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STATE OF THE ART

Race, Property, and Erasure in the Rust Belt

Viewing Urban Changes through a Binocular Colonial Lens

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Abstract

This article builds on settler and domestic colonial histories and theories to advance our understanding of urban changes in segregated, disinvested, U.S. Rust Belt cities. While many major cities have rebounded in population and experienced gentrification since the mid-twentieth century, many Rust Belt cities have continued to decline. The resulting conditions call for new theories to describe their changes, trajectories, and the impacts for majority poor Black populations. We construct a Binocular Colonial Lens: an analytic framework that superimposes shared conceptual descriptions and theoretical explanations of settler and domestic colonialisms. With this lens, we can elucidate the practices of erasure that are deployed throughout colonized communities and focus them on phenomena associated with urban decline and revitalization. While some urban scholarship has used metaphors and language of settler colonialism to describe gentrification, most of these works at best reflect the salience of settler ideology, and at worst reinforce Indigenous erasure. Foregrounding shared conditions of colonization and conquest in the United States, we train this Binocular Colonial Lens on Detroit, which reveals myriad urban processes like ghettoization, urban renewal, suburbanization, and gentrification as ongoing colonization, wherein domestically colonized populations are subject to numerous forms of erasure at the behest of the settler state and toward the advancement of settler society. This lens advances urban theory by expanding the depth of our analyses of urban changes, and scaffolds connections with other axes of racialized inequality by revealing shared tools of erasure operative in, for example, mass incarceration and environmental injustices.

Keywords: Settler Colonialism; Domestic Colonialism; Property; Erasure; Rust Belt; Urban Decline; Gentrification

Introduction

This article builds on recent attention to the ways that anti-Blackness, racial capitalism, and settler colonialism are entangled and co-constituted (Kelley 2017; King 2019; Walcott 2014), and structure contemporary urban spaces (Dorries et al., 2019; Porter and Yiftachel, 2019). We argue that existing scholarship fails to recognize the extent to which contemporary urban processes like segregation, suburbanization, urban renewal, and gentrification, are continuous and congruent with the socio-structural dynamics of settler colonialism. As part of a broader agenda aimed at sharpening our perception of the character and impacts of ongoing coloniality, we contend that combining analyses of domestic and settler colonization creates a binocular field of vision that expands the breadth

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and depth of our descriptions and explanations of how urban processes unfold, and advances our understanding of the racial dynamics of these changes. We then use this lens to re-view processes of urban change that have fundamentally shaped Detroit, a quintessential declining Rust Belt city.

Understood generally, settler colonialism is an ongoing historical process involving the arrival and continued presence of outsiders into a territory inhabited by Indigenes. Settlers arrive with the intent to remain and establish their own society. At the core of this process is the idea of space to settle: "Territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element," (Wolfe 2006, p. 387). For newcomers to settle, they must acquire control over land. Unless land is truly vacant or unused, this process requires wresting control from/ severing relations with those who are already there. Racialization and narratives about productive use of land enable this process (Glenn 2015). The logic of settler colonialism, visible in its various structural analogues, functions to promote the territorial control and erasure of a racialized population to aid the advancement of settler society. Domestic colonialism refers to the broad set of socio-structural conditions that subjugate racialized groups living *within* a given society. The formation of "nations within nations" (see Allen 1969, p. 90) or "internal colonies" in the Western Hemisphere is particularly entangled with the enslavement of African people forced to places like the United States. Scholars argue that life for many racialized groups, and especially Black people, is defined by the logics of surveillance, sequestration, psychological harm, and direct violence characteristic of colonial domination. Domestic colonialism has been theorized as a defining feature of U.S. urban space (Allen 2005; Clark 1965; Pinderhughes 2011; Wall 2022).

Applying a binocular lens, we argue, reveals how techniques of the settler state/settler society continue to promote racialized erasure throughout what are treated as distinct processes of urban change. Displacement threatens marginalized residents' spatial location, but erasure threatens their persistence and survival. Erasure is a descriptive concept (and socio-historical fact) used to encompass a multitude of interconnected practices—including displacement, extraction, containment, assimilation, and annihilation—that are deployed in various colonial projects to control populations, spaces (territories), resources, labor, and discourses (Glenn 2015).

