, the
ruggedness and immutability of a volcanic stone. Today, socially engaged art\(^{41}\) is
commonly used as an continuation or expansion of Beuys’s original ideas.

\(^{40}\) Dia Beacon provided the initial funding for the work and later continued the durational piece
in New York; the planting of all 7000 trees had always been envisioned as necessarily temporally
and geographically protracted. “Dia installed five basalt stone columns, each paired with a tree,
at 548 West 22nd Street in 1988, continuing the sculpture project 7000 Eichen (7000 Oaks) by
German artist Joseph Beuys” (Dia Beacon Foundation, 2016).

\(^{41}\) The most notable quality of this large-scale public art work by Joseph Beuys is its temporal and
spatial transience. It was conceptualized as a social participatory ‘work’, or ‘piece’, in which the
audience becomes the artist. In fact, the term audience loses its meaning in such a participatory
framework. The ecological and environmental concerns that Beuys articulated are relived and
shared by the participants of this extended tree-panting intervention. The social landscape was
thereby transformed by his work in that the public sphere was made ‘greener’, New York City

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Much of my own work is inspired by Beuys’ expanded, multi-disciplinary understanding of art: one that seeks to intersect and critically inspect the politics of social life and the processes that foment or destroy social solidarity. Several of my artworks from this time are hybrid works that mix sculpture and architecture. My interest in urban structures, industrialization, the built environment and its ruin or degradation over time (Figure 108), and in particular, its impact on human sensibilities was further deepened by my experience and investigation of regional specificities. I was both fascinated and appalled by living in Germany’s heavy industry center, the Ruhrgebiet. Düsseldorf is the seat of North Rhine-Westphalia’s (Nordrhein-Westfalen) state government and is belted by Germany’s leading mining, coal, steel and pharma industries. The local landscape is dominated by hundreds of square kilometers of large, heavy industry infrastructure. And yet, industrial Düsseldorf’s closest urban neighbor Köln, is the country’s art and cultural center. The famous gothic Kölner Dom and the adjacent Museum Ludwig are Germany’s main cultural capital destinations.

and Kassel were made more oxygenated, and citizen-participants were socially engaged by producing a social service. His own words express best how social sculpture operates: “I believe that planting these oaks is necessary not only in biospheric terms, that is to say, in the context of matter and ecology, but in that it will raise ecological consciousness—raise it increasingly, in the course of the years to come, because we shall never stop planting. Thus, 7000 Oaks is a sculpture referring to peoples’ lives, to their everyday work. That is my concept of art, which I call the extended concept or art of the social sculpture” (Beuys, 1982).
Not unlike the U. S. American Rust Belt, the Ruhrgebiet is not known for its progressive, globally-minded thinking. The situation in the territories in what was known as East Germany is worse still owing to a veritable modernization culture shock, which has not only deepened, but also festered with violent micro- and macro-aggressions over the course of the past three decades (Novotny, 2009). One of the many common points of pernicious contention is the notion of multiculturalism and a nation composed of native and naturalized Germans, of white, black and brown Germans, of Christian, secular, Jewish and Muslim Germans. Only two of my friends at the Kunstakademie were biracial – both with a white German mother and a black African father. My mixed friends, like most children of German/African couples, were constantly made to explain and demonstrate to their white German peers, though often with limited success, that they are, in fact, German by birth and culture. They often had

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42 Most other black/white biracial Germans were the product of relationships between German women and U.S. military servicemen from one of the countless bases spread all across Germany. U.S. military occupation of defeated Nazi Germany left behind a network of permanent military bases. According to an University of Heidelberg research project, “When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the US presence in Germany was a stunning 250,000 soldiers with as many civilian employees and family members. The soldiers and their families worked and lived in one of 47 major military bases, which were made up by some 800 separate sites. The predominance of West Germany in US military planning can be glimpsed from the resources allocated to the bases there. During the Cold War, 70% of US troops in Europe were stationed in West Germany and the country was home to 60% of all U.S. overseas bases. Of the troops stationed in Germany, 45% were combat troops, 45% served as combat support troops, and 10% worked in administrative positions” (University of Heidelberg, 2016).
to put up with questions about their surprising fluency in German or their “true”
national origins. Even in Berlin, my (biracial German) friend Michael Küppers-
Adebisi’s hometown, which enjoys a surprising international reputation for racial,
ethnic, social and minority tolerance, he is frequently asked by random pedestrians to
sell them narcotics. The stereotype of the black (and therefore foreign, illicitly employed)
male as drug dealer is widespread in Germany (and Switzerland). Indeed, much of
predominantly white Germany remains uninterested, biased and uninformed about the
larger, multicultural world outside of its borders, except as the spice it adds to vacation
experiences abroad. Neo-Nazis and the rising tide of right-wing extremists cannot
seem to make phenotypical distinctions, which might explain why racially motivated

