

REVANCHIST PLANET

By Neil Smith



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REGENERATION AND THE AXIS OF CO-EVILISM

By Neil Smith*

Over ten years ago when the idea of the “revanchist city” first arose, it did so in a quite local and contained context. The immediate inspiration was Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s “zero tolerance” campaign, beginning in 1994, against an estimated 100,000 homeless people on New York’s streets. No longer were those people excluded from the housing market, private or public, to be assisted and supported by public policy; rather, in a sharp reactionary shift, they were now to be cleansed from the streets as a plague by vicious police sweeps, their visibility (if not their condition) eradicated.

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His interests in social theory include political economy and marxism and lie behind his theoretical work on uneven development. From the global to the local scales, he argues, our spatial worlds are constructed and reconstructed as expressions of social relations and especially as expressions of capitalist social relations. Uneven development is in many way the hallmark of capitalism.

The accompanying rhetoric galvanized a spirit of revenge against a population that had “taken our city from us.” Others were quickly added to the list of criminal interlopers who had stolen the city from its rightful white middle class burghers (many long since decamped to the suburbs): African Americans, immigrants, windshield washers, panhandlers, prostitutes. Eradicating the signs of disorder trumped solving any crimes: street vendors and litter louts, petty criminals and jay walkers, prostitutes and taxi drivers, street artists and speeders on city streets – all were targeted. (The latter campaign against speeding cars was embarrassingly dropped the day after it was announced when an enterprising reporter clocked the mayor’s own SUV doing fifty miles per hour down Fifth Avenue.)

But “the Mussolini of Manhattan,” as the *New York Times* once dubbed Giuliani, pressed on. His zero tolerance doctrine was proudly buttressed by the pseudo-scientific sociology of the “broken-windows” thesis, which argued that small crimes tolerated led directly to large crimes encouraged. The antidote to this rampant criminality, the breaking of windows and worse, was visible and aggressive policing. A militant anti-police brutality movement responded to the Giuliani onslaught, yet before “Giuliani Time” came to an end a police force manifestly out of control had killed or brutalized dozens of innocent New Yorkers (Smith 1998). In only one of many high profile cases was a single police prep brought to justice. Intimately entwined with the city’s gentrification strategy, the revanchism of the 1990s combined an anti-liberal political reaction with an almost ontological social desire by some for class revenge. 1990s revanchism, in short, attempted a bare-knuckle reconquest of the city, marked the denouement of twentieth-century liberal urban policy, and harboured the desire for a new, peremptory urban order.

The book in which this discussion of the revanchist city first appeared was first slated to be entitled “The Revanchist City.” Tristan, my very excellent editor at Routledge, put his foot down and said that it was a cardinal rule of publishing that one should never give a book a title where bookshop browsers need a dictionary to know what it is about. Claiming no expertise in publishing, and thinking this to be serious wisdom, I quickly demurred. But, once the book began to be read, scholars in conversation often as not called

it “The Revanchist City.” I have even seen the book cited in book and journal bibliographies under this title. If it goes into another edition, I may trust popular demand over my ex-editor.

The question of revanchism looks very different today, and it is much more serious. On the one hand, the edge of 1990s-style revanchism has been blunted – at least in post-Giuliani New York. On the other hand, a far more dangerous revanchism stalks the world. Here I want to look at contemporary revanchism under three headings. The first considers the direct export of zero tolerance strategies from New York beginning in the late 1990s. The second theme concerns other experiences of urban revanchism that at least until 2001 had little if anything to do with New York City. Third, there is the intensified revanchism associated with state-sponsored and private market violence at the global scale (including cities). I want to conclude with a discussion of the political and conceptual traffic that connects revanchism at the urban scale with the more variegated kinds of global revanchism. If we can now be said to inhabit a revanchist planet, where does this leave our conceptualization of revanchism? How do we distinguish revanchism from other kinds of state violence, routine or otherwise?