This article offers three arguments about the importance and advantages of combining settler and domestic colonial theories as a frame for analyzing contemporary urban processes. First, a binocular vantage allows us to perceive how urban processes like suburbanization, disinvestment, urban renewal, and gentrification, are guided by settler-state policies and expressed in settler ideologies, to promote eliminative practices of erasure. Second, more specifically, we suggest that gentrification scholarship should more rigorously engage with the legacies and contemporary structures of settler colonialism, especially for understanding and anticipating the effects of revitalization in U.S. Rust Belt cities seeking to stabilize after decades of continued decline and disinvestment. Third, we argue that a binocular colonial lens provides researchers with greater explanatory breadth by showing how urban processes are linked with other contemporary manifestations of racialized inequality like mass incarceration, health, and environmental injustice through shared tools of erasure. The framework we outline here reveals urban changes like suburbanization and gentrification to be nodes in a complex of practices, processes, and programs threatening the well-being of racialized populations in settler societies. By challenging practices of erasure and (re)settlement we can help build coalitions across disaggregated social movements that resist eliminative social policies, both formal and informal.

We begin by first reviewing and critiquing existing threads of urban scholarship that deploy the language of settler colonialism. Second, we introduce settler and domestic colonialisms and our analytic framework, which combines concepts from these theories to

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more accurately describe and represent the structural realities of and systemic threats to communities of color in the United States. Third, we discuss the conditions of declining Rust Belt cities that our theories must account for to be descriptively and explanatorily adept. Finally, we use the case of Detroit to illustrate how using a binocular colonial lens explains the multitude of urban processes affecting declining cities in the past, emerging revitalization (gentrification) efforts, and scaffolds connections with other persistent racialized inequalities.

Pioneers and Frontiers: Settler Colonialism in Urban Scholarship

Engagement with settler colonialism in urban scholarship has grown. Some works explore the conditions for and experiences of Indigenous urban residents. Scholars have articulated how settler colonial structures shaped the development of post-war Minneapolis (Hugill 2021), how gentrification pressures harm Indigenous residents in downtown Vancouver BC (Blomley 2004), and the dynamics of housing and property for Indigenous people in Townsville, Australia (Blatman-Thomas 2019). Gentrification scholarship, in particular, has a longer history with colonialism. Ruth Glass—who is known to have coined the term "gentrification"—noted intensifying displacement pressures in London due to immigration instigated by metropole colonialism (see Wyly 2019).

Other urban scholarship has tended to use the language of settler colonialism to refer to and describe gentrifiers, their practices and ideological orientations, and even the space of gentrifying neighborhoods. Broadly speaking, gentrification refers to a process wherein residents with economic and/or cultural capital move into less advantaged neighborhoods, resulting in "upgrades" or "improvements" to the local landscape. Private capital investment by developers and various public resources aid this process. Displacement is a "downside" to gentrification, whereby more vulnerable longtime residents are pushed out and thus are unable to take advantage of these improvements. Reflecting the centrality of colonial narratives in the United States, early gentrifiers call themselves (and are called) "pioneers" (Taylor 2002), as the early settlers who arrive to tame the wilderness of the ghetto (Zukin 1982). Many gentrifiers embrace a homesteading ethos, investing sweat equity to improve their property and neighborhood—a "frontier and salvation" mentality (Spain 1993). Others orient themselves in opposition to longtime residents, seeing the latter ("natives") as obstacles to improving the neighborhoods they settle (Brown-Saracino 2009; Stratton 1977).

Neil Smith (1996) engages the history and ideology of settler colonialism more robustly in his work examining the "new urban frontier". He draws historical parallels to articulate the pervasiveness of frontier ideology which frames inner-city neighborhoods as an urban wilderness to be tamed by brave pioneers. Like Native Americans were/are, the urban working poor are treated as features of the natural environment: portraying these spaces as socially uninhabited legitimizes capital expansion through inner-city conquest. Smith focuses our attention on the power of colonial tropes and how these are intertwined with spatialized profit-making in the "revanchist" city, but his analysis relies on the "metaphorical indigenization" (Quizar 2019, p. 116) of inner-city residents.