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43 Michael Küppers-Adebisi and his wife Adetoun have become leading figures in the fight
against racial discrimination through art. They are the founders of several initiatives that seek to
empower Black German’s of African descent and black diaspora communities in Germany.
Küppers-Adebisi is also one of the founders of the Afro-German Media Platform AFROTAK TV
cyberNomads (http://afrotak.com/).
44 This pattern, which finds a similar expression among non-whites in the U.S., France, Italy and a
host of other countries, graphically challenges Bourdieu’s concept habitus, which involves a fine
gained spectrum of non-verbal identifiers and symbolisms of class including but not limited to
gate, dress code, speech pattern, taste, cultural sophistication etc.
45 There is a growing body of evidence that Germany is ill-equipped to handle racially and
ethnically motivated violence. A recent report by Amnesty International, following thousands of
documented cases of hate crimes, states: “With hate crimes on the rise in Germany, long-standing
and well-documented shortcomings in the response of law enforcement agencies to racist
violence must be addressed” (Perolini, 2016).
46 My biracial wife experienced firsthand racial slurs on many occasions in Berlin out in the open
public sphere, in so-called integrated, liberal/alternative neighborhoods. And our white-looking
children were verbally assaulted in the presence of their biracial mother. That said, in New York
City, my wife was almost always assumed to be the nanny of our children and therefore by and
insults and violence against foreigners or foreign-looking people, including darker-skinned white Germans, can happen to almost anybody. One could argue that this ignorance stems, in part, from the fact that Germany did not have an extensive colonial empire like Spain, Portugal, Britain, France or even Italy, but such an explanation ignores what the past has to say about what were Germany’s colonialist activities and the fact that it has long been a haven for disaffected American artists of color, non-white U.S. servicemen, and the multicultural exports of the American entertainment industry.

*Outfit for the Traveling Surgeon of Yore*, my graduate thesis artwork at the Kunstkademie Düsseldorf, was essentially a traveler’s suitcase that spoke not just to my experience as an art student in Germany, but also to the notion of gathering knowledge through travel. I was socially and physically outcast by my fellow students both because I was a cultural misfit and because I made no effort to conform and in fact continued to travel, largely to enhance my learning experience, extensively throughout

large socially ignored by other (white) mothers who were also accompanying their children on the playground, for instance.

47 The German colonial war of 1904-1908 in South-West Africa, today’s Namibia, could be called Germany’s first genocide (Zimmerer & Zeller, 2008) and was the prelude to worse things to come. Indeed, the ethnically homogenous populations of much of Europe are the result of systematic genocidal campaigns, the last of which were the Balkan Wars that ended in 2001. Curiously, in Bavaria, the home of the infamous Hofbräuhaus, where the National Socialist Party was founded in 1921, the typical phenotype is by no means the Hollywood Nazi movie blond, blue-eyed stereotype. Possibly because of Bavaria’s geographic proximity to the Mediterranean, its population is characterized by much more varied and often darker eye, hair and skin color.
my studies there. To that end, the artwork also sought to humorously invert modern media and communications technologies into prehistoric-looking weapons systems and Flintstone-like video recording and playback devices (Figure 109). In what ended up being a happy twist of fate, after having been prevented from utilizing the usual exhibition space, my piece was shown on an emergency staircase, the busy, transient nature of which perfectly suited the conceptual framework of the work.

After graduation, I returned to Spain, first settling in northern Catalunya, at the foothills of the Pyrenean mountains, near the French border, and later on the heavily touristed island of Mallorca. I started working on the restoration of a 500-year-old country manor with the intention of building an independent artist commune with residency opportunities for visiting artists. The initial success of the project allowed me to concurrently begin to experiment with land art and performative, ephemeral sculptures in the natural environment. Inspired by artists such as Richard Long, or Andy Goldsworthy, who made impromptu artistic interventions in nature using the landscape and the found natural materials as their source material, my works from this period were reflections on the traces and scars human technology leave on the natural world.

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48 I am thankful for the cliquishness of the institution and its students because it reminded me that my place in the world—as scholar, artist and human being—was and will always be somewhere else.
One of these works, entitled *Haystack Highway to Nowhere*, was a reaction to a new interstate highway that was built right in front of our 14th century property (Figure 110). The work consisted of a 200-meter long, perfectly straight line of hay bales, which ran exactly perpendicular to the new highway, the latter of which, furthermore, cut through the existing, naturally winding landscape in a perfectly unnatural straight line. Scattered across the extensive field were several vertical wooden sculptures that acted like unsightly abstract representation of urban developments.

When my brother and his ISO-norm-trained (Easterling, 2014) engineer rationality clashed with my artistic, hands-on, learning-by-doing attitude, the art commune project came to an abrupt end. I moved to the Baleares Island Mallorca, were I built a custom-made furniture and interior architecture business. The ebb and flow of my business made many decisions for me, including that to once again return to Germany. Back in the area in which I had completed my secondary schooling some ten

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* Yale-trained architect Keller Easterling (2014) identifies global ISO-norms and the standardized quality norms they project as part of her “Extrastatecraft” theory, and considers them to be a vital part of global infrastructure space. For Easterling, ISO-norms are pseudo-religious belief systems, “at once evangelical and almost secretive” (p. 172) that tend to be based in irrationality. The management systems that ISO-quality norms inculcate are “exemplary of a supposedly rationalized set of practices serving as an ideal vessel of irrationality” (p. 173). Unfortunately, ISO norms in my case destroyed a life-long relationship with my brother, who simply could no longer sleep soundly at night when he thought about all the non-ISO ideas I had about how to rebuild a 500 year-old building. Century old oak beams that were as hard as iron girders and that had held up the house for so long, in his eyes had to be cut down and replaced with reliable, ISO-norm conform, prefabricated concrete beams.