The Export and Diffusion of Zero Tolerance

If the original revanchists of late nineteenth century France (Rutkoff, 1981) were resolutely and violently nationalist, things have changed in this new global world. No sooner was “zero tolerance” introduced in New York City and its “success” ballyhooed from City Hall – on the basis of dubious correlations morphed into historically and statistically unsupportable statements of causation – than it was internationalized. On the one hand, a disgruntled police commissioner, fired by Giuliani, set himself up as a highly paid consultant to cities and security forces around the world, and others followed. On the other hand, urban governments from all continents sent police chiefs, urban managers and politicians (including then-UK Home Secretary, Jack Straw) to observe the New York program in practice (a returning Straw enthused over what he called, “zero tolerance with a British face”). Nottingham may have become, in this process, the first British

constabulary to routinely arm its officers, but many others from London to Glasgow adopted the doctrine in varied forms and to various extents (Atkinson 2003). And the most gleefully aggressive implementation of zero tolerance in the UK undoubtedly came from Ray Mallon, police chief of the Cleveland District. A man with an apparent fetish for tear gas – his police force used more than any other in the country – Mr. Mallon admired Margaret Thatcher but thought the “iron lady” much too “soft.” (He would later lose his job for being just a little too hard.)

Beyond Britain, such notoriously dangerous cities as Oslo and Bremen, Vienna and Barcelona, Stockholm and Dublin, have supped at this new holy grail of anti-crime snake oil. Indeed it is difficult to find an urban police force across the world that has not dabbled with it. In Spanish it is translated literally as “la tolerancia cero.” Beyond its original domain of urban policing, the language of zero tolerance has been generalized with explosive speed. There is zero tolerance for kids smoking, zero tolerance for “bad behaviour” in schools, zero tolerance for public drinking, (zero tolerance for fun, apparently, even as our advert-driven capitalist consumerism exalts fun as the *ne plus ultra* of daily living). There is zero tolerance for whatever British local councils deem anti-social behaviour (even, or rather, especially, when such behaviour is not illegal), zero-tolerance for strikes of course, and zero tolerance for White House leaks (unless the White House orchestrated the leak, in which case there is zero tolerance for anyone caught leaking who it was that originally leaked). The language of zero tolerance has become a virtual Vesuvius of clichés camouflaging weaker or milder practices of social repression.

The vital question here is why. Why in little more than ten years has zero tolerance become such a powerful synonym for whatever social activities those with social power and authority seek to repress? This is simply a different way of asking about the generalization of revanchism. But before attempting to answer this conundrum, it is important to make note of one geographical update in the story. The New York Police Department, which played a central role in spawning 1990s revanchism, has developed an entire organizational model for street crime fighting. With its military-sounding acronym, replete with capital letters, COMPSTAT is not simply a computerized technology for

gathering and mapping crime statistics but an entire system of outcome-based personnel management based on the assumption that all individual street crimes can be mapped (white-collar criminals need not apply) and so-called crime hot spots identified. From there it becomes a comparatively simple matter for precincts to concentrate on the designated areas, arrest supposed criminals, and thereby lower crime statistics. The patent geographical fallacies of this approach are presumably obvious and I won't offer a critique here (see Treves 2005) except to suggest that at the very least there are shades of Friedrich Engels: the bourgeoisie has no solution for the "crime problem" but simply moves it around. Round two of the global zero-tolerance merry-go-round, whereby NYPD insiders span out around the globe to proselytize "the system" to their great personal enrichment while eager global police managers flock to New York to see the system in action, is about to be launched with COMPSTAT. Watch for it at a constabulary near you.

Alternative Urban Revanchisms

Quite apart from the export of zero tolerance strategies, it is obviously possible to identify other forms and cases of urban revanchism. The unprecedented building booms of Shanghai and Beijing – simultaneously gentrification and the development of previously rural fringe land – bring the summary eviction of tens of thousands of paupers. The non-redistribution of wealth in post-apartheid Johannesburg breeds its own brand of white (but not only white) revanchism there. In Sydney in 2006, in a refraction of events globally, white race riots targeted beach-going Australian Muslims, Arabs, South and South-East Asians and other people of colour as foreigners.

