

Securitising Street Populations: Investment-led Growth in Rio de Janeiro and Bogotá

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Following global trends, many Latin American cities have embraced urban governance models that emphasise real estate development as a means to absorb surplus capital and trigger market-led growth. As the value of real estate investment is connected to its spatial surroundings, urban renewal plans, the upgrading of historic city centres and tighter surveillance and control of urban space have become key components of urban governance. Not only does urban planning and management of Latin American cities pander to private interests, this type of governing and its policies have a significant impact on the cities social make up. Public spaces are increasingly policed and securitised. Criminal law and other punitive policies have played crucial roles in the removal of ‘undesirables’ (beggars, drug users, homeless and street populations, etc.) from the areas of economic interest. Through the cases of Bogotá and Rio de Janeiro, this paper illustrates the growing of coercive and punitive urban policies that deal with the homelessness as the phenomenon which has escalated since the early 1990s. It is claimed that ‘clearing out’ of certain parts of these cities is not only achieved by means of deterrence, but more importantly, the arbitrary incarceration and physical extermination of these populations carried out by the police, military and para-military forces. The debates on criminalisation of poverty in the global south reveal how urban governance, state violence and financialisation are deeply connected.

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Introduction

[*Colombia*]. With the title ‘A Trip to Hell’, *Semana*, one of the main national magazines in Colombia, reported a police raid that took place on 28 May 2016 in the biggest drug zone of Bogotá: *El Bronx*.¹ A powerful special reaction force of 2,500 police officers and soldiers seized and shut down the entire area,² located just a few blocks away from most governmental buildings and tourist hotspots. It was described as a ‘sordid stew of drug dens, vagrants, prostitution and gambling’,³ an ‘independent republic of crime’,⁴ or more dramatically, as ‘hell on earth’.⁵ The operation resulted in the displacement of around 3,000 people, most of them ‘homeless addicts’.⁶ This is not, however, a new type of intervention. The *El Bronx* operation was organised by the centre-right re-elected Mayor Enrique Peñalosa, who during his previous administration (1998–2001) demolished one of Bogotá’s most notorious ‘drugs cooking pots’, *El Cartucho*, and turned it into a concrete plaza.⁷ Most of the displaced population moved to *El Bronx*, which is located only a few blocks away.⁸ Following the Bronx raid, as in 1998, Mayor Peñalosa promised to

¹ *Semana*, ‘Viaje al infierno: en las entrañas del Bronx’ *Semana* (Bogotá, 4 June 2016) <www.semana.com/nacion/galeria/bronx-en-bogota-prostitucion-desapariciones-microtrafico/476358> accessed 3 September 2017.

² R Emblin, ‘El Bronx: The Living Hell at the Heart of Bogotá’ *The City Paper* (Bogotá, 11 July 2016) <<https://thecitypaperbogota.com/bogota/el-bronx-the-living-hell-at-the-heart-of-bogota/13666>> accessed 3 September 2017.

³ J Wyss, ‘Hostages, Drugs, Grenades—Colombia Cracks Down on Notorious “Bronx” Slum’ *Miami Herald* (31 May 2016) <www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/colombia/article80874132.html> accessed 3 September 2017.

⁴ Mayor of Bogotá, as quoted by Wyss (ibid).

⁵ Emblin (n 2).

⁶ Redacción El Tiempo, ‘Comenzó este miércoles la demolición de predios en el “Bronx”’ *El Tiempo* (10 August 2016) <<http://www.eltiempo.com/bogota/demolicion-del-bronx-57235>> accessed 3 September 2017.

⁷ Wyss (n 3).

⁸ Andrés Góngora and Carlos José Suárez, ‘Por una Bogotá sin mugre: violencia, vida y muerte en la cloaca urbana’ (2008) 66 *Univ Humaníst* 107, 116; Carlos Arturo Bravo Gutiérrez, ‘La producción de marginalidad urbana. El proceso sociohistórico, emergencia y configuración del Bronx en Bogotá’ (Universidad Santo Tomás 2015) 56.

refurbish buildings and public spaces in order to turn the area into a cluster of creative and cultural industries.

The history of both areas reflects complex—local and global—processes of violence and exclusion. Since the beginning of Colombia's contemporary internal conflict in the 1950s, Bogotá has become one of the main receivers of rural migrants and forcibly displaced peoples. They have joined the ranks of slum dwellers and street populations. In the 1990s, changes in the strategies of local cartels—prompted by the US war on drugs⁹—led to a significant increase in homeless drug users, who began to congregate at *El Cartucho*.¹⁰ Following the demobilisation of paramilitaries forces in 2004, ex-combatants took control of the drug business in *El Bronx*, introducing arms trafficking as well as brutal practices of violence common within these groups such as torture and dismemberment.¹¹ Besides facing the effects of the internal civil conflict, *El Cartucho* and *El Bronx*'s strategic location has made them attractive to real estate investors and the target of coercive and aesthetic governmental interventions aimed at improving the reputation of Bogotá as a modern, prosperous and safe city. Hence, *El Cartucho* and *El Bronx*'s fate has been closely linked to the developmental imaginaries and aspirations of the city.

[Brazil] On 21 May 2017 yet another episode of State violence took place in Brazil. This time in São Paulo, a municipal intervention backed by the State military police raided one of Brazil's infamous *cracolândias* ('cracklands')¹²—an area occupied by groups of hundreds of people and where the drug trade and consumption, mainly of crack cocaine, is habitual. Around 500 armed police officers were involved in the operation and around 50 people were arrested

⁹ The local cartels decided to focus on crack cocaine rather than on marihuana, as well as to pay more attention to the internal market. Bravo (n 8) 48.

¹⁰ Bravo (n 8) 49-50; Centro de Pensamiento y Acción para la Transición—CPAT and Pares en Acción Reacción Contra la Exclusión Social—Parces ONG, *Destapando la olla: informe sombra sobre la intervención en el Bronx* (2017) 16.

¹¹ CPAT (n 10) 61.

¹² See J Watts, 'Cracolândia: The Crack Capital of Brazil Where Addicts are Forced to Seek Help' *The Guardian* (São Paulo, 9 May 2013) <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/09/cracolandia-crack-capital-brazil>> accessed 6 June 2017.

for drug trafficking offences.¹³ This intervention was celebrated by public authorities as ‘the end of impunity’ in that area. The intervention, however, merely removed groups of people and displaced them to other parts of the city. Many did not go far and in a short period of time they returned to the space they had been in before. In this context São Paulo’s centre-right Mayor João Doria promised to ‘knock down many buildings and redevelop the streets’ in the newly cleared out area.¹⁴

While this is one of the most recent episodes, these police-led street operations are not a new approach. In Rio de Janeiro, host city of the Olympic Games in 2016, and one of the twelve Brazilian cities selected for the FIFA World Cup in 2014, the use of this ‘business-interest cleansing dynamic’ is also indisputable. In order to make the city seem safer for international and corporate investments—supposedly improving security for all—state authorities have implemented policing strategies in preparation for the mega-events which have led to the killing of over 2,500 people by the security forces, mostly residents of *favelas* and other impoverished areas.¹⁵ During the ‘Olympic Project’, carried out to promote urban regeneration, there were numerous reports of repression of street trade, homicides, mass evictions and demolition of homes and of entire communities in areas of interest.¹⁶ Carried out by security forces, these interventions generated further social conflicts, and indeed, with a history of extrajudicial executions, death squads and *chacinas* (police-

¹³ ‘Brazil police raid Sao Paulo “Crackland” and make arrests’ BBC News (21 May 2017) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-39994177>> accessed 6 June 2017.

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ Data circulated by Amnesty International Brazil: ‘The Deadly Side of the Rio 2016 Olympics’ <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/06/deadly-side-rio-olympics-2016/>> accessed 6 June 2017.