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years before, I was now working as a freelance movie and TV set designer for Bavaria Film Studios and various other TV production studios. After several years of inconsistent and essentially non-artistic work, I accepted a job with the Zurich Opera in Switzerland. It was at the Zürich Opera that I met my wife, Julianna, who had come to Zurich as a resident singer from New York City. A year after the birth of our first of three children, we moved (back, in my wife’s case) to the United States of America, which I naïvely expected would be an exciting land of opportunity and a bastion of free expression and openness.

When we arrived for Thanksgiving in 2006, the job market had already softened significantly—in anticipation of the proximate financial crisis—and finding a job and an apartment in Manhattan proved to be disappointingly difficult. The very low-paying job I did get, as an architectural lighting designer, had me working on lighting systems for big box malls all across the U.S. and even more spectacularly, for the excessively large new shopping malls being erected in the Middle Eastern deserts of Dubai, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, and aspiring new global cities like Krakow, Poland, or Kolkata, India. After a year as a lighting designer, I moved onto a Manhattan-based Media and Communications Firm where I worked in a more creative capacity as a 3D logistics artist. As such, I worked on pre-construction bidding packages for Turner Construction Corporation, which, in a very odd strike of fate, was the very same company my father and brother had worked for, as Turner had been taken over by German Hochtief a few
years earlier. I visualized some of New York’s most iconic new high-rise buildings including two of the new World Trade Center Towers, the new Whitney Museum in Chelsea and several of Columbia University’s new hospitals.

Unfortunately, with the 2008 implosion of Lehman Brothers, the bursting housing bubble, and the financial industry crisis, many among New York’s so-called creative class were laid off. Turner Construction cut 40% of its engineers when New York’s construction and infrastructure projects came to a grinding halt. Our 3d visualization content providing agency was deemed superfluous. And so, I lost my job, and our family was forced to leave Manhattan and temporarily set up camp in Cleveland, Ohio, where my wife grew up.

The 2007-2009 financial crisis led to nearly a decade of moves, each with the goal of finding professional opportunities and a sense of belonging. The chain of job-related, relatively luxurious and exciting geographical relocations I had experienced as a child were replaced with an impatience with permanence and a deep-seated desire to establish (or find?) a fixed home. And yet, as my own family grew, my impatience turned into a thirst and my indifference about having no fixed sense of home, complete with a reliable and caring community turned to regret for what I realized I needed but did have and was similarly not providing my own children. During this latest forced professional time-out, I decided to return to school in order to improve my job prospects. Our next move, would be, we hoped, one of our last. I completed a second
MFA degree, this time from the Rhode Island School of Design. And although I was thankful for the financial aid my naturalized U.S. citizenship afforded me, the signing of promissory notes also ushered me into a cultural tradition that I had previously neither understood nor regarded with the blind inevitability everyone else seemed to: I now shouldered a significant educational debt that I would likely spend decades repaying. Debt has a way of not only shackling a person to a system but in this case, also to a culture. And indeed, the loss of place and any real sense of belonging had begun to feel like an insufferable weight that as a mature adult, I was finally ready to shed.

Completing my second MFA reconnected me to a deep sense of self and of social duty that I realized needed further exploration. And so, I set myself up for a once-in-a-lifetime journey: doctoral studies at Duke University, which I hoped would lead me “home” in all sense of the word. Now, after some 11 years of nearly annual moves—domestic and international—I am close to completing my educational goals and in presenting this work, set my sights on applying all of my years of travel, forced transience, searching, studying and the making Self to changing my world through my art.

**War and Peace: A Continuum**

We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. (von Clausewitz, 2007, p. 28)
[...] we can invert Clausewitz’s proposition and say that politics is the continuation of war by other means. [...] According to this hypothesis, the role of political power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to reinscribe that relationship of force, and to reinscribe it in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals. (Foucault, 2003, p.15)

One of the company’s Hochtief’s most prestigious projects [...] was the New Jeddah International Airport\(^{50}\) in Saudi Arabia. Worth over DM 10 billion, this was the biggest construction contract ever given to a single company; it was begun in 1974 and finished ten years later. Other international Hochtief projects included the subway in Hong Kong; a water power station in Saryar [sic], Turkey; the Mossy-Marsh-Tunnel in Tasmania, Australia; 23 hospitals in Peru; dams in Mozambique, Pakistan, and Irak [sic]; the relocation of the Temple of Abu Simbel; the Bosphorus bridge in Turkey; and harbors all over the world. (International Directory of Company Histories, 2000)

Hochtief, whose global headquarters are located in Essen, Germany, is one of the world’s largest, internationally-focused construction and mining companies. What began in 1873 in a small town near Frankfurt, Germany, as a small family business run by the brothers Philipp and Balthasar Helfmann, is now a globally operated, multinational corporation with more that 48,000 employees and 22 billion Euro in annual revenues (Grant, 2000; Hochtief, 2000). It goes without saying that over the course of the last century-and-a-half, Hochtief has surrendered much of its character as a family business. When my father started working at Hochtief in the late 1950s, it still offered the guaranteed life-long employment typical of post-war Germany’s corporate culture and unionized labor contracts. The expertise that set Hochtief apart from its late

\(^{50}\) The airport had a separate terminal just for Hajj pilgrims that could accommodate extreme surges in passengers arriving from all over the world.
19th century competitors was its know-how with armored or reinforced concrete. This modern building material was a crucial technological innovation not only for the construction of large scale buildings, bridges, tunnels, canals and dams but also for the proliferation of wartime bunker and fortification infrastructure of the First and Second World Wars.

