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Global retail capital and urban futures: Feminist postcolonial perspectives

Caroline Faria | Dominica Whitesell

Department of Geography and the Environment, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, USA

Correspondence

Caroline Faria, Department of Geography and the Environment, University of Texas at Austin, Liberal Arts Building, 305 E 23rd St, Austin, TX 78712, USA.

Email: cvfaria@austin.utexas.edu

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Abstract

Critical scholarship on urban development and displacement has a long history in geography. Yet one emergent driver remains strikingly understudied and poorly understood: global retail capital (GRC). This essay engages feminist postcolonial approaches, grounded in African continental feminist work, to theorize from the urban transformations, displacements, and resistances driven by GRC and emerging in urban East Africa. This framework engages an intersectional understanding of capitalism, and its work driving urban displacement, as always co-produced through gender, racial, colonial, heteronormative, nationalist, and other power-geometries. We assert that feminist postcolonial geography helps us imagine other urban futures, within and beyond Africa: critical of colonial past-presents; free of the modernizing imperatives of normative urban planning; and that recognize the work and insights—intellectual and material—of African women.

KEYWORDS

Africa, displacement, feminist postcolonial geographies, retail, urban geography

1 | MASTERPLANS AND THE GLOBAL RETAIL MAKEOVER

Jane, Eva, and Sarah sit in frustration at Usafi market. Business is slow, with little foot traffic. In 2017, these women were “relocated” from Park Yard market in downtown Kampala after its demolition (Ngwomoya, 2017; personal communication, 3/2018). That valuable land was sold to build a new football stadium, integrating retail space and a car park. At that time, Park Yard and neighboring Owino market together formed one of East Africa's largest retail districts. It had long been a space for low-income women to make a living in the face of economic and political

marginalization (Mugisa et al., 2009). Urban (re)development at Usafi will soon see them moved from that site too (authors et al., 2020; Bagala, 2011).

This story of urban African displacement is not new. But in recent years, it has accelerated, and taken on new forms, as neoliberalizing governments and their city planners prioritize mid to high-end shopping malls (Eduful, 2019; Yiga, 2020). Uganda has one of the most rapidly neoliberalizing economies in Africa (Harrison, 2006; Wiegratz & Cesnulyte, 2016). In the last decade, this economic restructuring has facilitated dramatic globalized retail capital (GRC) inflows. While GRC has transformed cities in Latin America and South and East Asia, the newest forms manifest in African cities (Bromley & Mackie, 2009; Bryceson, 2011; Shand, 2018). South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, and Kenya, along with Uganda, have seen substantial growth in GRC (Muchadenyika & Waiswa, 2018; World Bank, 2017), dramatically reorganizing cities and widening urban inequality and displacement (World Bank, 2016).

GRC is reshaping cities. But this is not simply a top-down process. It occurs in coordination and contestation with nation- and city-state officials, local businesses, and city residents. And these actors are positioned differently, and with varied capacities to respond. Funded by the World Bank, the 2011 Kampala City Physical Development Plan proposes a “Markets Master Plan” integrating and welcoming GRC (KCCA, 2011). Promising “to stop the endless linear sprawl of shops and public services” (KCCA, 2011, p. 37), it aims to transition the city from its open market spaces and small-scale enterprises to a series of new shopping malls. Part of an effort to “makeover” Kampala (KCCA, 2011, p. 98), and amidst concerns about informal trading and urban “overpopulation”, retail-led development is now a key component of urban redevelopment projects across the city. Asserting that Kampala “has lost its form, attractiveness, and identity as the Garden City of Africa” (KCCA, 2011, p. 21), planners and government officials position new retail spaces and the foreign investments they require as lucrative and central to transforming, modernizing, and making “global” the city of Kampala (KCCA, 2011).