¹⁶ According to a report released by the World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro, ‘A total of 22,059 families have been removed in the city of Rio de Janeiro, amounting to 77,206 people, between 2009 and 2015, according to data presented by Rio de Janeiro’s City Hall in July 2015. Dozens more communities remain under threat of removal’ (‘Rio 2016 Olympics: Exclusion Games—Mega-Events and Human Rights Violations in Rio de Janeiro Dossier’ (November 2015) 20 <<http://www.streetchildrenresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Rio-2016-Olympics-The-Exclusion-Games.pdf>> accessed 6 June 2017.

led massacres) targeting street populations,¹⁷ the tensions of their encounter with the security forces intensified in the context of international-corporate-touristic-mega events.¹⁸

Since 2009, the goal of ‘cleaning up the city’ has been taken up by a task force which brings together security, sanitation and social assistance institutions. With the symptomatic name of the ‘*Choque de Ordem*’ (‘Shock of Order’), the public order (mega)operation¹⁹ established in the city of Rio de Janeiro during the preparation for the mega sporting events, has been shown to use violent, controlling and abusive practices targeting street populations forcibly removed in the process of street cleaning—many of which also agglomerated in the so called *cracolândias*. This ‘removal’ entailed not only the involuntary relocation of people to the outskirts of the city, but forced disappearance, forced institutionalisation of people and collection of their belongings through violent and degrading treatment. Thousands of people have been targeted²⁰ and children and young people living on the street were particularly affected by these mass operations as they involve involuntary relocation to shelters, or even to youth detention centres without having committed a criminal offence.²¹

¹⁷ For an overview of this history of violence, racism and criminalisation of poverty in Rio de Janeiro, see Alex Besser et al, ‘Understanding Rio’s Violence: The Criminalization of Poverty’, Rio On Watch (1 August 2016) <<http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=30636>> accessed 6 June 2017.

¹⁸ Other international and ‘mega events’ Rio de Janeiro has hosted recently are the 2007 Pan American Games, 2013 World Youth Day, 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup, among others.

¹⁹ For a detailed account of the measures involved in the Operation Shock of Order and reports on violations of rights, see World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro (n 16) 56. See also Transforming Childhoods Research Network, ‘“Let’s Win This Game Together” Documenting Violations of Children’s Rights Around the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil’ <<http://www.streetchildrenresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/15337-SoE-Let%C2%B9s-Win-This-Game-Together-Report-A4.pdf>> accessed 6 June 2017.

²⁰ Records show that fewer than two weeks before the FIFA World Cup in 2014, the municipal administration had forcibly removed 669 people from the streets and taken them to the shelter Rio Acolhedor in the neighbourhood of Paciência (J Puff, ‘MP diz que Rio “tirou” 669 mendigos das ruas para Copa apesar de proibição’, BBC Brasil (Rio de Janeiro, 3 julho 2014) <http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2014/07/140628_rio_mendigo_wc2014_jp> accessed 6 June 2017.

²¹ Terre des Hommes International Federation, ‘Child Rights Violations During the Rio 2016 Olympics’ (29 September 2016) <<http://www.childrenwin.org/wp->

These operations have been contested by human rights groups²² but strongly supported by other segments of society, in particular those interested in the urban regeneration of abandoned areas of the city.

Although these examples in Colombia and in Brazil might seem to be independent events, they are representative of the lived urban experience in Latin America. Moreover, they are not recent but rather historical expressions of Latin America's sociopolitical organisation, the effects of its colonial past and the violence of development. Street populations have historically been the object of brutal projects and racist public security policies combined with social cleansing practices. What seems to be new—and this refers to a whole innovation of neoliberal governmentality in Latin America since the 1990s—is a clearer association of such cleansing interventions with a new developmental and financial ethos of urban administration. *El Cartucho*, *El Bronx* and the *cracolândias* raids are part of larger strategies aimed at controlling and removing 'undesirable' populations from the streets in an attempt to attract international investment. They reveal how the violence that has characterised the encounter between security forces and street populations in Colombia and Brazil intensifies hand in hand with pressures for business improvements and competitiveness.

Latin America is said to have been a laboratory for neoliberal governance since the mid-1980s, with the Washington Consensus seen as the turning point for neoliberal policy.²³ Urban centres across the region have been particularly affected by global market forces. At the

content/uploads/2016/09/Rio-2016-Briefing-Paper.pdf> accessed 6 June 2017, 10; World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro (n 16).

²² See Amnesty International, 'Violence Has No Place in These Games! Risk of Human Rights Violations at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games' Report (2016) <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/brazil_olympics_-_briefing_eng.pdf> accessed 6 June 2017. Amnesty International, 'Brazil: You Killed My Son: Homicides by Military Police in the City of Rio de Janeiro' Report (3 August 2015) <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr19/2068/2015/en/>> accessed 6 June 2017. World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro (n 16). Terre des Hommes International Federation (n 21). Transforming Childhoods Research Network (n 19).

²³ Emir Sader, 'The Weakest Link? Neoliberalism in Latin America'. *New Left Rev* 52, July-August 2008 <<https://newleftreview.org/II/52/emir-sader-the-weakest-link-neoliberalism-in-latin-america>> accessed 10 May 2017.

same time, waves of coordinated policies towards the ‘social problem’ of the urban poor have emerged in the region. The urban context today is no different. Following global trends, many Latin American cities have embraced models of urban governance which emphasise real estate development as a mean to absorb surplus capital and trigger market-led growth.²⁴ Thus, urban planning and management of Latin American cities are anchored by a need to make areas of economic interest available, which in most cases entails the removal of ‘undesirables’ (beggars, drug users, homeless, street vendors and street populations, and so on) from the streets.²⁵

Against this background, through the cases of Bogotá and Rio de Janeiro as empirical starting points, this article addresses the association of urban planning with the growing coerciveness and punitiveness of policies that deal with street populations as the phenomenon escalated from the early 1990s. Two ‘logics’ underpin these ‘new’ approaches to urban planning and policy: on the one hand, they rely upon aesthetic urban improvements intending to attract corporate investments by transforming the images of violence and ‘disorder’ associated to these cities, and on the other, they are implemented by means of further securitisation of poverty and the public space.²⁶ The aim of this article is to explore the ways in which

²⁴ See Carlos A De Mattos, ‘Globalización, negocios inmobiliarios y transformación urbana’ (2007) *Nueva Sociedad* 82; Michael Janoschka and Rodrigo Hidalgo, ‘La ciudad neoliberal: Estímulos de reflexión crítica’ in Rodrigo Hidalgo and Michael Janoschka (eds), *La Ciudad Neoliberal Gentrificación y exclusión en Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires, Ciudad de México y Madrid* (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile 2014); Michael Janoschka, Jorge Sequera and Luis Salinas, ‘Gentrification in Spain and Latin America—a Critical Dialogue’ (2014) 38 *IJURR* 1234; Germana de Faria Arantes, *Intervenções urbanas: rumo à cidade neoliberal* (Appris 2015); Markus-Michael Müller, *The Punitive City: Privatized Policing and Protection in Neoliberal Mexico* (Zed 2016).

²⁵ See Kate Swanson, ‘Revanchist Urbanism Heads South: The Regulation of Indigenous Beggars and Street Vendors in Ecuador’ (2007) 39 *Antipode* 708; Anne Becker and Markus-Michael Müller, ‘The Securitization of Urban Space and the “Rescue” of Downtown Mexico City: Vision and Practice’ (2013) 40 *Lat Am Perspect* 77; Vera da Silva Telles, ‘Cidade: produção de espaços, formas de controle e conflitos’ (2015) *Revista de Ciências Sociais, Fortaleza* 46(1).