Although the adoption of settler colonial language in gentrification scholarship gestures towards similarities between processes of urban change, land/property control, and population movement, its usage has often been stripped from theoretical and historical contexts; simplistically fit into other theories; and/or deployed rhetorically or metaphorically.[1] Furthermore, reductive popular discourse that calls gentrification the "new settler colonialism" is harmful and perpetuates Indigenous erasure (see Waánataŋ 2017). At the same time, the abundance of these parallels reflects the centrality of settler colonialism for contemporary ideology and White settler identity. And to abstain from rigorous critique or

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investigation promotes "colonial unknowing": "forms of historical unknowing and plays at innocence that further settler futures and anti-Blackness" (Dotson 2018, p. 1). Most existing scholarship does not go far enough to uncover the way colonial structures reproduce dynamics of privilege, oppression, exploitation, and elimination among different social groups, nor how access and control over land (in our case, urban property) are central for these processes.

More recently, scholars have begun to articulate how settler colonial *structures* continue to shape not just the experiences of Indigenous residents, but the form, inequalities, and land dynamics of cities in settler societies. In the sprawling southwest American desert, Sarah Launius and Geoffrey Alan Boyce (2021) argue that a settler colonial framework unveils how processes of land valuation and dispossession negatively target Indigenous, Mexican American, and other non-White residents. Nathan McClintock (2018) argues that contemporary urban agriculture in the United States is "entangled in racial-capitalist/settler-colonial logics of Othering and dispossession" (p. 6). The structural continuities of settler colonialism are especially apparent in scholarship examining how revitalization unfolds in declining cities. Sara Safransky (2014) analyzes the settler colonial logic operating through popular presentations of Detroit as "empty" or "vacant" and how the rhetoric of "productive use" is used to justify reallocating vacant land to private developers and outsiders, as part of larger-scale plans for gentrification in the city. Jessi Quizar (2019) argues that Black Detroiters are structurally similar to Indigenous people insofar as the land they occupy is more valued than they are as potential laborers. Jean-Paul D. Addie and James C. Fraser (2019) describe redevelopment efforts in Cincinnati as infused with racialized, settler-colonial dynamics. These investigations are promising, however to this point most scholarship doesn't account for the centrality of racialization in these processes, and those that do perform an algebraic substitution of Black and Indigene in their use of settler colonial theory (see Quizar 2019 for exception). This approach risks further silencing Indigenous struggles against colonialism and undervalues the tradition of domestic colonization and its advancements over time (see Pinderhughes 2011).

Analytic Framework: Binocular Colonial Lens

Our use of domestic and settler colonialisms as an analytic framework for re-examining the myriad of urban processes that have shaped declining Rust Belt cities presupposes: 1) settler colonialism is an ongoing process that structures harmful asymmetrical relations between different social groups; 2) that racialization is a process of othering and dehumanization deployed against various groups of people to aid forms of domination, and for some groups concentrated in ghettoized geographic spaces, racialized oppression is so ubiquitous their social location can be described as domestically colonized; and 3) that race and space (land, now property) are intricately linked in settler colonial, domestic colonial, and urban change processes.

First, the United States is paradigmatically a settler colonial society. Its brand of colonialism continues in numerous locations, with a variety of racial mechanics and distinct histories (Bhandar 2018). From the ongoing colonization of Hawaii to the domestic evolution of Indigenous Africans imported as chattel slaves (Kelley 2017), to the movement west of European pioneers, examples abound of "taming the wild frontier" and erasing Indigenous populations, often via physical elimination like war and genocide. But erasure is/was not only achieved by killing Native people, but also by removing the obstacle their presence poses for settlement and territorial expansion, such as through spatial sequestration (containment on reservations, ghettoization) and cultural assimilation (Indian schools, White adoption) (Madley 2016). Brenna Bhandar (2018) describes an historical example wherein Natives could qualify for individual rights to land like White settlers if they lived in

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a nuclear family, cultivated land and produced crops, and gave up traditional cultural practices and ways of living. These forms of erasure have been consistent features of settler societies where acquisition and control over land is paramount (Bhandar 2018; Madley 2016).