Hochtief built some of the most iconic buildings of the Third Reich. The Berghof, Hitler’s favorite pre-war and wartime retreat in the Bavarian Alps, and the heavily armored New Reich Chancellery (Neue Reichskanzlei) in Berlin (Figure 111), which was designed by Hitler’s favorite architect, close friend and influential counsellor Albert Speer (Kitchen, 2015) were both Hochtief projects. The company also played a prominent role in the ambitious construction of the National Auto Roads (Reichsautobahn), which was an innovative network of highways that inspired the development of the American Interstate highway system under President Eisenhower’s Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 (Weingroff, 2000). Hochtief was also heavily involved in building the National Socialist Party conference buildings in Nuremberg (Hochtief, 1932).

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51 The French gardener, Joseph Monier, is attributed with having invented reinforced concrete. He placed wire mesh inside of concrete flower pots to increase their tensile stress resistance. In construction, Monier’s wire was replaced with high-performance steel rods or so-called rebar.

52 Speer managed to build the vast complex in only a year by employing thousands of workers. The building ended up as Hitler’s tomb rather than his seat of government as it became the site of his suicide only six years later. (Kitchen, 2015)
2000). Such exemplars of vast and bombastic Nazi architectures imbued with formally charged symbolism was crucial for Hitler to galvanize and rally the German people around his deranged Raum, Volk and Blut ideology\(^53\) (Hitler, 1943). Another Nazi signature project executed by Hochtief that garnered international attention was the 1936 Olympic Stadium (Olympiastadion) in Berlin. However, it was not so much the fascist aesthetics of the building that drew international attention but rather it was there that black American track and field star, Jesse Owens famously beat Hitler’s supposedly superior Aryan athletes. Under the auspices of the infamous Organization Todt, Hochtief helped build the so-called Westwall or Siegfried Linie, the first line of defense against potential Allied counterattacks, and the Atlantic Wall (Kitchen, 2015; Seidler, 1986). The Westwall at the former geographical border with France and the French Coastal Atlantic Wall composed a massive fortification infrastructure mostly made from Hochtief’s signature technology, armored concrete.

Hochtief was also one of the many established German corporations that prospered not only from National Socialist’s pre-war and wartime building frenzy, but also exploited the death laborers\(^54\) made abundantly available to the company. Hochtief

\(^{53}\) Loosely translates into space, people and blood, but ideologically is the very foundation of Hitler’s expansionist, Aryan supremacist and genocidal ideology.

\(^{54}\) In his brilliant analyses of Third Reich concentration camps, Sofsky (1997) points out that ‘forced labor’ or ‘slave labor’ are the wrong terms to describe such labor relations. If death and
also belonged to an assorted group of German corporations that resisted paying reparations to the survivors and/or families of the Nazi regime’s “death labor” (Sofsky, 1997) system. Starting in the 1980s, though only after an onslaught of bad press, the corporation finally started paying reparations (Hochtief, 2002).

Today, Hochtief presents itself as a highly diversified international corporation that seeks to extract profits from the entire value-added chain of construction, mining, business management, finance and logistics operations. This includes planning, financing and running the infrastructure it builds and providing the heavy machinery such enterprises require. Despite the fact that construction remains at the core of Hochtief, it has branched out to offer an integrated system, turn-key product portfolio. The corporation has made strategic global acquisitions of leading international players in the highly competitive infrastructure sector. For the new millennium, it took over U.S. market leader in commercial high-rise construction, Turner Construction (Wallstreet Journal, 1999), and shortly thereafter, the world leader in contract mining, Australian

not economic profit or reproducible surplus value is the ultimate goal of labor, which was clearly the case for these laborers under National Socialism, then the proper term must be “death labor”. The concept of death labor and death camps under totalitarianism (Arendt, 1958) and its relationship to colonialism and peacetime civil society will be discussed in great detail in the chapters to follow. Mbembe’s (2003) concept of death-worlds and necropolitics will be compared to Foucault’s biopolitics to better grasp the phenomenon of perpetual war and mass migration under early 21st century capitalism.
Cimic Group (Smyth 2016). Hochtief now builds and runs everything from high-rises to highways, bridges to subways, and from telecommunication and energy networks to nuclear and hydroelectric power plants. They have even got in the business of air-and-seaport infrastructure, mineral prospecting, extraction, logistics and the final restauration and re-naturalization of the ferociously gutted natural environment.