²⁶ *Securitisation*, as will be argued, operates hand in hand with processes of criminalisation of poverty and other coercive responses. *Criminalisation*, in turn, is seen to be associated to the idea of *culpabilisation* of the poor, resulting from liberal narratives of individual failure combined with moral judgements based on

the issue of street populations has turned into a problem to be solved via a 'security' rationale so as to facilitate business improvements, real estate speculation, tourism and developmental projects.

We claim that 'social cleansing' in these cities is achieved not just by means of controlling the use of the public space, but more importantly, the arbitrary incarceration and physical extermination of street populations encouraged and carried out by civil and military police forces, national defence armed forces, municipal guards, public order agents, as well as militia gangs, paramilitary groups and private security bodies. The securitisation of street populations and what this entails are manifestations of the biopolitical unfolding of neoliberalism and its punitive and coercive tendencies. Our aim is to shed light on how in Latin America urban governance, state violence and financialisation assemble in a complex apparatus, which engenders coercive and violent responses to the problem of street populations. These responses go beyond criminalisation: they involve arbitrary incarceration, police brutality and even physical extermination. We also seek to problematise the growing securitisation of 'the poor'²⁷ witnessed in recent years and illustrate how it is instrumental to processes of capital accumulation in contemporary cities.

2. Demarcating street populations as an object of inquiry

'Street populations' as we conceive them today are considered within the social sciences to be a heterogeneous social phenomenon of urban poverty historically associated to the social transformations produced by industrial capitalism.²⁸ The term 'street populations' can comprise

the ethics of work. This triad is construed in this paper as the drivers of what is here demonstrated to be the complex mechanism of power revealed in the intersections of urban governance, state violence and financialisation.

²⁷ It is important to point out here that 'poverty' and the abstract figure of 'the poor' are the driving elements of this co-authorship. We are both legal researchers committed to make the issue of poverty the focus of our work. Thus for this paper, poverty should be taken as the key lense through which we are questioning the issues of securitisation, social policy, urban management and financialisation.

²⁸ In fact, from a Marxist perspective, the roots of the capitalist mode of production is in the displacement of feudal work organisation, the enclosure of the common

multiple social groups typically sharing the urban experience in the urban space: street vendors, beggars, the homeless and travelling peoples, among others. Different social, structural and biographical factors operate in each case and, because of this, fundamental distinctions must be made clear. What usually is pointed out as the common ground in this diverse experience of life in the streets is, however, an abstract feature: these are populations that in different historical times have been marginalised from social organisation, excluded from systems of production and consumption and from social life, in a highly unequal societies. Yet, marginalisation, exclusion, inequality and even vulnerability are unsatisfactory terms. The general term ‘street populations’, therefore, produces a homogenising effect on what actually is a complex, multifaceted and heterogeneous phenomenon.

‘Homelessness’ is only a part of this wider category and is not precisely what we are emphasising here. People that resort to a private life in the public space, that make street corners and pavements their *locus* of existence and residence are not just *home*-less. It is not merely the interplay of habitational and housing issues that is at stake.²⁹ To avoid the homogenising discourses about the ‘social problem’ of street populations means to depart from the usual emphasis on a housing issue. It is not *merely* a matter of homelessness that produces such ‘social problems’. Other factors are concurrently at play, such as: poverty, mental health issues, violence, familial and community relations, institutional and political violence, etc.³⁰

With no *a priori* identity of those who live on the streets, and seeking to avoid stigmatisations, we have based our analysis on an ethical–political premise that acknowledges the subjective

lands and freehold estates and, thus, the forcible consolidation of the figure of the urban poor. Cf. Karl Marx on the so-called primitive accumulation, *Capital*, vol I, part 8 (Penguin 1990 [1867]).

²⁹ Also the term ‘homeless’ is not attributed exclusively to those living on the street, but can comprise those in temporary housing programmes.

³⁰ Cheryl Forchuk et al (eds), *Homelessness, Housing, and Mental Health: Finding Truths, Creating Change* (Canadian Scholars’ Press 2011); Irene Rizzini et al (eds), *Life on the Streets: Children and Adolescents on the Streets: Inevitable Trajectories?* (IDE 2007).

irreducibility of this social condition and experience.³¹ Essentially, the lack of ‘fixed abode’, the nomadic, vagrant, wandering way of life seems central in this definition. Thus, this is not about one specific social group, but rather multiple groups that are on the street for numerous reasons and constitute diverse subjectivities that challenge the homogenising effect of life on the street.

This is how we approach our *object* of inquiry. We critically analyse the ways in which street populations have been securitised and subjected to coercive technologies that reduce them to a mass of abject, menacing and dangerous subjects that need to be removed in order for ‘business to flourish’. From a historical perspective, it was within the expansion of industrial capitalism that the links between poverty, vagrancy and criminality were constituted.³² As the poorest strata of society street populations personify the contradictions of capitalist mode of production being simultaneously victimised and seen as a dangerous group.³³

Policies based on liberal traditions of reinsertion of the individual back into the productive system end up further marginalising such groups by enforcing the logic of individual responsibility and failure. This is frequently referred to as a processes of culpabilisation.³⁴ Culpabilisation is directly linked to the factors said to lead people to resort to a life on the streets. Thus, philanthropic, hygienist and punitive measures are interconnected, as individualising and pathologising responses to social imageries and perceptions. Hygienist circular discourses—founded on the need to eliminate this ‘social problem’—are promoted by reinforcing the labels and stigmas of the street populations. Thus a crucial claim we endorse is that it is

³¹ This ethical-political research posture has been built throughout our past research experiences in this field and can also be found in different studies about street populations in Latin America. See a contribution to Miriam Krenzinger, *Populações em Situação de Rua* (Pallavra 2017). See also A Javier Omar Ruiz, ‘Los ciudadanos de la calle, nómadas urbanos’ (1999) *Nómadas* 172.

³² R Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (Norton 1994); Bronislaw Geremek, *Poverty: A History* (Blackwell 1997).

³³ Cecilia Coimbra, *Operação Rio: o mito das classes perigosas* (Oficina do Autor/Intertexto 2001).

³⁴ P Guareschi, ‘Pressupostos Psicossociais da Exclusão: Competitividade e Culpabilização’ in Bader Sawaia (org), *As artimanhas da exclusão: análise psicossocial e ética da desigualdade social* (Vozes 1999).

through the construction of such social perceptions, about the poor, that policy responses have been historically constructed.³⁵

These constructions, in turn, have a direct impact on bodies. The street is a place of bodily vulnerability.³⁶ The body is the visible strand of the social-political existence of street populations in the city. Food and personal care are the immediate bodily needs that are addressed by social policies and charity practices. It is also upon the body that interventions and violations are inflicted.³⁷ As a result, street populations develop group behaviour to protect themselves, which occasionally involves the creation of communities and a sense of belonging for mutual protection. Strategies of collective action, association and mobilisation can also be produced. Therefore, life in the street is both individual and collective, it can simultaneously alienate and bring people together.³⁸

In order to address the street population's conditions it is crucial to grasp the intersections of bodily existence within the urban public space. The street is not merely a geographical space, it is a *locus* of social processes, subjectivities and senses of belonging. To be living in the streets means to impact the urban space and to be transformed by it. This is the paradox that this study seeks to draw attention to—that the corporal and nomadic characteristics of this social segment makes at the same time both less likely to be affected by social policies and more liable to being affected by urban planning measures that control the uses of public space. Indeed, the point of contact between street populations and the State are much more frequently mediated by the police than by social workers.³⁹ Apart from all the risks and the lack

³⁵ See Mitchell Dean, *The Constitution of Poverty: Toward a Genealogy of Liberal Governance* (Routledge 1991).

³⁶ Simone M Frangella, *Corpos urbanos errantes: uma etnografia da corporalidade de moradores de rua em São Paulo* (Anablume, Fapesp 2009).