Brazil is different again. In May 2006, 186 people were killed in São Paulo in a two-week spate of violence that virtually brought the city to a halt. While this event was initially reported in Europe and North America as largely the result of gang aggression and police attempts to quell it, it became increasingly obvious that in addition "irate officers[...] sought revenge with a killing rampage" (Rohter, 2006). In São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro there is a long history of police violence, much of it deployed against street and drug gangs

but virtually all of it targeting the poor. A 2005 attack is described in the most recent Amnesty International Report:

On 31 March, 29 people were killed in the Baixada Fluminense district of Rio de Janeiro. The killings were attributed to a “death squad” of military police officers, who [for two and a half hours] drove through the towns of Queimados and Nova Iguaçu shooting randomly at passers-by. Ten military police officers and one former police officer were arrested and charged with murder. The joint federal and civil police investigation linked at least 15 earlier killings to the massacre suspects [police], who were believed to have been involved in kidnapping and extorting money from lorry drivers.

<http://web.amnesty.org/report2006/bra-summary-eng#2>

In another attack two months later, police cornered and assassinated with machine guns five youths between the ages of 14 and 22. In the favelas of Rio de Janeiro young, homeless street “urchins,” not yet in their teenage years, have periodically been swept up and killed by police.

Although some of the police murders are connected to the gentrification that is beginning to affect some neighborhoods in the centre of these cities, they are almost entirely, as with the cases referred to here, aimed at the favelas on the outskirts. Lawyers, political leaders and human rights workers testify to the “endemic corruption and brutality in law enforcement agencies and prisons” (Rohter, 2006), and the mutual militarization of relations between the police and favela dwellers. *Amnesty International*, meanwhile cites a 2003 report in Rio de Janeiro’s daily newspaper *O Globo* complaining about the lyrics of training songs sung by “members of the elite wing of the city’s military police”:

*The interrogation is very easy to do /
get the slum dweller and beat him till it hurts /
Interrogations are very easy to finish /
get the criminal and beat him till he dies.*

*A criminal from a slum /
you don’t sweep up with a broom /
you sweep them up with grenades /*

*with a rifle and with a machine gun.*¹

A Brazilian security expert concludes that the police have implemented a policy of “private revenge”: “It is a tragedy for society when you have a police force acting on impulse, out of revenge ... reacting in much the same way as the criminals, with excessive violence” (Phillips 2006).

It is important to remember that this kind of endemic police violence predates the 1990s-style New York City revanchism, and in the case of Brazil specifically it can be traced back to the military junta, and its aftermath, which was only evicted from power in 1985. Concerted efforts especially by Lula’s Workers’ Party government have had only very limited success in reigning in police violence or in bringing the police to trial. On the few occasions when they are even charged, the police are routinely found not guilty. In the case of the military officers accused of killing the five São Paulo youths in 2005, intimidated magistrates dropped all charges on the grounds that those randomly shot were all drug dealers. What may be new in the Brazilian case, then, is the increased intensity of violence since the 1990s against the poor, the predominance of summary executions, and the intensified militarism of social control in the favelas. It is also important to state the obvious, namely that the scale of police violence in Brazilian cities is of an entirely different order than in New York City, for example. The 2006 *Amnesty* report estimates that, in Brazil’s two largest cities alone, as many as 9,889 people were killed by the police forces between 1999 and 2004. The cause of death was routinely listed as “resistance followed by death.”