González describes retail marketplaces as “frontier spaces for processes of gentrification, displacement and dispossession” (2019, p. 4). Yet, we have limited understanding of the grounded operations of global retail capital, how it reconfigures global south city-spaces like Kampala, its differentiated impacts, and the strategies of compliance and resistance taken up by city residents and workers. Specifically, women and women's entrepreneurial labor, *particularly* that of women of color, remains on the margins of urban theory-making in Geography in general, and on GRC in particular. These margins share space with interrogations of the colonial past-presents of urban space-making in the global south *and* global north. As such, in this article we assert that a feminist postcolonial urban geography, one attentive to and informed by African subjects and African thinking, is vital. This ensures we link colonial pasts and neoliberal urban presents (Hungerford & Smiley, 2016; Myers, 2014; Njoh, 2008). Furthermore, it provides an intersectional urban analysis, one that is always embodied and rooted in relational and “global intimate” (Pratt & Rosner, 2006) forms of racial, gendered, and classed power. Last, and central to any examination of GRC and urban development and displacement, it attends to those so often elided, overlooked or dismissed in city planning and thinking, and their strategies of resistance—women like Jane, Eva, and Sarah. Feminist postcolonial urban geographer Adeniyi-Ogunyankin argues,

Urban development and planning... is incompatible with [women's] needs, priorities and concerns... Valuing low-income women's experiences and knowledge...lead[s] to their inclusion, and via this inclusion, more insight...on how to make the urban more liveable. (2019a, p. 439).

In this intervention, we take the thought of Adeniyi-Ogunyankin and other African feminists as our departure point. We argue for a feminist postcolonial approach to the new machinations of global retail capital, and its transformation of urban space and urban life.

2 | RETAIL GENTRIFICATION, GLOBALIZING MOVES

In the last decade, GRC has become a central driver of contemporary urban change. Control of retail economies has moved from large multinational corporations into financialized clusters; connected webs of companies and their shareholders (Bromley & Mackie, 2009). This marks a dramatic transition, with a merger into highly globalized, footloose, and powerful clusters of GRC (Mermet, 2017). This restructured retail capital has undergone concentration, internationalization, and financialization (González, 2019; Mermet, 2017) with investors increasingly identifying lucrative global opportunities (Burnett, 2014). Despite these shifts, retail and urban geographers alike acknowledge that GRC is strikingly understudied (Drechsler & Maginn, 2018; Kok & Bergman, 2018; Mermet, 2017; Verhetsel et al., 2018).

Work linking retail capital and urban displacement is indebted to the well-developed body of critical scholarship on gentrification, which has a long history in American-European Anglo geography (Lees, 2000, 2002; Ley, 1994, 1996; Slater, 2006; Smith, 2002). This centers a class-based account of dis- and re-investment, typified by middle class movement into working class parts of the poor urban core (Glass, 1964). Varied “waves” of urban transition, transformation, and loss are understood as central to gentrification processes, including: the devalorization and reinvestment of inner city spaces, rising rents, and state-driven urban renewal policies (Davidson & Lees, 2005; Hackworth & Smith, 2001). Geographic analyses, strongly informed by political-economy perspectives, understand these waves as a form of “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2003, 2008; Smith, 1979, 1996).

While this body of scholarship is rich and longstanding, it less commonly connects *urban* and *retail* development. As Zukin et al. argue: “Despite three decades of studying residential gentrification, only now are researchers and community groups starting to wonder how commercial gentrification may play into broader dynamics of social inequality” (2009, p. 49). This is surprising given that, intellectually, geographic engagement with “retail capital” and urban change has a longer history in and beyond Geography (e.g., Ducatel & Blomley, 1990; Molotoch, 1976), and geographers *have* engaged with consumption as part of urban gentrification, displacement, and development (e.g., Ley, 1994, 1996). In turn, retail development has long been central to urban policy and vice versa, with retail outlets often acting as a centerpiece for urban reinvestment (Kok & Bergman, 2018).

Responding to this gap, a small body of work explicitly examines “retail” or “commercial” gentrification (González & Dawson, 2017; Hubbard, 2018; Mermet, 2017). González and Waley define this as the: “cycle of disinvestment (by local authorities) and displacement (of longstanding market stall holders and customers) followed by rediscovery of the commercial and real estate value of markets and plans to rejuvenate and regenerate through the insertion into the market of stalls selling upmarket products, the relocation of markets to shopping centres or their complete ‘boutiquing.’” (2013, p. 97). Increasingly scholars understand retail investment not only as a *result* of gentrification, but also its “initiating force” (González, 2019, p. 5).