³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ *ibid*

³⁹ This is a paradox pointed out in a research in which one of this article's authors have participated: Miriam Guindani et al, 'Segurança Pública e Populações em Situação de Rua: desafios às ações intersetoriais e políticas pedagógicas' in Cristiane Lima et al (org), *Segurança Pública e Direitos Humanos: temas transversais*, vol 5 (Ministério da Justiça/ Secretaria Nacional de Segurança Pública 2014).

of basic material needs inherent to a life in the streets, street populations are also commonly susceptible to material, physical and symbolic violence. Living on the street⁴⁰ means a life of instability, a life at the margins of formal views about society where the State is allegedly the provider of order and safety. We could say that many public security policies that address street populations are not seeking their protection, but targeting them as the potential threat to society's safety and order.⁴¹ Policies, therefore, reflect the hegemonic imageries and perceptions that, instead of treating these populations as subjects of rights, take them to be object of social control.

3. The entrepreneurial city:

Construction investments for business improvements

Although most frequently the analysis of poverty in the urban space is centred on the ways in which the capitalist mode of production has ended up generating a by-product—a vast mass of the urban poor—David Harvey reminds us of the centrality of cities to the very development of capitalism. Cities and urban populations have not only 'arisen through the geographical and social concentration of a surplus product',⁴² they have also been instrumental in reproducing capitalism to the extent that they absorb this surplus, which is what propels the system. As stated by David Harvey: 'Capitalism needs urbanization to absorb the surplus product it perpetually produces'.⁴³ Public investments in physical infrastructure as well as housing development are some of the old strategies through which the surplus product is absorbed.⁴⁴ This type of urban restructuring is

⁴⁰ When we use the phrase 'living on the street' we are not merely talking about those who use the street as a place that provides them with 'housing', or an alternative to a 'home'. The term 'living on the street' includes those that use the street as their place of business, street commerce or beggars, for example. Those who spend the day in the street but do have a home to go at the end of the day, workers who sleep rough during the week, going to the homes only at weekends.

⁴¹ Guindani et al (n 39).

⁴² David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Rights to the City to the Urban Revolution* (Verso 2013) 5.

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ *ibid*

characterised by Harvey as a process of ‘creative destruction’, which particularly affects the poor.⁴⁵ ‘Creative destruction’ relies upon different techniques, ranging from expropriation, police and military interventions, to property speculation and the fiscal disciplining of local governments,⁴⁶ demanding a combination of financial capital and state engagements.

Cities have also been crucial to the development of neoliberalism. They have been the laboratories in which neoliberal ideas and practices have been experimented with, and the spaces where the processes of ‘creative destruction’ increasingly occur.⁴⁷ As described by Brenner & Theodore, processes of delegation of power combined with declining state support, among other phenomena, have imposed higher financial burdens on the cities and forced them to engage in processes of ‘interspatial competition, place marketing, and regulatory undercuts in order to attract investment and jobs’.⁴⁸ Furthermore, they have become geographical targets for experimentation aimed to ‘mobilise city space as an arena both for market-oriented economic growth and for elite consumption practices’.⁴⁹

Competition and urbanisation led by transnational capital have contributed to the emergence of ‘entrepreneurial cities’. This term, coined by David Harvey, denotes urban governance schemes concerned with enhancing cities’ competitive position in the global market as a mean to attract investment and intensive consumption, and in this way, boost growth.⁵⁰ Cities rely upon different and innovative strategies that usually involve the (re)commodification of urban space and place marketing. Particularly in Latin America, this phenomenon unfolds especially in central neighbourhoods, given their deterioration as a result of urban de-industrialisation. Thus, the

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁷ Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, ‘Cities and the Geographies of “Actually Existing Neoliberalism”’ (2002) 34 *Antipode* 349.

⁴⁸ *ibid* 367

⁴⁹ *ibid* 368

⁵⁰ David Harvey, ‘From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism’ (1989) 71 *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography* 3.

entrepreneurial city has resulted in the restructuring of the inner city accompanied by the return of investment capital in real estate markets. The value of real estate investments has been maintained and boosted not only by means of aesthetic interventions in the surrounding public spaces, but also by resorting to control, surveillance and violence, all this with the aim of removing undesirables and creating safe spaces both for people and capital.⁵¹

What we face today is a new logic of security-led growth which we will explore in the following section in terms of a ‘process of securitisation’ of urban spaces and the urban poor. For the time being, we propose to examine the ways in which our empirical units of observation reveal a new tendency, that is: a developmental and financial *logic* of urban administration that explicitly advocates a political project of social cleansing interventions to attract international investments based on infrastructure reforms, public-private partnerships and real estate speculation.

In Brazil, construction businesses have been known to be the main donator to electoral campaigns—regardless of the political stance of the parties involved—even after recent legislation has prohibited corporate contributions to candidates.⁵² Multiple corruption scandals have been exposed in the midst of the country’s recent political crisis which led to the parliamentary coup in 2016. Grupo Odebrecht, the largest construction conglomerate in Latin America, was one of the actors at the centre of the turmoil.⁵³ Since

⁵¹ Becker and Müller (n 25) 77-78.

⁵² A Duarte, ‘Empresas driblam lei para doar a campanhas eleitorais’ O Globo (Rio de Janeiro, 18 September 2016) <<https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/empresas-driblam-lei-para-doar-campanhas-eleitorais-20132632>> accessed 6 June 2017.

⁵³ In between accusations of corruption, favouring certain companies for public tenders, in 2017 the Audit Office of the state of Rio de Janeiro identified the overbilling by the consortium (of which Odebrecht participated in) in charge of the construction projects implemented in Rio’s *favelas* as part of the former federal government’s Programme of Growth Acceleration [*Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento*]—a central infrastructure programme with public and private investments for urban reforms, sanitation, transport, logistic and also housing projects. ‘Obras do PAC em favelas do Rio foram superfaturadas, diz TCE-RJ’ G1 Rio (Rio de Janeiro, 15 March 2017) <<http://g1.globo.com/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/obras-do-pac-em-favelas-do-rio-foram-superfaturadas-diz-tce-rj.ghml>> accessed 6 June 2017.

2015, many of its executives have been arrested and, in plea bargains, confessed to having paid bribes to government officials in exchange for infrastructure contracts in Brazil as well as in many other countries in Latin America.⁵⁴

Since the 1990s, Rio de Janeiro has been consolidating a market-interest agenda of ‘entrepreneurial urban governance’ based on the 1993 Strategic City Plan—itself a product of the alliance between public and private sectors at the time.⁵⁵ More recently, in the context of preparations for mega events in 2014 and 2016, when the city of Rio de Janeiro sought to improve its international image of a dangerous city, the mayor at the time, Eduardo Paes capitalised on the momentum to rebrand Rio: from a violent city, to an investment opportunity⁵⁶ (the ‘Olympic Project’). The upcoming mega events also promoted the discourse of an opportunity to implement overdue urban revitalisation plans with the promise of creating a legacy of infrastructure for the city.⁵⁷

Amidst construction plans for sporting venues that entailed the removal of entire communities, the most notorious case being that of *Vila Autódromo*,⁵⁸ some other major urban regeneration projects

⁵⁴ D Gallas, ‘Brazil’s Odebrecht Corruption Scandal’ BBC News (7 March 2017) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-39194395>> accessed 6 June 2017.

⁵⁵ Luanda Vannuchi and Mathieu Van Crielingen, ‘Transforming Rio de Janeiro for the Olympics: Another Path to Accumulation by Dispossession?’ *Articulo* (special issue 7, 2015: Tales of the City) <<https://articulo.revues.org/2813#tocto1n3>> accessed 6 June 2017.