Colonization is not just an historical event in the United States: it is ongoing in the practices that exploit, erase, and toxify vulnerable communities (Veracini 2013; Whyte 2018), and persists ideologically, such as in the views of planning professionals (Barry and Agyeman, 2020) and more privileged in-movers to disinvested/racialized spaces (Herbert 2021). The *logic* of settler colonialism functions in the politicized erasure of racialized populations deemed superfluous, threatening, or in the way, and is deployed to aid the reallocation/consolidation of resources and space to bolster and/or appease dominant populations who are engaged in the production of settler futurities (Barry and Agyeman, 2020; Dotson 2018). It is this logic that we can trace through its varied manifestations and adaptations as an organizing structure that continues to be impactful today.

Second, racialization is a central tool in the settler colonial project and is integral to the racial structure of the contemporary United States (McKay et al., 2020). Racialization—as a demarcation of inferiority to justify and carry out exploitative, oppressive, and violent practices—does not just happen in relation to phenotypical difference. Historically, White Europeans[2] and some immigrant groups in America were racialized (Brodkin 1998; see also La Chapelle 2007 on the racialized subjugation of very poor White "Oakies" in California), and conversely, people of color can also occupy the structural position of settlers (Pulido 2018; Dotson 2018). Because our contemporary American milieu is an evolving complex of racial dynamics, "(s)ettler colonialism should be seen as a system of power relations that simultaneously but separately engulfs both indigenous and exogenous subalterns," (Veracini 2015, p. 47).

As a structure, settler colonialism is not reducible to White/Native relations or interactions. Native, arrivant (people forced *to* the Americas) (Byrd 2011), and settler are all particular positionalities within U.S. settler society. At certain historical moments, in specific spaces, racialized/subordinated groups participate in various ways. There is clear historical evidence of Mexicans and Chicana/os as both colonized and colonizers (Pulido 2018). Cherokee Natives and some other Nations owned Black slaves—participating in settler society in a way that signaled their "civility" (Glenn 2015; Pulido 2018). This does not, however, mean that one can simply swap "Black" (or other groups) for "Indigenous" in identifying settler colonial structures in contemporary urban contexts. Instead, we build on domestic colonization theories to articulate how the machinations of the settler state and settler society can forcibly shape racialized people's survival and flourishing with structurally congruent tools and techniques.

Domestic colonization comprises a longstanding yet analytically plural body of scholarship. For decades scholars have been developing the anticolonialism of civil rights internationalists, arguing that various racialized communities—particularly those with roots as formerly enslaved Africans in the Western Hemisphere—have been and are subject to different and ongoing forms of colonization, despite the facade of legal universalism in places like the United States (e.g. post-1965 Civil Rights Act). Scholars have analyzed, for example, the different ways colonialisms impact Black Americans (Allen 2005, 1969; Blauner 1969); the complex, often macho, history of the idea of an internal colony for Blacks and Chicanos/as (Gutiérrez 2004); English conquests of Celtic peoples (Hechter 1975); and militarized forms of control exercised against Filipinos (Rodriguez 2010). These theories have developed over time, accounting for changing conditions for Black and Latinx Americans, class and spatial dynamics of racialized populations, and different eras of domestic colonialism (Pinderhughes 2011).[3] Recent scholarship uses this framework for understanding race, the state, policing, and even shrinking cities (Silverman 2020;

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Steinmetz et al., 2017; Wall 2022). Today, a multitude of geographically-based patterns of subordination and oppression—evident in ongoing segregation, disinvestment and organized abandonment, and inequalities in education, wealth, health, and incarceration rates—undermine Black, Latinx, and many other racialized communities' well-being and subjects them to "group differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (Gilmore 2007, p. 28).