Some may be tempted, therefore, to refer to Giuliani-style street repression as a kind of “soft revanchism,” but I think we should probably avoid that temptation. I say this, not as a means of devaluing a far greater scale of revanchist violence in Brazil or elsewhere, compared with that experienced during “Giuliani Time.” Rather, in the first place, revanchism in the west has by no means disappeared: during the 2004 Republican National Convention, affectionately known by New Yorkers as the Republican National Convulsion,

¹ <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGAMR190252005>

Giuliani's mayoral successor, Michael Bloomberg, converted midtown Manhattan into a police state and had nearly 2,000 protestors summarily arrested and held sleepless in a bus garage for as much as 60 hours, until George Bush escaped town. In the second place, it is important to keep the European and North American experiences in focus, if for no other reason than that in the twenty-first century these very different experiences of revanchism around the world may be, in part, converging. The American pseudo-scientific cloak of respectability donated by the "broken windows" rationale for zero tolerance has been widely exploited abroad; and there is a cruel irony in the fact that Jean Charles de Menezes, the innocent, unarmed man chased and gunned down at point blank range by shoot-to-kill London police on the tube in the days after 7/7, was a Brazilian emigre.

Anti-terrorism as Revanchism

The sporadic (and not always novel) revanchism of the 1990s, whatever form it took, has been overtaken in the twenty-first century by a thoroughly new beast. This is not just a question of scale, important as that is, not simply an escalation of revanchist violence, nor simply an internationalization of that revanchism. It is a whole new genre of revanchism. It would be easy to point to September 11th 2001 as a turning point, and the consequent "war on terror", but that would be far too easy. History did not begin on 9/11, and the United States is not the Archimedean point of all existence.

That said, the *response* to September 11th did change the world. Anti-terrorism, which had always been a convenient mobilizing device for revanchist politics, quickly became the grammar, indeed the *modus vivendi*, of politics at all scales from the global to the personal. Terrorism of the incidental sort – suicide bombers, hijackers, non-suicide bombers, and the like – has been superseded by an omni-present blanket of anti-terrorist moralism, thinly camouflaging quests for advantage, power and control – an effort at the endgame of globalization (Smith, 2005). For the populations of Afghan villages whose weddings are bombed by CIA drones, Iraqi residents of Fallujah slaughtered by US marines with globally banned phosphorus bombs and agent orange, Iraqi women raped and killed by the same US units, Gaza Palestinian families at the beach, Lebanese children mercilessly

bombed by US weapons in a relentless explosion of state violence – the war on terrorism is itself the most frightening and deadly violence these people have ever known. This to say nothing of Abu Ghraib or Guantánamo.

In what sense do the wars against Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Lebanon qualify as revanchist? Israel's pretext for its war against Lebanon was justified as revenge for the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers, while Hezbollah's rationale for the kidnapping was both revenge against an Israeli Defence Force that killed Palestinian civilians, including five children, on a beach some days earlier. Palestinian hostility against Israel is a revenge for their eviction from Palestine in 1948 and the resulting homelessness of an entire people. The US Afghan war was revenge for 9/11, and the Iraq war represents a pure war of opportunism aimed at taking revenge in the Middle East for more than three decades of defeats in the region by the United States.

Coming out of World War II the US expected the Middle East to be its new oil-rich backyard, and indeed, whereas it had controlled only 10% of the region's oil supply on the eve of the war compared with Britain's 72%, by the 1960s it controlled 60%, more than twice the British haul. Control was short-lived however, as the recently founded OPEC initiated an embargo in 1973 which may have enriched US oil corporations but left the US government helpless to counteract. 1978 brought the toppling of the Shah's regime which for a quarter of a century after a CIA-engineered coup had run Iran as a puppet to the US; the US embassy was stormed and hostages were taken. In 1981, having suffered a massive defeat – 241 marines killed in a single attack – the US retreated from an Israeli-invaded Lebanon. Despite its financial and military support for Saddam Hussein, the US was unable to engineer a definitive defeat of Iran in the 1980s. This series of global defeats in the Middle East left the US smarting for revenge, and, irate that Bush Sr. had not gone all the way to Baghdad in 1991, the neoconservatives in the later 1990s began to manufacture the ideological and practical means of doing so. Any target would have done but the ire against Hussein was intensely personal ever since he stopped agreeing to follow the US line in the 1980s, stopped, in other words, agreeing to be "our" son-of-a-bitch, as Franklin Roosevelt