Hochtief offers integrated management system products and expertise (Sassen, 2002) to service, maintain and run facilities. Furthermore, the company has become a global leader in operating in the shadowy realm of so-called public-private-partnership programs, which grants Hochtief access to the deep pockets of public works reaching far beyond the more rugged energy or traffic infrastructures. In fact, this opens up the highly lucrative business of building and then facility managing schools, barracks, museums, administrative buildings, and even universities56. All this far exceeds the one-time building operations of the past and mirrors the expansion of global finance capital that ensued with the end of the Cold War.

Diversification hedges Hochtief’s business models against the seasonally contingent downturns that are typical for the construction sector. Interestingly, the bread and butter ‘core’ business of civil engineering has been reframed as ‘urban and

56 All of these sites are part of what Foucault (1978) described as constitutive for the formation of disciplinary society.
social infrastructure’ (Hochtief, 2000). It is this conceptual and operational reframing that makes Hochtief emblematic of the changing global business landscape that is increasingly shaped by the tectonic forces of neoliberal geopolitics and highly flexible finance capital. In its historic trajectory, Hochtief touches on many of the key topics that are central to this dissertation. Only via momentous political opportunism and smart diversification could a small, local construction company morph into such a vast global construction, mining, services, and maintenance conglomerate. The company’s changing business model over the years was cleverly rebranded using language that fits better within a globalized economy, which is increasingly shaped by cultural capital and symbolic values rather than by brick and mortar talk. Moreover, the corporation that prospered most from building reinforced concrete bunkers before, during, and after the Second World War, has become one of the undisputed leaders in the construction of public and civil infrastructure, which in turn, ultimately determines which nation states or geopolitical regions will be part of the globalized world economy. In the modern world, fortifications and bunkers no longer need to be built of reinforced

57 It is not difficult to imagine how global trade infrastructure such as the Panama Canal, or the Bosphorus Bridge connecting the Asian and European continental plates, or the Channel Tunnel between France and England—just to name a few—enhance economic opportunity and financial as well as geopolitical power. If the power to manage, run, shut down, or otherwise limit these access points is held in the same hands, then it becomes clear how much leverage such corporations wield.
concrete. Nowadays, security comes in the form of financially and legally reinforced infrastructures, armor-plated geopolitics, and armored multilateral business associations. These modern ‘bunkers’ shut out certain groups while boxing in others, and the riches and securities of the world are left accessible only to a select minority.
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Figure 5: Paul Klee (1920). Angelus Novus. Retrieved from https://www.sfu.ca/~andrewf/CONCEPT2.html

Figure 6: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey personal artwork image archive.


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**Figure 45:** Taylor, K. (2016). Eerie never-before-seen photos from inside one of Chicago's abandoned malls. *The Business Insider.* Retrieved from http://read.bi/2k9YSM0.


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Figure 75: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey personal artwork image archive.


Figure 79: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey personal artwork image archive.

Figure 80: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey personal artwork image archive.

Figure 81: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey personal artwork image archive.

Figure 82: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey personal artwork image archive.

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Figure 84: Screenshot from website: http://www.fearconutah.com/.


Figure 88: Kubrick, S. (Director & Producer) (1971). A Clockwork Orange. [Screenshot form Motion Picture]. Warner Brothers.

Figure 89: Google Search Result for: Doomsday Preppers. Screenshot of Search Result.


Figure 91: Kirkman, R., & Darabont, F. (Producers) (2010-2016). The Walking Dead, Season 1-7. [Screenshot from TV Series]. AMC.


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Figure 109: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey personal artwork image archive.

Figure 110: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey personal artwork image archive.

Figures

Figure 1: Jannis Kounellis. *Untitled*, 1990.

Iron panels, sides of beef, and a lit blowtorch hanging from hooks, propane gas cylinder.

Figure 2: Thomas Munita. *Migrants Waiting at Greek Border for Food*, 2015.

A photograph taken for The New York Times, showing a long line of migrants waiting for food next to the Greek border fence.
Figure 3: Todeszones (Death-Zone) between West and East Germany, 1970.

Figure 4: Eyal Weizman and Daniel Bauer. Outpost in the West Bank, Israel, 2001.
Figure 5: Paul Klee. *Angelus Novus*, 1920.
My digital collage, *The Ambassadors 2.0*, is a re-interpretation or “upgrade” of Holbein’s seminal panel painting. Many of Holbein’s symbolic artifacts have been replaced by their modern equivalents to highlight the value systems shift over time.

One of the world’s largest refugee camps that developed into a permanent city structure.
Figure 8: Santiago Sierra. *Global NO Tour*. Reykjavik, Iceland, 2012.

Figure 9: Alfredo Jaar. *One Million Finnish Passports*, 1995/2014.
Urban obstacles—veritable infrastructures of violence—designed to deter unwelcome usage by humans and pets.
Figure 11: Thomas Hirschhorn. *Deleuze Monument*, 2000. Avignon, France.

Figure 12: Harun Farocki. *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades*, 2014.
Figure 13: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. *150,000,000 Empty Boardrooms*, 2012.
Roman military logistics included the camp perimeter securitization. The strictly ordered distribution of tents, utility spaces, and weapons systems resembles modern military and commercial logistics operations.
Figure 15: Bridgeheads of Capital. Standardized Container Logistics Ports, 2015.