Third, scholars from various disciplines have noted the interconnections of race, space/land, and property (Bhandar 2018; Dantzler 2021; Dorries et al., 2019; LaFleur 2020; Rucks-Ahidiana 2021; Safransky 2017). The process of racialization is intertwined with the creation of different forms of property, the valuation of space/land, and ideals about legitimate ways of using and relating to property. In the United States, for example, the racialization of Black bodies was central to their treatment as property for the purpose of exploitation and capital accumulation. The racialization of Indigenous Americans portrays their relationships/claims to land as null and justifies imposing the private property model, enabling the U.S. government to sever their relationships to land, "legally" expand U.S. territory, and shift it into the hands of private owners to settle (McKay et al., 2020). The interconnection of race, land, and property control is also visible in the systemic and systematic use of rape to terrorize and control, with different yet overlapping dynamics on both the frontier and plantation (Davis 1972; Deer 2015).

While scholars have foregrounded the control and exploitation of land as paramount for settler colonization, chattel slavery and forced labor were required to extract value from that land to produce vast wealth and promote capital accumulation in the United States (Glenn 2015). Robin D. G. Kelley (2017) wrestles with how Cedric Robinson's work on racial capitalism expands our understanding of settler colonization, which we incorporate by recognizing how the fungibility of Black bodies in the United States reflects that "settler colonialism's response to undesirable exogenous others has often swung (and still does) between the poles of 'elimination' and coercive 'exploitation'" (Glenn 2015, p. 60). Rinaldo Walcott (2014) recognizes the entanglements of domestic and settler colonial legacies, calling for further attention to "the conditions and ideas of the plantation, the reservation, the ghetto, and neo colonial dispossession, revealing the particular euphemisms of those discursive and violent material constructions, but also their linked and shared realities as the result of the logic and practice of anti-Blackness and thus a wider reach of coloniality" (p. 100). James Fenelon (2016) and Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2015) recommend combining different theories to more accurately track the complexity of how colonialism continues to shape contemporary social relations; and Peter Kent-Stoll (2020) advocates integrating colonial frameworks into our analyses of contemporary gentrification.

In this article, we build a view of urban processes in segregated Rust Belt cities through the combined lenses of settler and domestic colonial theories. Like binocular vision, this approach expands the breadth of our disciplinary fields of vision and sharpens the depth of our historical perception. We superimpose analytical categories devised to elucidate the practices of erasure that are deployed throughout colonized communities and focus them on phenomena associated with urban decline and revitalization. Doing so, we argue, more accurately describes and explanatorily coheres policies and practices that abide the logics of colonialism. Put another way, we propose superimposing shared conceptual descriptions and theoretical explanations to break the camouflage of an adaptive yet consistent set of exploitative and eliminative structural relations. Overlapping forms of coloniality illuminates connections across similar phenomena, such that a broad spectrum of policies and practices come into focus more coherently across disparate levels of scholarly analysis and historical eras. The "heterogeneity of different colonial formations" (Wolfe 1999, p. 2) shows continuously reproductive and evolving material and discursive social practices rather than discrete events that culminate in definite ends.

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Using settler colonialism to understand urban changes in highly racialized, disinvested Rust Belt spaces takes as a starting point that many Black Americans frequently occupy the socio-structural positions of colonized people, not that Black Americans' experience can be substituted for Indigenous Americans' experience; and that settler colonialism continues to structure land and property relations for Indigenous Americans, other racialized groups, and White settler society.

The Raced Space of the U.S. Rust Belt

Dominant urban frameworks presume conditions of growth (like the Chicago School's ecological models or Logan and Molotch's (1987) political-economy of the growth machine). Scholarship building on these traditions has rigorously researched and explained segregation, the rise of the suburbs, and the harms of urban renewal projects in the twentieth century. Scholarship also developed to explain "back to the city" movements and gentrification in the late twentieth century in many large growing coastal cities like New York, Boston, and San Francisco. But during this time and since, many Rust Belt cities did not stabilize or rebound, instead continuing to lose population (Mallach 2018).

Urban decline or "shrinkage" is a global phenomenon, but only since the mid-2000s has decline become "a new master framework" (Haase et al., 2014, p. 1520). Cities across predominately the Midwestern and Northeastern U.S. Rust Belt have suffered population decline associated with deindustrialization, suburbanization, and racism (Sugrue 1996), creating problems such as under-funded municipalities; high crime, jobless, and poverty rates; low property values; vacant, deteriorated built environments; and racially segregated spaces (Haase et al., 2014; Massey and Denton, 1993). Examples of shrinking cities include Detroit, Buffalo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Baltimore, and Philadelphia; many such cities have experienced population loss upwards of 20-30% (Hollander et al., 2009).