⁵⁶ Actions for this aim included not only urban regeneration, as we shall see, but also symbolic practices such as ‘concealing’ the city’s spatial exclusion from the international gaze, epitomised in the episode where Google Maps was called to remove the word ‘favela’ in Rio’s map in 2013, having reverted the suppression in 2016. See: N Southwick, ‘The Importance and Challenges of Putting Favelas on the Map’ *RioOnWatch* (Rio de Janeiro, 11 October 2016) <<http://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=32519>>.

⁵⁷ O Santos Jr, ‘A modernização neoliberal no Rio de Janeiro’ in LCQ Ribeiro, LC Lago (eds), *Rio de Janeiro: transformações na ordem urbana* (Observatório das Metrópoles, Letra Capital 2015).

⁵⁸ See Terre des Hommes International Federation (n 21). See also T Phillips, ‘Brazil troops and police raid Rio shantytown in clean-up drive’ *The Guardian* (Rio de Janeiro, 13 November 2011) <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/13/brazil-troops-raid-shantytown>> accessed 6 June 2017.

were designed. One example is *Porto Maravilha*,⁵⁹ one of the biggest public-private partnerships in the country created to recuperate the strategic site of the *Zona Portuária*—a deteriorated but central port area of the city. To make this project viable the municipal government widened the construction potential in the area to attract real estate investment. Through the sale of securities⁶⁰ to the private sector interested in constructing residential and corporate buildings, the renovations were primarily financed by private investments. It is worth mentioning that the infrastructural reforms were carried out by a consortium of construction companies which included *Odebrecht*, *OAS Construtora* and *Carioca Engenharia*. Diverse published materials examined this urban operation from a financial and administrative perspective.⁶¹ What is relevant here, however, is to indicate that this revitalisation project was implemented in utmost disregard to the demands of those who live and work in the area. Although some areas were reserved for the construction of social improvements and housing, the implementation of *Porto Maravilha* has been marked by disputes between the local community and government and by the generation of profit to the private sector by

⁵⁹ See the website of Rio de Janeiro's municipal council for more details: <<http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/web/secpar/porto-maravilha>>.

⁶⁰ Called Certificates for Potential Additional Construction (CEPAC), these are defined as 'publicly traded securities issued by municipalities as instruments to finance large scale urban interventions through the sale of development air rights' (Shawn T Amsler, 'The Redevelopment of Rio de Janeiro's Historic Port District—a study of urban waterfront revitalization as a catalyst for real estate development' Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University (May 2011) iv <<http://portomaravilha.com.br/conteudo/estudos/ea1.pdf>> accessed 6 June 2017).

⁶¹ *ibid.* See also Mariana Werneck, 'Os infames termos aditivos e o mico do Porto Maravilha', Observatorio das Metrôpoles (Rio de Janeiro, 30 March 2017) <http://observatoriodasmetrosoles.net/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1956%3Aa-fal%C3%A1cia-do-porto-maravilha-ppps-cepacs-e-o-%C3%B4nus-para-o-poder-p%C3%ABablico&Itemid=180#> accessed 6 June 2017.

means of public funds.⁶² Ironically, in the end, it was the public sector that went bankrupt.⁶³

In Colombia, since the 1990s, Bogotá has been exposed to increasing financial burdens, in part due to the decentralised structure introduced by the Constitution of 1991 alongside other neoliberal institutional reforms.⁶⁴ This has contributed to the rise of a development model which relies on enhancing competitiveness, in particular in the area of real estate development. Bogotá's government has struggled to improve the city's image and disassociate the city from the national civil conflict.⁶⁵ The main strategies put in place have consisted in architectural improvements, civic education (e.g. education for self-government and engagement in democracy), cultural marketing, environmental protections, fiscal incentives and security schemes.⁶⁶ Governmental efforts have proven effective in improving the city's reputations, as shown by a number of international awards and the city's improved credit ratings.⁶⁷

⁶² See Ribeiro et al, 'What Is at Stake in These Games? 2016 Olympics and the Commodification of the City of Rio de Janeiro'. Dossier Observatório das Metrópoles. (IPUUR 2016) <http://www.observatoriodasmetropoles.net/images/abook_file/dossieJO_2016_ing.pdf> accessed 6 June 2017.

⁶³ Boeckel et al, 'Governo do RJ decreta estado de calamidade pública devido à crise', G1 Rio (Rio de Janeiro, 17 June 2016) <<http://g1.globo.com/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2016/06/governo-do-rj-decreta-estado-de-calamidade-publica-devido-crise.html>> accessed 6 June 2017; F Matoso, 'Planalto edita MP que dá socorro financeiro de R\$ 2,9 bilhões ao Rio' G1 Rio (Rio de Janeiro, 21 June 2016) <<http://g1.globo.com/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2016/06/medida-provisoria-da-socorro-financeiro-de-r-29-bilhoes-ao-rio.html>> accessed 6 June 2017.

⁶⁴ Luis Eslava, *Local Space, Global Life. The Everyday Operation of International Law and Development* (CUP 2015).

⁶⁵ Camilo Andrés Cifuentes Qui and Sandra Fiori, 'El urbanismo y lo urbano en la transformación de Bogotá. Discursos expertos y palabras de los habitantes', (2012) 11 *Dearq* 138, 141; Eslava (n 64) 63.

⁶⁶ Jhon Williams Montoya, 'Bogotá, urbanismo posmoderno y la transformación de la ciudad contemporánea' (2014) 57 *Revista de Geografía Norte Grande* 9, 16-26.

⁶⁷ Bogotá received special recognition at the World Bank Urban Forum in 2005 for its public governance practices. In 2006, the city won the Golden Lion Award at the 10th *Binnal di Venezia* due to its architectonic improvements. The successful rehabilitation of public spaces was also highlighted in the UN Population Fund's 2007 report *State of the World Population: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth*. More importantly, the city improved its creditworthiness significantly enjoying since 2005 of a AAA sovereign credit rating. These and other awards

Beginning in the late 1990s, the city centre became a key focus for the municipal administrations. Large investments in reclaiming and upgrading public spaces, schemes aimed at improving perceptions of security and even fiscal incentives have been put in place expecting to encourage the return of the upper classes, as well as investors.⁶⁸ In contrast to the selective and smaller scale interventions pandering to market demands that predominated in the 1980s and early 1990s, in the late 1990s massive regeneration projects were backed by new urban legislation. This new legislation emphasised the importance of public space in urban development and the role of the state as an urban strategic planner with the aim of enabling and invigorating land and real estate markets, among other objectives.⁶⁹ Hence, the construction sector has been one of the main beneficiaries of these innovations due to the rise in land prices, slackening of building regulations and more state subsidies. The recent Odebrecht scandal also reveals the close links between the construction industry and local politics in Colombia. Odebrecht also played an important role in Colombia, contributing to the political campaigns of national and municipal leaders, while at the same time was favoured with key contracts to develop crucial infrastructure projects.⁷⁰

The urban regeneration of *El Bronx* is part of one of the large-scale projects undertaken in Bogotá in recent years. This project comprises several neighbourhoods in the most violent and abandoned area of the city centre. The first part of the project was accomplished in the early 2000s after the *El Cartucho* raid was carried out in 1998. The original plan was to improve public spaces in order to enable the private sector to develop residential and commercial urban developments. Approximately 680 constructions were pulled down and a large public square was built, but so far the other elements of the regeneration project have not been carried out, mainly because the investment

attest Bogotá's success in improving its reputation and competitive position in the global arena. See Eslava (n 68) 61-63.

⁶⁸ Samuel Jaramillo, 'Reflexiones sobre las políticas de recuperación del centro (y del centro histórico) de Bogotá' (2006) Documento CEDE 40.

⁶⁹ *ibid* 24; Montoya (n 66) 17.