As González (2019) notes, work linking urban displacement and retail gentrification in these ways center global north settings like London (González & Dawson, 2017), Barcelona (Hernández & Andreeva, 2016), Lisbon (Guimarães, 2018), and Paris (Mermet, 2017). Much less attention has been paid to global south cities (Jeong et al., 2015; Schlack & Turnbull, 2015), the differentiated impacts in terms of race and gender (Zukin et al., 2009), the interconnected processes of racial and sexist capitalism (Derickson, 2016; Oswin, 2012), and to their colonial grounds. Responding to this first elision, newer research does examine gentrification outside the North Atlantic. Some elements of these variegated bodies of scholarship take up Marxist frameworks of gentrification, globalizing, grounding, disrupting or otherwise complicating gentrification in new ways in and through global south contexts. This wide ranging research is provoked by Smith's (2002) claim that gentrification now forms a “global urban strategy” and has examined the operations of gentrification in, for example, China, Pakistan, India, Korea, Ethiopia, and South Africa (Banerjee-Guha, 2011; Desai, 2012; Gooptu, 2010; Harris, 2008; Lees, 2011; McDonald, 2008; Muzein, 2017; Shin, 2009). Sometimes work in this area aims to generalize the “gentrification thesis” (Smith, 2003), fostering a “new comparative urbanism” (Clark, 2005; McCann & Ward, 2014; McFarlane, 2008, 2010; Robinson, 2002, 2011) and critiques of “planetary urbanization” (Brenner & Schmid, 2014; Merrifield, 2013;

Schmid, 2014). Other connected, yet distinct, strands emerge as a new “southern urbanism” or a “situated urban political ecology” (Ghertner, 2014; Lawhon, Ernstson, & Silver, 2014; Lawhon et al., 2020; Schindler, 2017). These linked scholarly imperatives interrogate the primacy of capital in urban development and displacement and seek place sensitive yet generalizable theories of urbanization from a multiplicity of case studies (Robinson, 2016).

This work influences thinking on GRC, particularly as global south cities are targets for this investment. With growing middle classes, affordable land, competitive international investment tax rates, and other incentives, dramatic retail development now occurs in global south urban spaces (Moriarti et al., 2015; Sotunde, 2014). The activities of major multinational, national, and city-level entities to address corruption and improve transparency, regularize taxation, and neoliberalize trade each also support these moves (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2018; Grunberg, 1998; Livingston et al., 2018; Martin & Beck, 2018). Indeed, global south cities are seeing the most growth in GRC investment, with African cities offering huge investment potential (kmgp.com/Africa, 2016). We concur then that GRC demands attention, particularly in long-elided global south cities, and most notably those in Africa. But it is not enough to extend existing theories of retail capital, GRC, and gentrification to these spaces. A feminist postcolonial approach, grounded in African thought, is crucial. As we show below, it centers urban subjects and subjectivities that are typically ignored; those who face the sharpest edges of urban renewal projects, while being used to promote them; and who are envisioning and enacting more just urban futures. And while we center African women here, this move sits in solidarity with demands for broader intellectual space (following Livermon 2020; H. B. Young 2017 and others) for queer, disabled, and other marginalized urban subjectivities and perspectives.

3 | FEMINIST AND POSTCOLONIAL INTERVENTIONS

Our provocations engage histories of antiracist, feminist, postcolonial, and queer scholarship that disrupt Anglo-Euro-American- and capitalo-centric urban geographic thought (Oswin, 2016; Peake & Rieker, 2013). This calls attention to the embodied and interscalar operations of urban structural change including disinvestment, segregation, and gentrification (Datta, 2016; Peake & Bain, 2017). Typically centered are low-income women, people of color, people living with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ communities, with attention to their resistance, agency, and political subjectivity. A key feminist intervention is a “global-intimate” scalar insistence (Pratt & Rosner, 2006). This enlivens abstracted political-economic processes, carving space for fine-grained and *differentiated* accounts of subjects and spaces (Bénéker, Sanders, Tani, & Taylor, 2010; Chlala, 2019; Iverson & Sanders, 2009; Silvey, 2004; Varley, 2013). Feminist work often examines the elided efforts of women to produce, remake, and survive urban space (Das, 2007; Kanai & Kutz, 2013; Nelson, 2004; Schlyter, 2009).