once famously lamented about Nicaraguan dictator, Anastasio Somoza. That Iran is now in the cross-hairs of a potential future war simply confirms the vengefulness of the “war on terrorism”. The Vietnam War was not a war of revenge, nor was the Korean War; the Cold War more generally was a power politics standoff. Except perhaps on the part of the Third Reich, which used the punitive Versailles Treaty as a pretext, World War II was not a war of revenge; World War I was a classic inter-imperialist war. By contrast, war today is justified as a question of revenge and reaction. Revanchism at the global scale has become the grammar of politics as at no time in the last century. If deeper geoeconomic interests – the endgame of globalization (Smith 2005), for example – still underpin such wars, the revanchist rationale for war not only alters the political landscape but sets up a whole new ideological contest.

As in all times of war, the manufacture of fear is aimed as squarely at the domestic population as at any “external enemy.” The domestic population is drilled into fear of a dire enemy incursion or else the equally dire threat that they themselves may become the enemy. “Loose lips,” read British propaganda posters in WWII, “sink ships.” Today, the “war on terror” is terrorizing the citizens of the world into support for anti-terror violence. “If you see something, say something,” reads a New York City subway terrorism poster, simultaneously instilling fear and enlisting the populace in the very war *of* terror to which they themselves are subjected.

More generally, a broad multinational clampdown on public space – its increased surveillance and militarization – is carried out in the name of fighting terrorism, but as the extraordinary anti-social behaviour ordinances (ASBOs) in Britain suggest the larger goal is a galvanization of ontological fear and a form of tightened social control that exceeds what the law actually allow (see Atkinson 2006). As Carl Schmitt proposed, for better or worse, this reveals the exception to be written into the letter of the norm; the deep revanchist impulse does not counter liberal law but is written into its very DNA. Hence neoliberalism. The same states that claim as their primary *raison d'être* the protection of their citizens, have mobilized extreme fear and demands for revenge as a means to terrorize their own

populations. Reds under beds have given way to bombers in your basement. George Bush's first Secretary of Education, confronted by the threat of a crippling strike by underpaid teachers, didn't just liken the teachers' union to terrorists but publicly proclaimed union members as terrorists.

The global, highly profitable and state-sanctioned burgeoning of anti-terror violence is in no immediate danger of receding. The dramatic expansion of private militia and mercenary corporations, popularized by media apologists as "independent contractors," betokens this brave new world of planetary revanchism. The wealthy – state or private – can hire a corporate mercenary to protect their Cape Town villas, drive them to work in Mumbai, do the dirty work of the Iraq war, or strong-arm an election in West Africa. The New York City Police Department has itself globalized: in addition to energetically recruiting officers with various Asian language skills, they also send anti-terrorist detectives to Israel as well as to other port cities such as Singapore and Montreal, London and Santo Domingo both for training but also to snuffle intelligence usable in New York or Washington (Miller 2005); other NYPD personnel have trained in urban warfare techniques in Belfast. Nor are we as academics, indeed left theorists, entirely insulated from this: Deleuze and Guatarri's arguments about "lines of flight" have been mobilized by the Israeli Defense Force to strategize its brutal bulldozing through Gaza Palestinian homes, block by block: rather than send soldiers through the more vulnerable spaces of narrow, open urban streets and lanes, the IDF simply drills its way through block after block of Palestinian living rooms and bedrooms (Weizman, 2004).