⁷⁰ Tomás Betin, 'Los grandes contratos de Odebrecht en 25 años en Colombia' *El Heraldo* (Colombia, 6 February 2017) <<https://www.elheraldo.co/colombia/los-grandes-contratos-de-odebrecht-en-25-anos-en-colombia-326030>> accessed 8 September 2017.

expected never arrived. The intervention was successful however in increasing land prices.⁷¹

During the previous municipal administration, changes were introduced to the city centre regeneration plan. Instead of real estate development, the previous local government attempted to turn *El Bronx* into a cluster of social services targeting in particular homeless and vagrant populations. The project included areas of controlled drug use together with temporary accommodation facilities.⁷² The current administration changed the land uses allowed in the area and returned to the original plans set in 1998. Just a couple of weeks after the raid, the city's new development plan was put in place, again inspired by the idea that reclaiming and embellishing of public spaces improve security.⁷³ In practice, the raid accomplished the first stage of the *Bronx* regeneration plan to the extent that it displaced the street population and provided justification for land confiscation.⁷⁴

The interventions in *Cracolândia*, *Zona Portuária*, *Vila Autódromo*, *El Bronx* and *El Cartucho* are part and parcel of the neoliberal visions of the city that have dominated the political arenas in both Brazil and Colombia in the past decades. The re-conquest and recovery of the city centres play a crucial role in attuning the city to investors' expectations due to their symbolic and material meaning in terms of images of sovereignty, security and prosperity. As the cities grow and valuable land becomes scarce, city centres also become attractive spaces for business, housing and real estate developments. Poor populations become redundant (or undesirable) in light of the new uses and imaginaries of the city and, hence, subjected to different technologies to make them disappear. We will explore some of these measures in the following section.

⁷¹ Jaramillo (n 68) 33-34; Centro de Pensamiento y Acción para la Transición (n 10).

⁷² *ibid*

⁷³ *ibid*

⁷⁴ *ibid*

4. Security-led growth, investment-led ‘pacification’

Literature from the last two decades has highlighted how neoliberal policy relies on coercive and a punitive logic to manage populations, in particular in the city.⁷⁵ Loïc Wacquant illustrates the punitive manifestation of neoliberalism in the context of the North American cities. His work shows how the rise of neoliberalism in the United States is deeply connected to higher levels of incarceration of the underclass, coupled with the punitive slant of the welfare apparatus.⁷⁶ The penal and workfare apparatus acquire new functions in this context: they contain the disorder generated by the insecurity and inequality brought about by neoliberalism, while at the same time make problem populations invisible or force them to disappear altogether.⁷⁷

As argued by Mitchell & Beckett, zero tolerance policing and its ‘broken window’ theoretical underpinning—the idea that neighbourhoods that fail to address manifestations of disorder such as broken windows are an invitation for crime and criminals—lie at the root of many of the phenomena described by Wacquant. A growing transnational security industry led by the United States has promoted these strategies as a ‘success’—the case of New York City being the example—and has turned them into best practices to be followed.⁷⁸ Recommendations include: increments in policing and surveillance, anti-homeless laws, tougher punishment for misdemeanour offences such as public drunkenness, prostitution and street vending, and other aggressive forms of law enforcement. For Becker and Müller the exportation of this model of urban control has become a core element of neoliberal urbanisation.⁷⁹ Besides providing legitimation to coercive interventions, it reflects the growing interpenetration of the

⁷⁵ See Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (UCP 2007); Loïc Wacquant, ‘Crafting the Neoliberal State: Workfare, Prisonfare, and Social Insecurity’ (2010) 25 *Sociol Forum* 197; Bernard E Harcourt, *The Illusion of Free Markets. Punishment and the Myth of Natural Order* (HUP 2011); Becker and Müller (n 25).

⁷⁶ Wacquant *ibid* 214-15.

⁷⁷ *ibid* 198-99.

⁷⁸ Katharyne Mitchell and Katherine Beckett, ‘Securing the Global City: Crime, Consulting, Risk, and Ratings in the Production of Urban Space’ (2008) 15 *IJGLS* 75.

⁷⁹ Becker and Müller (n 25).

(neoliberal) global economy and a globalised economy of ‘security’ expertise, both interested in reducing investment-related risks.⁸⁰

Security and (dis)order concerns regarding ‘the proper use, design, and (re)ordering of urban space’⁸¹ are a central element of the dynamics described above.⁸² In the case of ‘inconvenient’ urban populations, this involves their securitisation through their discursive construction as existential threats to society⁸³ or simply as a dangerous element.⁸⁴ Securitisation calls upon a defence *logic* and, consequently, engenders and legitimises coercive and punitive responses in the form of criminalisation of certain groups, militarisation of territories, police force incursions and administrative sanctioning. In Latin America these interventions also include extermination, massacres, forced disappearance, torture and degrading treatment. The coercive and punitive logic that securitisation enables is not necessarily an emergency response; these types of interventions have become regular and normal in current urban governance. They are promoted by the State—directly or indirectly—as well as by other actors—such as corporations and interest groups, and involve the use of both physical and symbolic violence. John Gledhill categorises the securitisation of inconvenient populations as a ‘new war on the poor’ precisely to highlight the heterogeneity of drivers and forms of violence.⁸⁵

Security in this context constitutes a ‘mode of governing’,⁸⁶ a technology: ‘through which individuals, groups, classes, and, ultimately modern capital is reshaped and ordered.’⁸⁷ Securitisation as part of this governmentality is instrumental to capitalist accumulation to the extent that it facilitates the control, neutralisation and removal of undesirable

⁸⁰ *ibid*; Mitchell and Beckett (n 78).

⁸¹ Becker and Müller (n 25) 78.

⁸² John Gledhill, *The New War on the Poor. The Production of Insecurity in Latin America* (Zed 2015) 19; Becker and Müller (n 25) 5.

⁸³ Barry Buzan et al, *Security: A New Framework of Analysis* (Lynne Rienner 1998) 21.

⁸⁴ Rita Abrahamsen, ‘Blair’s Africa: The Politics of Securitization and Fear’ (2005) 30 *Alternatives* 55, 71.

⁸⁵ Gledhill (n 82) 1-2.

⁸⁶ Becker and Müller (n 25) 149; Mark Neocleous, *Critique of Security* (EUP 2008) 4.

⁸⁷ Neocleous *ibid* 4.

and redundant populations, the constitution of their subjectivities in forms amenable to the needs of the entrepreneurial city, and the elimination of barriers which impede the extraction of profit from selling goods and services within them.⁸⁸ The expression ‘accumulation by securitisation’ is useful to understand this connection, as it emphasises how the ‘social problem’ of poor populations is coupled with security concerns as part of ‘a dynamic in which capital accumulation is enabled by practices and related logics of security in ways that often provoke dispossession, with such dispossession itself further enabling accumulation’.⁸⁹

Some voices warn about how the neoliberal punitive measures, and the monolithic image of the neoliberal state that emerge from Wacquant’s and similar accounts, are essentialised.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, these scholars do not question the punitive tilt of penal and welfare practices in the particular case of the United States and other specific countries. They call for historic specific analyses that take into account the context and engage with particular practices.

In response to this critique a growing literature illustrates the use of coercive and punitive interventions to neutralise social turmoil and facilitate accumulation in particular cities. These studies show how the practices unfold differently depending on the institutional, political, spatial, social and economic characteristics of the particular contexts, as well as the specific geographic and special negotiations that take place in each case.⁹¹ Ethnographic research has also shown that the punitive turn is both a top-down and a bottom-up process, whose formation cannot be reduced to the neoliberal rationality.⁹²

⁸⁸ Gledhill (n 82) 20.

⁸⁹ Francis Massé and Elizabeth Lunstrum, ‘Accumulation by securitization: Commercial Poaching, Neoliberal Conservation, and the Creation of New Wildlife Frontiers’ (2016) 69 *Geoforum* 227, 228.