Global intermodal sea port hubs are highly standardized infrastructures. What varies are the site specific topographical features.
This is Amazon’s Towers Business Park fulfillment center in Rugeley, U.K. Guided tours are offered to visitors. Today, Amazon 8th generation fulfillment centers look very different. Amazon now uses robots that automatically pick up stacking shelves and deliver them to a human handler. Walking is no longer required to pick up the online order items. A sophisticated computer program and visual marker system embedded into the concrete floor coordinates the seamless flow of hundreds such robots. See video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMpsMt7ETi8.
Sierra hired a person to obstruct the exiting container trucks at Kaj 3 Frinhamnen, in Stockholm, Sweden. The obstruction lasted more than 10 minutes. Nobody was hurt.
Sierra hired a truck driver who used his trailer rig to obstruct Mexico City’s important outer beltway, the Anillo Periférico Sur, for about 5 minutes.
Figure 19: Michael Landy. Breakdown, 2001.

Landy shredded all of his 7,227 personal belongings with this logistical operation setup.
Figure 20: Post-Panama Class Cranes shipped from China, 2015.

The global, intermodal container shipping system requires standardized and self-perpetuating hard and software. New sizing parameters, such as an expanded Panama Canal require an update of the entire logistics backend.
Figure 21: Alex Rivera. Border Trilogy Part 2, 2003.

Screenshot of Alex Rivera’s documentary *Border Trilogy* on container cities in the U.S..
Figure 22: Hochtief: Chixoy Hydroelectric Powerplant and Dam in Guatemala, 1980s.
Hitler’s ambitious Autobahn (interstate highway network) never paid off quite as he had hoped for. Germany lagged behind America in terms of mass production of privately owned automobiles. Hitler’s Autobahn was largely unused, and ironically facilitated the logistics operations of the Allied forces, who first bombed all German railways and then used the Autobahn for its incoming fleet of trucks. This expedited Nazi Germany’s downfall. The so-called Red Ball Express was an exclusively Black servicemen logistics operation. Strict racial segregation policies in the U.S. military (Colley, 2000) did not tolerate racially diverse regiments.
Figure 24: Albert Speer. Cathedral of Light, 1934.

For the Reichsparteitag in Nürnberg, Speer used all of Germany’s 152 anti-aircraft searchlights to create a stunning architecture in light.
From “Theater of War: The Pretend Villages of Iraq and Afghanistan”. Many U.S. military simulation and training bases exist on the national territory and abroad. The abstracted representations that the artist Sims captured during his visits are a testament to common cultural misrepresentation by the U.S. military.
I photographed The USS Harry S. Truman arriving at the Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. The Truman is the eighth of a total of ten Nimitz-class aircraft carriers available to the United States Navy. The only other country that has one single aircraft carrier is France, and it is by far smaller and less powerful.
I spent two days trying to get as close as possible to the seafront of the Norfolk Naval Station, encountering multiple overlapping security features, ranging from purely infrastructural, explicit signage, CCTV surveillance, and heavy military police and civilian police forces. I was boxed in on several occasions by military and police forces.
Figure 28: Richard Serra. *Tilted Arc*, 1981.

This image says it all. The artist on one side of his public artwork shut off from the boxed-in public on the other side.
The solid steel blocks were so heavy, the gallery floors needed to be reinforced first.

Large scale video projections on architectural icons in Venice critique their symbolic meaning and cultural capital value in an age of global tourism.
Oak tree and basalt stone “planted” at various sites across Europe and the U.S. The project began in 1982 at the Documenta 7 in Kassel, Germany. A variety of trees were planted by Beuys himself and participant spectators. Next to each tree, a large basalt stone was placed thus speaking to both transformational states (the growth of the tree) and static states (the ruggedness and immutability of a volcanic stone). Dia Beacon provided the initial funding for the work and later continued the durational piece (planting all 7000 trees had always been planned to take place over time and space) in New York.

Beuys (1982) writes,

I believe that planting these oaks is necessary not only in biospheric terms, that is to say, in the context of matter and ecology, but in that it will raise ecological consciousness—raise it increasingly, in the course of the years to come, because we shall never stop planting. Thus, 7000 Oaks is a sculpture referring to peoples’ lives, to their everyday work. That is my concept of art, which I call the extended concept or art of the social sculpture. (Dia Beacon Foundation, 2016)
Figure 32: Trevor Paglen. *The Last Pictures*, 2012.

The image shows the micro chip with the 100 images etched into its surface. It is designed to survive billions of years in the harshest conditions of outer space.

Figure 33: The Voyager Golden Records, 1977
Figure 34: Eyal Weizman. *Forensic Architecture. Book of Destruction, Gaza, 2015.*
Figure 35: Gordon Matta-Clarke. *Splittings*, 1974.

Figure 36: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. *A Fleeting Moment*, 2014.
Figure 37: Marwa al-Sabouni. Sketch of destroyed neighborhood in Homs, 2015.

One hand sketch by the architect Marwa al-Sabouni (2015) from a series to her book.
A true icon of modern architecture and urban renewal policy failures. The entire low-income development was demolished in several phases after only 17 years. Architect Minoru Yamasaki later designed the World Trade Center in New York City.
My architectural sculpture can be ‘unfolded’ into different configurations, thus altering forms within a generic matrix.
Figure 40: Theaster Gates. *Dorchester Project, 2009*.