Valuing the emplaced complexity of women's lives enables a postcolonial intersectional appreciation of capitalism, that is, one co-produced through gender, racial, heteronormative, nationalist, colonial, and other power-geometries (Arefin, 2019; Caterall, 2014; Gilbert, 2010; Gilmore, 2007; McKittrick, 2011; Mollett & Faria, 2013; Mullings, 2009; Mullings & Kern, 2013; Noxolo, 2011; Peake, 2016; Pollard et al., 2009; Vasudevan & Smith, 2020). This complicates our understanding of spatiality, with instructive implications for understanding urban displacement and development. Hanson and Pratt (1995) and Wright (2004) provide classic examples. Wright's long-standing research on Ciudad Juárez connects the persistent devaluation of women's bodies to macroeconomic structural aggressions. The devaluation of these women enables their displacement: from the use of citations to keep commercial sex workers in motion, their spatial management in maquiladoras, and to the violent disappearance - the murders - of thousands of women. Wright makes clear how neoliberal urban development, indeed neoliberal capitalism itself, *relies on* certain kinds of racist and sexist displacements. Mollett's (2014) antiracist, feminist political ecology builds on and deepens this work. Beyond the strictly “urban,” yet central to capitalist spatial formation, she shows how tourist development in Honduras and Panama displaces Black and indigenous communities from the land, while entrenching them in place by *relying on* their devalued labor. Here,

intermeshed patriarchal and colonial logics position Black women as vital yet denigrated sources of caring, domestic, and sexual labor.

Postcolonial efforts dovetail with and complicate feminist theory, and vice versa. Postcolonial work “provincializes” Europe and North America in theory-making (Sheppard et al., 2013; following Chakrabarty, 2000). That is, it disrupts Anglo Euroamerican norms of modernity, rationality, and universality that infuse (even critical) arguments about, say, “planetary urbanization,” “global cities,” and the “urban age” (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2018; Roy, 2011b). It attends to global south realities, frames of thinking, and methodologies (e.g., Doshi, 2013; Ghertner, 2014; Roy, 2011a; Sequera & Janoschka, 2015), largely deemed “off the map...structurally irrelevant to the commanding heights of the global economy” (Roy, 2011b, p. 10).

Postcolonial feminist work on retail consumption is small, yet demonstrates these insights. Notable is Bagheri (2014) and Gökarişel and Secor's (2009, 2015) respective work on mall spaces, retail capital, and fashion-based consumption in Iran and Turkey respectively. They link the cultural politics of the fashion retail industry to typically abstracted geopolitics. Both center ethnographic work with women, embodying retail capital through their lived experiences. They detail women's negotiation, resistance, and compliance with heteropatriarchal, faith-based, and neoliberalizing classed norms. For example, on the geopolitical-economies of Teseztür, Gökarişel and Secor argue, “Veiling-fashion crystallises a series of issues about Islamic identity, the transnational linkages of both producers and consumers, and the shifting boundaries between Islamic ethics and the imperatives of neoliberal capitalism.” (2009, p. 6). In Bagheri's Iranian case, these embodied politics are also powerfully policed by the state. Together, their work links urban economic materialities with processes of consumption and subject formation. It prompts us to consider the tensions between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, neoliberal governmentalities and their disciplining of the body, and how GRC and the consumption practices it drives are negotiated, celebrated, refashioned, worried over, and refused (see also Dosekun, 2016; Faria, 2014; Oza, 2012; Thomas, 2009, 2020). Feminist postcolonial interventions like these pose new questions about GRC and its political-economies.

But an analysis of GRC also demands we link an engagement with consumption to the urban geographies of displacement. Here, feminist postcolonial approaches complicate work on retail gentrification by interrogating the limits and coloniality of the framework of gentrification itself. We find scholarship from South Asian scholars Doshi (2015, 2016), Doshi and Ranganathan (2018), along with African scholars Adeniyi-Ogunyankin and Kinyanjui (developed below) particularly instructive. Doshi counters Marxist gentrification analyses in her study of dispossession in Mumbai, India. She argues,

understanding socio-spatial transformation in Indian cities requires a processual analysis of how public space is enclosed rather than simply the outcome of class-based displacement...Resisting the notion of an Indian style gentrification is crucial not only for more accurate analyses but also for effective political practice. (2015, p. 114–115)

Doshi articulates an “embodied urban political ecology” (2016) linking the feminist and antiracist moves described above to postcolonial interventions. This approach attends to: the intimate, embodied, and affective experiences and processes of urban life (Datta, 2016); the labor of social reproduction (Federici, 2004; Katz, 2001); the connected, intersectional work of power, for example as it is expressed via racial and masculinist capitalism; and the varied ways that political subjectivity, shaped by intersectional power, is bound up with urban space (Doshi & Ranganathan, 2018).