In all of this there is another irony. The first use of the word "terrorism" referred to state rule by terror. It was coined in the years after the French Revolution – the so-called Reign of Terror – and identified terror as an instrument of state power. In the interim, with the generalization of the bourgeois national state since the eighteenth century, the power of states and of ruling class ideologies have successfully deflected and redefined terrorism as first and foremost an instrument of *anti*-state power. Today's revanchism brings us full circle, exposing again the deployment of terror as an instrument of state power. There is

an even greater irony: the original revanchists of late nineteenth century France were reacting against, and taking revenge for, the liberal revolt of 1848 in France, wartime defeat at the hands of the Prussians two decades later, the Paris Commune of 1871, and its aftermath. Today's revanchism takes aim also at domestic "defeats," taking revenge for the 1960s, as well as for defeats abroad. In the case of the United States this means more than three decades of defeat in the Middle East; in the case of Britain, especially England, it means a country that has never reconciled itself to the abject loss of Empire and the comparative global impotence that has followed.

Today's revanchism is far from arbitrary revenge and reaction, striking out in all directions. It is revenge with a clear goal, and it is for the most part precision targeted. Not all of the global citizenry face equal threats of revenge and reaction. Those whose fear is realist are rarely heard while those whose fear is loudest determine policy. In the wake of 9/11 several Middle Eastern and South Asian people in the US were arbitrarily killed in vengeful racist attacks, and in Britain an assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan police has come out and argued that anti-terrorism laws have become a means of criminalizing and terrorizing British muslims and people of colour (Butt and Dodd, 2006).

But there is also another aspect to this. Margaret Thatcher's famous dictate that "there is no such thing as society, there are only individuals" ("and," as she added in an afterthought, "the family") certainly harkened back to the paradigmatic bourgeois individualism of the eighteenth century liberal capitalism, but it simultaneously looked forward to a neoliberalism of its own making, a neoliberalism in which the national state's subsidy of capital not only continued but intensified, while its support for the social reproduction of the people was gutted. The so-called nanny state was to be supplanted by the rugged individualism of one's relationship to the market. The global and the local are melded: neoliberalism from the barrel of a gun entwines neatly with the equally violent dispossessive dictates of the market. Class reconquest, in the broadest sense – taking back the city, the nation or the planet from any whose presence or politics would challenge the narrow class and race ambition writhing in the verbiage of globalization and the discourse

of neoliberalism – is the true glue that attaches local to global revanchism. The war on terror at home has simply picked up, reconfigured and intensified a revanchism, already imminent in the 1990s, that began as a small and dispersed monster and has now become a planet-spanning Godzilla.

Conclusion

The brilliance of revanchism in its early twenty-first century incarnation is its universal ambition to terrify the populace into self-discipline and compliance. But it does not do so equally or evenly. Some are targets of bombs and bombers, while others use security systems to fortify their houses and airports against them. Some are permanently subject to arrest, torture and rape even while innocent, while others inveigh with ontological spleen against Muslims, Jews, strikers, workers, immigrants, women. Those carrying out the bombings, rapes and torture in the name of anti-terrorism are generally the ones who get to fortify themselves, or at least they fall on the same side of the political equation, while those bombed are the ones most likely to be attacked in their homes. Whether one is revanchist or recipient has everything to do with existing power structures including especially, but by no means exclusively, class. I emphasize class here because although the class contours of the revanchist city are fairly well discussed, the class aspects of more global conflicts are not, and need to be revealed. The war on terrorism is, like the revanchist city, a war of the rich against the poor, in which the poor often dies.

In any specific situation, of course, the entwinement of class and race especially represents an analytical challenge, and gender is even more complicated: the victims of Giuliani Time were generally men – men of colour – while more than half of the Lebanese victims of the 2006 Israeli war have been women and children. British revanchism, courtesy of urban “regeneration,” victimises people on the basis of their class by evicting them from the local housing markets. Revanchism exacerbates and reproduces, reconstructs and constructs social differences in the populace, and this applies to wartime Baghdad and Beirut as much as New York, London or São Paulo.

To be fair, the so-called urban regeneration policies of the same Blair government that tried to regenerate Baghdad and Basra by means of deadly and destructive military force are surely a softer and gentler revanchism. Winkling people out with promises of new housing – real or imagined – in the neighbourhood or in far distant estates is very different from bombing them out at the direct cost of their lives. But the ideological connection that justifies both state manoeuvres is similar. Some people are held to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and this judgement is rarely if ever cavilled against the ruling class.