Gates project has grown into a cultural meeting point for residents, providing a vital platform for citizen participation and dialogue.
The video projection in this space was part of the Chrystal World show at MoMa PS1. 2013.
Figure 42: ISIS’s Professional Propaganda Campaigns, 2014.

The screenshot from a ISIS propaganda video shows kidnapped British journalist John Cantlie prior to his gruesome beheading.
Figure 43: Hitler and Todt Inspecting their New Autobahn System, 1937.

Figure 44: Largest Mall in New York State: Destiny Mall, 2016.
Figure 45: Seth Lawless: Chicago’s Abandoned Lincoln Mall, 2016.

Figure 46: Magdalena Jetelová. *Atlantic Wall Series: Area of Violence*, 1994-95.
The participant audience experiences the artwork in a variety of stages. Entering the smoke filled interior of the container is the pivotal ontological moment.
Figure 48: Eadweard Muybridge. Motion Study of Laborers, 1887.
This photo is taken from the ‘spectator space’ from which the spectacle unfolding on the ‘inside’ mirrored chamber can be observed. The participant on the inside can not see the audience, akin to double mirror setups in police interrogatory spaces.
Figure 50: Clement Valla. Seed Drawings, 2011-ongoing.

Drawings by thousands of individuals via Amazon’s crowd sourcing service Mechanical Turk.
The panoramic images of Duke’s golf course are too large to show here. However, the process of printing captures some of the artwork’s deeper meanings.
Figure 52: Harun Farocki. *Comparison (Zum Vergleich)*, 2009

This screenshot from Farocki’s film. The juxtaposition of two vastly different forms of the same production process during brick production and house building.

Figure 53: David Cronenberg. *Crash*, 1996.

In his 1973 book *Crash* (Ballard, 2001), and the later movie version directed by David Cronenberg, the protagonists sexually fetishize deadly car accidents and the physical wounds suffered by its survivors. In this screenshot the protagonist sensually inspects a car damaged during a deadly accident.
Figure 54: Robert Venturi. *Precedents of Suburban Symbols, Learning from Levittown Studios, Yale, 1970.*
Figure 55: Amulet Corporation: Ballistic Barriers, 2016.

Figure 56: Nils Norman. *Architectures of Play*, 2003.
Figure 57: Marina Abramovic. *The Artist is Present*, 2010.

Figure 58: Planet of the Apes. Final scene with Statue of Liberty ruins, 1968.
Figure 59: Levittown in Long Island, NY, 1957.
Figure 60: Freitag Flagship Store Zürich. World’s Tallest Container Structure, 2016.
Figure 61: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. *Climate Controlled Homeless Residence for Hot Climates*, 1989.
Figure 62: World’s largest permanent refugee camp. Dabaab, Kenya, 2016.

Figure 63: Josh Begley. *Prison Map. Geography of Incarceration in the U.S.*, 2012.
Figure 64: Offshore Processing Center on Manus Island, 2016

Figure 65: Ai WeiWei. Posing as Drowned Syrian Child, 2016.
Christoph Schlingensief staged a spectacular public performance artwork in downtown Vienna’s cultural heart, right next the its famous Opera House. The news magazine Der Spiegel titled their article Big Brother of Hate.
Figure 68: Baton Rouge Protester and Riot Police, 2016.
Figure 69: Jeremy Deller. The Battle of Orgreave, 2001.
Figure 70: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. *Blockbuster*, 2014.
Figure 71: Santiago Sierra: 24 Blocks of Concrete Constantly Moved During a Day’s Work by Paid Workers, 1999.
Figure 72: The 'Original' Ground Zero, Nagasaki- Before and After Atom, 1945.
Figure 73: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. Arabian Knights, 2013.

Figure 74: Wafaa Bilal. Domestic Tension—Shoot an Iraqi, 2007.
Figure 75: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. *Tableau Mort*, 2016.

Figure 77: Screenshot from *Die Hard* movie, 1988. Inspiration for 9/11 terror attacks?

Renowned film directors have commented on the cinematic precedents for the 9/11 terror attacks in New York.

Figure 78: The Original WTC: An Architectural Blueprint Copy of Mecca.

The center section of the image shows Mecca in its pre-development stage. After Mohammed Bin Laden had completed his multi-billion-dollar remodeling project, Mecca today resembles the Las Vegas strip.
New glass and curtain wall technology makes buildings blend into the environment.
Figure 80: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. Architect Santiago Calatrava’s new PATH Station, NYC. 2016.
Figure 81: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. Michael Arad’s Reflecting Absence, 2016.

Figure 82: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. WTC Tourists Taking Selfies at September 11 Memorial, 2016.
Figure 83: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. Posing at Reflecting Absence, 2016.

Figure 84: Screenshot from Official Website. Annual Fear Con in Utah, 2016.
This Horrifying Video Shows How Police Respond to Active Shooters Now
A raw scene from New York's JFK airport last night.

Daily mass shootings are the new normal in America.