This approach is imperative to examine GRC and urban change in Kampala, Uganda. Together, the innovations of feminist postcolonial work on the cultural political-economies of retail-based consumption and urban displacement prompt different and important questions for our analysis: How do macroeconomic inflows of capital rely on and impact the bodies of women in the global south? What are the emotion-laden, viscerally felt forms of this capital? What are the differentiated impacts and benefits of GRC and how is this marked by class, race, and gender? How do these intersectional forms of power, and the past-presents of colonial power, interweave with

capital formations to shape urban retail developments in Uganda? And how is the narrative of displacement resisted by low-income women traders? Feminist postcolonial critiques of western thought, along with new feminist ways of thinking through the city, thus offer rich avenues for understanding GRC.

4 | URBAN AFRICAN INTERVENTIONS

African and Afrodescendent thought must be central to this feminist postcolonial framing. In line with calls to “Writ[e] the World from an African Metropolis” (Mbembé & Nuttall, 2004), an important body of African scholarship theorizes from and produces new radical imaginings of urban Africa (see Kinyanjui, 2014; Livermon, 2020; Simone, 2004). Yet African and Afrodescendent scholarship remains marginal in urban geography—including around urban retail political-economies and displacement. Foundational here are critiques of hegemonic African urbanization and urban planning that are infused by fifty years of developmentalist and modernist ideologies (e.g., World Bank, 1991; Friedmann, 1986 as detailed in Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, 2019b). These ideologies typically position African cities as unplanned, informal, overpopulated, over- or wrongly urbanized, and behind. These are rooted in colonial arguments that positioned urbanization and economic formalization as civilizing (Bigon, 2005; Kamete, 2013; Lloyd-Evans, 2008; Meagher, 1995; Njoh, 2008). Critical scholars show how these narratives reproduce orientalist imaginaries of the African continent by striving to create ideal, modern, westernized cities there (e.g., McCall, 1955 in; Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, 2019b; Mbembé & Nuttall, 2004; Myers, 2011; Simone, 2001).

African and Afrodescendent scholars examine a host of urban issues, including work on urban industrialization, resource access, sustainable development, “green urbanism”, and transportation fixes (e.g., Acey, 2018; Cobbinah, Erdiauw-Kwasie, & Amoateng, 2015; Johnston-Anumonwo & Doane, 2011; Ikioda, 2013; Oberhauser & Johnston-Anumonwo, 2014; Oberhauser & Yeboah, 2011). Postcolonial scholars here link these contemporary urban issues to colonial pasts (Kamete, 2013; Njoh, 2008; Omolo-Okalebo et al., 2010; Usuanlele & Oduntan, 2018). For example, Kamete (2013) interrogates western-centric urban thought and planning. Via case studies of Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, and Angola, he traces the sweep of “formalization” projects in Southern African cities, showing how informality is positioned as threatening to national progress. He demonstrates how these colonially rooted drives, dominating even in post-independence discourse, devalue actually existing economic structures and relationships. They render citizens who partake in “informal activity” or live in informal structures as dangerous and in need of state intervention.

African feminist work weds these analyses of colonial-racial power to patriarchy (Kinyanjui et al 2020). For example, Johnston-Anumonwo and Doane (2011) take on the deployment of colonial binaries in debates around women's urban entrepreneurialism. Amidst rapid neoliberal globalization, they critique simplistic renderings of African women either as innovative entrepreneurs or victims of economic restructuring. Johnston-Anumonwo and Doane root this narrative in the “benefits versus opportunities” framework developed in Euro-American economic thought and “tested” in Latin American and Asian contexts. Integrating complexity at several scales, they argue that this framing cannot transfer to African settings where industrialization takes different forms. They provide an intersectional critique of homogenizing categories, arguing that there is great diversity elided in the category of “African woman” that determine women's engagement in globalizing economies.