Twenty-first century revanchism has to do not just with the enforcement of market discipline and military power, but just as much with the tightened control of social reproduction. Actually existing globalization does, selectively, suck certain powers from most (but not all) national states, and the consequent redistribution of power gravitates toward the urban as much as the global.

Nonetheless, at the scale of the city in a globalizing world, one of the greatest challenges facing urban elites is to regulate the unprecedented flow of labour across national borders. Millions of people move annually to places where their norms of social reproduction no longer necessarily or entirely apply. The perceived need to socialize and regulate this “foreign” (not necessarily in a national sense) labour force meshes with the new demands of a stringent state power grasping both for new forms of power and defending its old prerogatives in the face of globalization.

To return to New York, then, where the idea of the revanchist city emerged, it is no accident that almost all of the victims of Giuliani Time were working class, black, immigrant men: Amadou Diallo from Guinea, Peter Dorismond from Jamaica, Abner Louima from Haiti – the list goes on. We can add London’s (and Brazil’s) Jean Charles de Menezes to the list. It is in this sense that the incidental revanchism of the 1990s merges with the global revanchism of economy as much as politics in the twenty-first century. It also has to be remembered that the four police officers who, having fired 41 shots at an unarmed Amadou Dialo in 1998, were acquitted on the grounds that they had “reasonable suspicion” of being attacked and shot. Pre-emption was legitimate. This judgement laid the ground work for

the Bush Doctrine of 2003. We know now of course that Diallo had no gun and Saddam Hussein had no WMDs.

“Security” is the ubiquitous justification for revanchism in all its forms and guises, but this hardly means an equal guarantee of security for all. As a mantra, “security” is a largely bureaucratic rhetoric: who, after all, could really champion insecurity? And yet the security of some is bought with the insecurity of others. Above all, it is the conditions of capital accumulation that are to be secured. The appropriate analogy here is with “sustainability” which, in its origins, was meant to refer to the *environmental* future, but ever since it became a hobby horse of the World Bank more than 15 years ago, sustainability has referred primarily to profit rates rather than environmental health. Yet who could be for *unsustainability*? The powerful connection between security and profit rates is not without its contradictions of course. When Giuliani wanted to close down street food vendors as both a visual blight and a security threat, Wall Street, amidst its barren urban canyons and depending on such vendors to feed their workers quickly for lunch and get them back in the skyscraper office, rebelled. When the US wanted a Dubai company to run security in the nation’s ports, American capitalists rebelled rather than lose lucrative contracts. Wal-Mart has routinely outfoxed state-controlled port security as a hindrance to trade (see Cowen on the contradictions of port security, forthcoming).

Capitalists struggle among themselves, between different sectors and different places. Giovanni Arrighi (1994) and later David Harvey (2003) have suggested that this represents a contradiction between a capitalist and a territorial logic of accumulation, but this argument only makes sense to the extent that the state is seen as somehow outside or sufficiently beyond capital. The argument here, by contrast, is not only that the national state emerged as an integral territorial expression of capital, but that the crisis of the state, to which revanchism is in part a response, is integral to a contemporary rescaling of the geography of capital accumulation. The reconnection of the global and the urban, through the tendrils of the state as much as through the dictates of the market, is central to this process.

So what does this mean for the revanchist city? Revanchism is a global reality today in a way it was not ten years ago, and any focus on revanchist urbanism must be squeezed through a recognition of this truth. The same companies commissioned to reconstruct Baghdad – Haliburton and Bechtel among others – have also been commissioned for the new urbanist post-Katrina reconstruction of New Orleans, which is resulting in the displacement of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of working class and African American residents. It is vital in this context that our perspective keeps pace with this globalization of revanchism. The convergence between the revanchist city and a revanchist globalism is still largely unexplored but now represents an urgent political and analytical challenge.

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