Figure 85: JFK Airport Lockdown. Fake Shooter Mass Panic. 2016.
Mueck did not make this alleged self-portraiture in order to relate to recent ISIS beheading videos, however, the uncanny resemblance to some of those horrific images cannot be overlooked.
Figure 87: Robotics Engineer Mashiro Mori: The Uncanny Valley with Zombie.
A growing number of TV series and documentaries are dedicated to preppers. The newest fascination is with billionaire preppers, who are making sure to have their privileges protected even in the end times.
Figure 90: Unknown Artist. The Mouth of Hell, 15th Century. *Hours of Catherine of Cleves.*
Figure 91: The Walking Dead TV Series: Typical Mouth of Zombie.
Figure 92: Angel Locking the Jaws of Hell. Winchester Psalter, 12th Century
Figure 93: The Walking Dead (TWD). Walker Hordes in a Feeding Frenzy. 2016.
Figure 94: TWD Walkers/Sinners on Path to Hell. Brueghel vs. TWD. 2016 vs. 1558.
Figure 95: Rails to the Gates of Auschwitz Birkenau and to Terminus in TWD.
Figure 96: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. *Hellfire*, 2014.

This silkscreen print on canvas shows nine Hellfire missiles in mid air. This warhead is launched by American Predator Drones in their covert missions to kill suspected terrorist in the Greater Middle East.

Figure 97: Haroun Farocki. *Auge/Maschine II*, 2002.
This is a collage of what Rancière calls “naked images”. These images witness key moments in history and tell all of the atrocities that happened outside of the specific frame. Top left: General Nguyen Ngoc Loan publically executes a Viet Cong prisoner; top right: Goran Jelisić executes a Muslim man in Brcko, Bosnia Herzegovina; bottom: 12-13 year old children execute a group of kneeling men in orange jumpsuits. The symbolism of orange jumpsuits is a direct attack against U.S. sensibilities, as it is understood as retaliation for the prisoner abuses of Muslims at the hand of American soldiers stationed in the Middle East. As a floating signifier, orange jumpsuits can now be “deployed” as media weapon no matter if the victims are American, Western, Eastern or like in this case, Muslims.
Figure 99: Rembrandt. *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632.

Figure 100: Human Teaches Terminator Robots How to Torture Humans.
Figure 101: Fashion Designer John Galliano: *Abu Ghraib Torture Couture*, 2008.

Figure 102: Allen Jones. *Hatstand, Table, and Chair*. Women as Furniture Series, 1969.
Figure 103: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. Me Seeing Us, 2012.
Figure 104: Caravaggio. *Medusa*, 1597.

Athena attached Medusa’s severed head to her shield as additional weapon system.
Figure 105: European Euro Versus U.S. Dollar: A Comparison.
Figure 106: Vietnamese and Cambodian “boat people” on small boat, 1975-1980.
Figure 107: Villa Baviera, formerly known as “Colonia Dignidad”, Chile.

3D sculpture visualization for planned fabrication in I-beam steel. 12m x 5m x 2m.
Figure 109: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. *Outfit for the Traveling Surgeon of Yore*, 1996.

Archaic looking artifacts that resemble scientific and medical instruments, clocks, magical wands, weapons, video recorders, audio playback machines, and so on. Materials include stainless steel, foam rubber, snake skin, bone, mechanical components, film fragments.
Figure 110: Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey. Haystack Highway to Nowhere, 1997.

A horizontal row of hay bales becomes a wall or barrier; the vertical architectures resemble watch towers or pitch-dark passage ways.
Figure 111: One of Hochtief’s signature projects: Hitler’s Neue Reichskanzlei.

The highly polished marble floor was designed to resemble ice so that visitors were intimidated—as if walking on thin ice—before meeting Hitler.
Biography

Michael Tauschinger-Dempsey, born in Munich, Germany, is a new media artist and researcher working at the intersection of fine art, critical theory and technology. He holds MFA degrees from the Rhode Island School of Design in Digital & Media (2012), and the Düsseldorf Art Academy in Integration Sculpture & Architecture (1997). Tauschinger-Dempsey also holds a MA degree in Visual & Media Studies and the Graduate Certificate in Information Science & Studies from Duke University, both completed in 2015. Tauschinger-Dempsey will complete his doctoral research at Duke University in 2017 with his dissertation entitled *Zones of Occupation: Violent Infrastructures in the Global Economy of Fear*. At the Rhode Island School of Design, Tauschinger-Dempsey was awarded the Graduate Teaching and Research Assistantship and the Graduate Assistantship in 2011 as well as Graduate Fellowships from 2010 through 2012. At Duke University he was recipient of a Ph.D. Fellowship from 2012 through 2017 as well as the Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant of Professor Richard Powell in 2014. He was awarded Ph.D. Summer Research Fellowships from 2012-2015. In 2013, Tauschinger-Dempsey’s essay *Life in a Corporate Wonder-Wasteland* was published in University of California Santa Barbara’s Media Fields Journal. He gave artist talks at the 2013 Media Fields Conference entitled Access/Trespass and Forms of Surveillance at the University of California Santa Barbara, and later that year, at Duke University’s Intermezzo a presentation entitled *The Art of Resistance*. 