Feminist thinkers ground colonial past-presents in embodied everyday accounts of marginalized subjects and spaces deemed unproductive or outside the “formal” economy (see Nager et al., 2002). Here, African feminist work also provides fresh perspectives on agency and resistance vis a vis the state, development, and other agencies that powerfully structure urban African life (Attia & Khalil, 2015; Kinyanjui, 2019). One example is Acey's (2018) work on urban water management and resource access in Lagos and Benin City, Nigeria. In the hybridized public and private provision-settings of these two cities she examines the strategies

women “change agents” use to access water, and their challenges (2016a, 2016b). Acey’s insistent centering of these “change agents” writes against the persistent elision of African and Afrodescendent women - not only in colonialist theorizations of urban Africa, but also in critical (notably Marxist) urban framings (see Peake, 2020).

Feminist African urban work on marketplaces is particularly instructive for our research on GRC, and similarly theorizes from African space and from women’s political subjectivity. Ikioda (2013, 2014) argues that marketplaces in Lagos, Nigeria, “appear disorganised and seemingly chaotic, but they...reveal important interconnections that can inform and illuminate theories on retailing and consumption in new and exciting ways.” (2013, p. 524) Instead she shows how markets are lucrative and dynamic sites of retail consumption, where urban belonging, densification, formalization, and diverse economic opportunities are materialized and negotiated. From East Africa, Kinyanjui’s research is also foundational. She centers low-income women, their lived experiences, modes of resistance, and everyday theory-making to understand Kenyan urban informality. Via her research on its largest retail markets, she disrupts an informality solely characterized by “helplessness and hopelessness” (2014; see also McKittrick, 2011). Instead she argues that “economic informality is...a people’s creative response to the innate desire for survival and self-actualization” (Kinyanjui, 2014, p. 14). Kinyanjui reads the subversive potential of informality as low-income women resist legal and physical efforts to displace them.

Dovetailing with these moves is Adeniyi-Ogunyankin’s research on African “megacity” development in Ibadan, Nigeria. She argues this is a form of “Afropolitan Imagineering”, that while critical of colonial pasts, remains rooted in capitalist, patriarchal constructions of modernity. Low-income Nigerian women, left out of this imagineering, are envisioning their own, socially just urban futures. They strategically deploy a politics of care to reassert their right to the city. She writes, “in their visions for the future, the women justify their inclusion in governance because of their gendered urban experience and gendered claims...and its [urban] inhabitants are lauded as the key to Africa’s sustained growth.” (Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, 2019a, p. 426).

African and Afrodescendent feminist scholars like these theorize with and from African women’s spaces and experiences. Kinyanjui frames this as a praxis of “Utu-Feminism”, a way to “navigate the neoliberal patriarchal frame in the world. It is the strategy of using feminine tools, norms and values to change the world” (Kinyanjui, 2019, p. 7)¹. Utu-feminism refuses masculinist knowledge formation: “cia riiko ti cio cia thingira (knowledge or information passed at the kitchen fireside is different from that conveyed in a man’s hut) (2019, p. 1), espousing women’s “survival, self-reliance, resilience and solidarity...” (2). Adeniyi-Ogunyankin makes related epistemological calls for “Afro-futurist imaginings” and place-making practices (2018, p. 1161; 2019a). For Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, “Afrofuturism not only reclaims the history of the future but also of the past” (2018, p. 1161). She calls for embodied urban futurities enacted by those Africans ignored, maligned, or abjected by dominant urbanisms. Echoing Kinyanjui, she argues that the African subjectivities valorized in these efforts should not align with elite Afropolitan ideals, but rather “promote survival and activism...in an increasingly competitive global political economy” (2018, p. 1162). It is an African urbanity that centers social justice, valuing African women as urban creators and thinkers.

This is foundational for understanding the ties between GRC and existing retail economies, and the complex workings and relationships between “informal” and “formal” subjects, spaces, and practices. This feminist urban African approach opposes Euro-centric and developmentalist models that position cities and their subjects as backward, chaotic and in need of control. However, it also calls for an *embodied* reckoning with these colonial past-presents. Following Utu-feminism, it confronts colonial-neocolonial capitalism via women’s lived reality. Most basically, it reminds us of women’s centrality in urban space making, and in everyday moves of urban resistance (Acey, 2018; Adeniyi-Ogunyankin, 2019a, 2019b; Kinyanjui, 2014). Epistemologically, this approach values “fire-side knowledges” and other feminist Afrofuturist knowledge making around urban life. It makes clear the always-colonial and intersectional workings of capitalism as it transforms the city.