⁹⁰ Mariana Valverde, ‘Comment on Loïc Wacquant’s “Theoretical Coda” to Punishing the Poor’ (2010) 14 *Theor Criminol* 117; Pat O’Malley, ‘Prisons, Neoliberalism and Neoliberal States: Reading Loïc Wacquant and Prisons of Poverty’ (2014) 122 *Thesis Eleven* 89; Máximo Sozzo, ‘Postneoliberalismo y penalidad en América del Sur. A modo de introducción’ in Máximo Sozzo (ed), *Postneoliberalismo y penalidad en América del Sur* (CLACSO 2016).

⁹¹ Becker and Müller (n 25).

⁹² *ibid* 8-9.

For instance, Markus-Michael Müller⁹³ explains how the urban regeneration project aimed to regain control over Mexico City's historic centre, has relied on a combination of punitive and architectonic strategies ranging from the criminalisation of informal economic activities, to zero tolerance policing and the construction of concrete-based open public spaces. The 'mobilisation of legalities' has been a key component of this strategy: besides criminalisation of street commerce and other activities that are accused of promoting disorder and insecurity, the expropriation and confiscation of real estate supposedly involved in criminal activity have also been a common practice. The law has created a 'punitive topography', which, on the one hand, has resulted in the displacement of some 'undesirable' communities, whilst on the other has converted many places where 'urban marginal live and struggle for economic survival into veritable spatial containers for the ostracization of undesirable social categories and activities'.⁹⁴ The agents of these developments are not only neoliberal reforms or the war on drugs—even though they are crucial in this process. Local politicians deal with crime through a security mindset and bring attention to personal security in order to mobilise political support.⁹⁵ These top-down schemes are then complemented by 'bottom-up forms of decentralised security', which are connected to poor residents' demands for more aggressive police presence, a growing industry of security expertise and other civic organisations, as well as 'private vigilantism' emerging in upper class neighbourhoods and financial districts.⁹⁶

In the case of Rio de Janeiro, John Gledhill shows how the securitisation of slum dwellers—*favelados*—has been central to processes of gentrification and the removal of poor communities from areas of economic interest, and the protection of utility companies' revenues, and the creation of new markets for different types of goods and services.⁹⁷ Yet, he also illustrates the multiplicity of strategies that the security mind-set can engender. He explains how Rio introduced

⁹³ Markus-Michael Müller, 'Penal Statecraft in the Latin American City: Assessing Mexico City's Punitive Urban Democracy' (2013) 22 Soc & L Stud 441, 447.

⁹⁴ *ibid* 450.

⁹⁵ Becker and Müller (n 25) 6, 146.

⁹⁶ *ibid* 9-15.

⁹⁷ Gledhill (n 82) 59-61.

a pacification scheme which combined development projects with militarised police surveillance and territorial control, producing ‘a strong subjection of ‘reconquered’ territories to the market’.⁹⁸

Alongside these forms of control, the examples of Bogotá and Rio also epitomise the use of brutal physical force for ‘cleansing’ purposes. With their violent history associated with ‘organised’ crime, drug trafficking, militia and paramilitary groups, both cities have been facing their own processes of securitisation and indeed militarisation. These processes are seen to deeply affect impoverished populations. Street populations face specific problems in this context as the new urban management model seems to increase socio-spatial inequalities both in Rio and Bogotá.

The security rationality and coercive approaches that have dominated the Colombian response to violence and conflict nationally—influenced by the Cold War, the war on drugs and the war on terrorism—have also not been foreign to urban governance. The war has been waged in the cities, while the military approach to the internal conflict has permeated urban strategies to control crime and (dis)order. Furthermore, on the national level, security attained through punitive and coercive means has been represented as a condition for the possibility of growth, a growth reliant upon investment. Security as the opposite of violence and conflict has been elevated to a superior public goal that demands sacrifice and citizens’ active engagement. Bogotá’s reputation as a secure destination for investment has improved hand in hand with an increasing punitive and coercive attitude towards crime and social turmoil. Against this backdrop, the way *El Cartucho* and *El Bronx* raids unfolded is not surprising.

In addition, street populations have been historically targets of extreme forms of violence in Colombia, such as practices of ‘social cleansing’ perpetrated by diverse actors in connection to different social, political and economic dynamics.⁹⁹ Media and governmental

⁹⁸ *ibid* 53-54.

⁹⁹ Police officers, paramilitary groups, private security guards and community leaders, can be counted among the perpetrators of events of ‘social cleansing’. The connection between social extermination and business sectors is also well known. Local businesses have financially contributed to the creation of extermination squads or directly hired mercenaries to get rid of ‘undesirable individuals’. Lovisa

discourses also contributes, to the extent that they depict street populations as inherently dangerous, immoral, dirty, disposable, made up of almost non-humans.¹⁰⁰ Police authorities and most media outlets reject the connection of these deaths to extermination squads or police brutality and instead privilege explanations related to inter-gang wars or isolated incidents of alcohol and drug abuse.¹⁰¹

What *El Cartucho* and *El Bronx* raids reveal, however, is a new connection between coercive approaches to urban order—which include police brutality—on the one hand, and real estate interests and urban developmental aspirations on the other. In the case of *El Bronx*, violence and physical force were crucial in the displacement and disappearance of those who for decades had inhabited the neighbourhood. Those who tried to resist displacement suffered beatings, arbitrary incarceration and even forced disappearance.¹⁰² Hence *El Cartucho* and *El Bronx* constitute not only struggles for crime control or the moralisation of the city, more importantly, they represent disputes for a territory traditionally inhabited by street populations, a struggle for its commodification as Bogotá endeavours to attract investment and growth.

In Rio de Janeiro, the violence towards street populations is also historical. The new context of an ‘Olympic Project’ for the urban revitalisation of the city, however, has encouraged both innovation and systematicity. In general terms, we can find multiple records¹⁰³

Stannow, ‘*Social Cleansing in Colombia*’ (Simon Fraser University 1996) 78-100; Góngora and Suárez (n 8); Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, ‘*Limpieza social. Una violencia mal nombrada*’ (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica y Universidad Nacional de Colombia 2015); Ingrid Carolina Pabón Suárez, ‘Espacio urbano, narrativas de desprecio y „limpieza social” en Bogotá’ (2017) 36 *Territorios* 87, 102.

¹⁰⁰ Stannow *ibid* 101; Pabón Suárez *ibid* 102-104.

¹⁰¹ Góngora and Suárez (n 8) 119.

¹⁰² CPAT (n 10) 94.

¹⁰³ For example, according to the report released by the World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro (n 16) 20: ‘A total of 22,059 families have been removed in the city of Rio de Janeiro, amounting to 77,206 people, between 2009 and 2015’. Amnesty International also associates over 2,500 killings by the police in the years preceding the Olympic Games (n 22). See also T Phillips, ‘Brazil Troops and Police Raid Rio Shantytown in Clean-up Drive’ *The Guardian* (Rio de Janeiro, 13 November 2011)

about the incidence of homicides, mass evictions, repression of street commerce and the demolition of homes and even entire communities from areas of interest, carried out by security forces and public order enforcement, generating violent urban social conflicts in this new Olympic context.

When it comes to the encounter of street population with the security forces more precisely—an encounter marked by a history of removals, forced institutionalisation, extrajudicial executions, death squads and *chacinas*—the tensions are intensified in the context of international corporate touristic mega events.¹⁰⁴ Despite being seen as marginalised from more ‘organised’ criminality,¹⁰⁵ street populations have been historically targeted for a professed high rate of drug consumption and petty crimes. Human rights organisations and popular collectives have reported violent practices of urban social cleansing for the preparation of the city for the events of FIFA World Cup and the Olympics.¹⁰⁶ Street children and young people were specifically targeted and while there was a visible increase of police abuse and violence, confiscation of people’s belongings, and the involuntary relocation of youths to shelters, or randomly to the outskirts of the city (disappearance/abductions), or even to youth detention centres without having committed criminal offences.¹⁰⁷ Since 2009, the goal of cleaning up the city has meant the creation of a task force that brought together

<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/13/brazil-troops-raid-shantytown>> accessed 6 June 2017.