5 | URBAN TRANSFORMATION, NEGOTIATION, RESISTANCE: GLOBAL RETAIL CAPITAL INCURSIONS IN UGANDA

To close we engage a feminist postcolonial urban geography of GRC in Kampala, Uganda. This forms part of a wider and preliminary research project on urban change in Kampala (Faria, Katushabe, Kyotowadde, & Whitesell, 2020, NSF: 1951585). We offer only a brief sketch of GRC here, but one that aims to demonstrate the insights of theorizing and understanding urban redevelopment via a feminist, postcolonial perspective - one that takes seriously the embodied and intellectual perspectives of African women. This means we first trace how colonial modernization and urban planning echo in contemporary market (re)development. Second, we examine how (neo) colonial racial capitalism works in concert with patriarchy. And third, we recognize the resistant political subjectivities of African women as central to urban (re)formation. In doing so we seek to put our theoretical call to work, using it to trace the varied power-geometries around GRC in Kampala.

Kampala's contemporary urban planning is grounded in colonial pasts. Today, city officials position markets as unsafe, undeveloped, unhygienic - a barrier to modernization and foreign capital (Businge & Ssemppogo, 2009; KCCA, 2011). These echo, with distortions, colonial anti-Black narratives of urban planning as civilizing practice. For example, the construction of Nakasero Fort in 1906, the 1951 Kampala City Plan, and the subsequent creation of Nakawa and Naguru "African residential zones" racially segregated, displaced, and strictly controlled African people to produce "safe" and "hygienic" urban landscapes for white administrators (Byerley, 2013; Omolo-Okalebo et al., 2010).

GRC is now central to Kampala's (re)development plans. In the last decade Uganda has experienced amongst the highest rates of GRC investment in Africa (Brown, 2013, 2014; kmgp.com/Africa, 2016; Sotunde, 2014). By 2016, 17% of such flows into Uganda were in retail, primarily high-end mall development (East African Community, 2011). In concert, Uganda has one of the world's highest rates of urbanization (Brown, 2012; Cities Alliance, 2010). Preliminary research with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and with local traders, along with analysis of multinational, national and city-level tax expansion and urban planning documents (KCCA, 2014; World Bank, 2017) links rising retail development in Kampala to greater Kampala, nation-state and multinational government initiatives to formalize the city (KCCA, 2014).

Much development is located in Nakasero in Kampala's Central Division. Once home to colonial administrators, it now hosts international hotels, high-end malls like Kampala Boulevard, and the upcoming Kampala Kingdom Shopping Centre. These mall sites encroach on long-established markets and low-income residential spaces in the city. Economic modernization directives, cloaked in the language of safety or beautification, underpin arguments to "update" these areas. Our work documents the recently demolished Park Yard and neighboring, also threatened, Owino/St. Balikuddembe market along with nearby Kisenyi, one of Kampala's largest "slum" residential areas. In the face of city modernization efforts and private capital drives, vendors operating in this downtown space face increasing pressures, including raised rents, import taxes, and market organization dues, demolition, suspected arson, and evictions, to vacate (authors, 2020; G. Young, 2018a).

Linked racial, gendered, and classed-based power shape these urban pressures. Women make up 70% of vendors in Park Yard and Owino markets (Mugisa et al., 2009), primarily a result of asymmetrical gendered impacts of neoliberal structural adjustment imposed over the last 30 years (AWID, 2002; Larsson & Svensson, 2018). In Uganda, many women traders like Jane, Eva, and Sarah sell imported secondhand clothing at the markets to make ends meet amidst austerity. The mechanisms of their contemporary *displacement* are also intersectional: new GRC incursions interweave with colonial, racist, and sexist power. For example, women build and maintain markets, making them profitable. Yet, in the wake of persistent state disinvestment and land privatization, this caring labor and their wider value as economic actors, is unrecognized, dismissed, and trivialized (authors, 2020). In connection, while they have legal rights to trade in the market, these are frequently ignored or denied by the city and private development firms (Ngwomoya, 2017; Njoroge, 2011). Because of the sexist denigration of their labor and the land value they have created for the city, low-income women are particularly vulnerable to harassment and displacement (authors 2020; Ben-Ari, 2014; see also Kinyanjui, 2014; N'Guessan, 2011; Salo, 2009 elsewhere).

But vendors navigate and subvert these shifts. Ugandan traders are complexly organized into a range of national, regional and market-level unions, business groups, and collectives. These include the Kampala City Traders' Association, United Market Vendors Association, Owino Women's Association, and the St. Balikuddembe [Owino] Market Stalls and Lockup Shop Owners Association. Some of these organizations challenge claims to acquire the market by wealthy redevelopers (others work in concert with them), asking for land titles and demanding greater say in redevelopment projects (Bagala, Ssenkibirwa, & Mukisa, 2013; Kasozi, 2011; Kigongo & Kasamani, 2012). They have had some success in doing so (G. Young, 2018b). Groups like Platform for Vendors Uganda have also responded to the rising criminalization of vending and the increasingly difficult economic constraints and working conditions vendors face. Of course, these organizations also have tensions. Some complain about their hierarchical nature, their representation of elite vendors over those more precariously situated, and their unreasonable dues (Kigongo & Kasamani, 2012). These divisions lie not just around class but the delineation of formal and informal work (e.g., Mulondo, 2019), the gendered, ethnic, and political biases of leadership, and their collective vision of "development" (N'Guessan, 2011).

GRC has exacerbated inequalities among vendors and deepened both the scope and impact of displacement. These impacts are *also* intersectional, with low-income women traders bearing the brunt of the impact, while at once disproportionately responsible for caring responsibilities (authors, 2020). As a result, we are seeing a growth in, and a strategic turn to, informal economic entrepreneurialism. As we note above "informal" vending has always operated alongside formalized, union organized, and taxed trading. In stark contrast to formalizing urban plans and the crack-down on informal trading, it now forms 43% of the national economy (Kibelebele, 2014; see also; Kinyanjui, 2014). Displaced women like Jane and Eva navigate and resist these new conditions by ignoring informal vending bans, moving to new trading sites, reinhabiting old sites after eviction, bribing officials, and both moving regularly and surveilling collectively to avoid police harassment, fines, and bribery (authors, 2020; G. Young, 2018a, 2018b). These efforts are increasingly risky, yet through them Young argues that "street vendors...seek to insert themselves into a system of development from which they are actively excluded" (2018a, p. 1017).

If we are to foster safe, just, and humane urban life, we must understand the geographic, political-economic, and socio-cultural mechanisms of contemporary urban development and displacement. We must do so through those cities and subjects of the global south, low-income women of color, who are experiencing and navigating its sharpest edges. And we must understand its key contemporary driver: global retail capital. But we must do so by following African feminist thinkers like Adeniyi-Ogunyankin who ask provocatively, "What if we prioritise radical imaginings of Africanity that value social justice over world-class aspirations and thus disengage from imperial continuities of cartographic hierarchies?" (2018, p. 1161). Kampala offers a particular and instructive example of urban transformation, development, displacement, and struggle. Yet it is more than a case-study for theoretical innovation. It is a place to theorize, to build new cartographies, *from*. Feminist postcolonial interventions—engaging, but other-than, Marxist norms—and grounded in African continental critical feminist work, provide complex and historicized understandings of those urban transformations, displacements, and resistances driven by GRC. This enables us to imagine other urban futures, with and beyond Africa, that are critical of colonial past-presents; free of the modernizing imperatives of normative urban planning; and that recognize the intellectual and material insights of African women.

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ENDNOTE

- ¹ It is important to note here that other strands of thought that center African women dispute the language and framing of "feminism", highlighting the vibrant heterogeneity of discourse (see Kinyanjui, Maloy, & Wamae "Utu Feminism: Towards an African Feminist Theory" Webinar 6/24/2020). We find Utu feminism, alongside other examples of African feminism, deeply informative for understanding global retail capital.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Caroline Faria is a feminist geographer. Her research examines how gendered-racial power shape nationalism, development, and neoliberal globalization, with a focus on the East Africa-Gulf hair and beauty trade.

Dominica Whitesell is a feminist geographer. Her work examines the ties between the urban geographies of clothing and fashion in Uganda and the urban politics of beautification. She draws on intersectional global intimate approaches, creative cartography and other feminist geovisualization methods.

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