¹⁰⁴ As illustrated in ‘Defensoria diz que Rio passou por ‘limpeza’ de moradores de rua do centro’ Uol (Rio de Janeiro, 15 August 2016) <<https://olimpiadas.uol.com.br/noticias/redacao/2016/08/15/antes-dos-jogos-rio-passou-por-limpeza-de-moradores-de-rua-do-centro.htm>> accessed 6 June 2017.

¹⁰⁵ The particularities of the scenario of violence and criminality in the city of Rio de Janeiro (and Bogotá for that matter) would demand special attention for this analysis in that it has been increasingly—and problematically—associated to a context of internal war. See C Woody, ‘Violence in Rio de Janeiro Has Gotten so Bad a Newspaper is Covering it in the “War” Section’ *Business Insider* (29 August 2017) <<http://uk.businessinsider.com/violence-in-rio-de-janeiro-military-police-deployed-2017-8>> accessed 19 September 2017.

¹⁰⁶ Amnesty International (2016) (n 22); World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro (n 16); Terre des Hommes International Federation (n 21).

¹⁰⁷ Terre des Hommes International Federation (n 21) 10; World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro (n 16) 131.

both security and sanitation institutions and has also lead to the formation of other public-private partnerships.¹⁰⁸

All this must be viewed in the context of the current political crisis.¹⁰⁹ The eruption of a wave of mass protests in 2013 was strongly related to a general dissatisfaction with the course that the country was taking and in particular issues of mobility, work, public safety, participation, information and budgeting and the negative impacts of the sporting mega events were important components of this dissatisfaction. It is during these protests that one iconic case emerged.

Although hundreds of people were arrested and charged during the 2013 demonstrations, only one person has been convicted.¹¹⁰ The conviction stems from the events of 20 June 2013, the day of the biggest demonstration registered in Rio during the ‘June 2013 protests’. On that day 25-year-old Rafael Braga, a former street worker who had been living intermittently on the street, was arrested amid the crowds. He claimed that he did not know that the protest was going to happen prior to the event and that he played no part in that protest. Yet he was criminally charged for allegedly carrying cleaning products onto the site where the demonstration was taking place. It was alleged that such products—small amounts of bleach and disinfectant—could have been used to make explosives despite the fact that technical reports concluded the cleaning products had minimum explosive capacity.¹¹¹ Released under conditional parole in December 2015, Rafael Braga was arrested again in January 2016 in the *favela Vila Cruzeiro* supposedly carrying small amounts of drugs, which Braga denies and further argues that he suffered police brutality

¹⁰⁸ World Cup and Olympics Popular Committee of Rio de Janeiro (n 16) 56; Terre des Hommes International Federation (n 21) 10.

¹⁰⁹ The still-ongoing political crisis would develop later on to form the contingencies of the parliamentary coup in 2016 and the installation of an illegitimate government in Brazil.

¹¹⁰ D Bowater, ‘Rafael Braga: Scapegoat or Dangerous Protester?’, BBC News (Rio de Janeiro, 20 February 2016) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-35578395>> accessed 3 September 2017.

¹¹¹ R Garcia, ‘There is no justice for the poor in Brazil’, Aljazeera (12 May 2017) <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/05/justice-poor-brazil-170511102159339.html>> accessed 26 November 2017.

during his arrest.¹¹² In April 2017, Braga was convicted and sentenced to eleven years in prison. His conviction was based on police officers' testimony, with conflicting testimonies and oversight of technical reports. Currently, Rafael Braga has the support of major human rights and activist groups that argue that the Brazilian criminal justice system biases and targets the marginalised, i.e. poor, black and young men.¹¹³

The scenarios described in the introduction and elaborated throughout this paper show how police raids, exterminations, evictions, incarceration and involuntary institutionalisation are typical methods used to control street populations by security forces both in Rio de Janeiro and Bogotá. We have emphasised how such systematic practices reveal a market-interest agenda in urban management of Latin American cities, which includes social cleansing practices driven by market demands to make existing valuable land available. For this final section, however, we sought to demonstrate that in the case of Latin American social, political and urban organisation there are particular articulations for the implementation of such market-interest projects that go beyond the displacement of people and communities, and indeed entail brutal containment and elimination of street populations.

5. Conclusions

We have used the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Bogotá as empirical units of observation to explore the complex combination of the logics of financialisation and securitisation that characterises the ethos of 'entrepreneurial urban governance' operating and expanding in the world today. Unfortunately, both Rio and Bogotá have experienced

¹¹² M Parra and R Garcia, 'Rafael Braga Vieira: Symbol of Institutionalized Racism and Criminalized Poverty in Brazilian Justice' *Global Voices* (28 April 2017) <<https://globalvoices.org/2017/04/28/rafael-braga-vieira-symbol-of-institutionalized-racism-and-criminalized-poverty-in-brazilian-justice/>> accessed 26 November 2017.

¹¹³ See the webpages that campaign for Rafael Braga's freedom: <<https://libertemrafaelbraga.wordpress.com/international-campaign-for-the-freedom-of-rafael-braga/>>, <<https://www.liberdadepararafaef.meurio.org.br/>> and <<https://libertemrafaelbraga.wordpress.com/about/>>.

extreme manifestations of such logics and serve as models for their expansion.

The new alliances between public and private sectors for the revitalisation of old and abandoned vicinities, central to this vision of urban development, and the corruption scandals later exposed, impose challenges to cities that have an international reputation for their dangerousness and criminality. Indeed, in historically violent cities, such as Rio de Janeiro and Bogotá, to the extent that security is crucial for creating climates attractive to investors, security is constructed as a precondition for the feasibility of the city and the prosperity of society. Any threat to this collective project is then represented as an existential threat to both. Insecurity, now visible through the lenses of terrorism (namely in the case of Colombia) and of an internal war (in the case of Brazil), is depicted as the main enemy of growth.

But the renewed obsession with security and order in Bogotá and Rio de Janeiro not only entails punitive responses to crime and disorder. The recent experiences of social cleansing in these cities manifest security tactics that go beyond the displacement of populations through processes of gentrification or criminalisation frequently explored by urban poverty scholarship. What we intended to show here is that the coercive and punitive technologies articulated by such projects include physical containment and indeed physical elimination of street populations. The punitive turn relies on the securitisation of street populations, deemed as redundant and undesirable. Securitisation constitutes a tactic through which the territory is vacated to allow for more 'efficient' uses, according to the neoliberal rationality. Hence securitisation enables and boosts accumulation in the neoliberal city. Practices of securitisation thereby unevenly distribute precariousness, vulnerability and death in a manner instrumental to accumulation.

Consequently, we argue that the coercive and violent approach to the problem of street populations in Bogotá and Rio de Janeiro is best explained not solely in terms of the violent cultures of the region or imaginaries of order and moral behaviour, but rather by reference to economic and political forces which favour a vision of urban development and privileges competitiveness based on real estate development and the (re)commodification of urban spaces. In exploring these connections we hoped to argue that the debates on

criminalisation of poverty in the 'global South' offer an important contribution to the urban poverty scholarship by revealing how urban governance, state violence and financialisation are deeply connected in a sophisticated mechanism of power.

Securitisation reveals the continuation and even enhancement of coercive approaches to government in neoliberal times. It shows how competitive climates which are attractive to investors, a corollary of the neoliberal rationale, are constructed not just by means of soft forms of power or indirect rule, but mainly by force and coercion. The construction of segments of society as dangerous populations and their subjection to coercive responses is instrumental to the foreign investment-led growth model reliant on real estate speculation. The cases of Bogotá and Rio de Janeiro illustrate this mechanism.