Attending to this "new master framework," scholars are increasingly noting ways in which theories garnered from growing cities may not easily translate to the context of decline. Growth and decline are not inverse processes: the built environment is durable and not easily "unbuilt". Rather, decline is spotty and uneven, as resources are extracted and residents with economic means strategize departure within a racialized legal and institutional framework, creating urban "ghettos"—segregated spaces of concentrated disadvantage and deterioration (Massey and Denton, 1993; Sugrue 1996; Wilson 1987). Attending to these conditions, scholars recently question the applicability of gentrification (Tighe and Ganning, 2016), instigators of displacement (Akers and Seymour, 2022), or possible trajectories of change (Hackworth 2021; Herbert 2021; Mallach 2018) for Rust Belt cities.

Notably, Jason Hackworth (2021) explains why declining Rust Belt cities largely haven't experienced gentrification like many Northeast coastal cities. He argues that the relative size of the Black population, housing supply/vacancy rates, and different housing stock characteristics have left cities like Cleveland and Detroit un-gentrified, while cities like Boston or New York have experienced significant gentrification and a rebound of the overall population size. Race, more than any other factor, explains the presence and persistence of extreme land abandonment in U.S. cities (Hackworth 2018). Urban scholarship needs a framework that can comprehensively account for the past processes and current conditions that define Rust Belt cities, including those with neighborhoods recently labeled as "gentrifying". Here we discuss some of the key features of declining cities that theories of urban change must account for to be descriptively and explanatorily adept.

Scholarship recognizes that deteriorated neighborhoods are ripe for gentrification due to the rent-gap and possibility for profit from decay (e.g. Smith 1996; Zukin 1987). But in Rust Belt cities, the co-occurrence of Black residents, disinvestment, and extreme land

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abandonment are more widespread and severe now (Mallach 2018) than in neighborhoods that early gentrification scholars viewed as the "frontier of profitable investment" in the late twentieth century (Smith 1996). Indeed, Alan Mallach explains that hypervacancy (20% or more) indicates that market conditions have deteriorated so much that vacant properties are more likely to be abandoned than reused (2018, p. 11).

Only in the past two to three decades has hypervacancy come to define many Rust Belt neighborhoods (Mallach 2018). Combined with extremely under-resourced local governments, these conditions give rise to widespread informal/non-standard uses of property that technically violate property laws (Becher 2014; Herbert 2021; Kinder 2016; Safransky 2017). Abundant deteriorated and abandoned property in these cities means that revitalization efforts must especially focus on transforming these signs of disorder so potential newcomers and investors will view urban property as a safe investment (Akers 2013). Informal property relations like squatting, scrapping, or uses of vacant lots by residents must be suppressed and property laws demonstrably upheld so that property rights and control are easily transferred to new legal owners (Herbert 2021).

High vacancy rates in declining cities may also enable newcomers to move in without necessarily pushing anyone else out (Tighe and Ganning, 2016). In gentrification research, direct-economic displacement—wherein various economic pressures force longtime residents out of their homes—is known as the "classic" type of displacement (Davidson 2008). Scholars have criticized others' narrow focus on this type (Davidson 2008; Elliott-Cooper et al., 2020) and much debate has centered on the extent to which displacement is a consequence of gentrification (Brown-Saracino 2017; Freeman 2005; Wyly et al., 2010); whether displacement precedes or follows gentrification (Billingham 2017); and the agents of displacement (e.g. the state, developers, residents; Davidson 2008). Furthermore, the term "displacement" is used to represent a range of harms associated with gentrification, from forced spatial movement, to loss of political power (political displacement, Hyra 2015), to residents who no longer feel "at home" in their neighborhoods (cultural displacement, Elliott 2018; Hyra 2015). And in declining cities, with room to accommodate rising population, the impacts of "gentrification" may manifest differently for longtime residents. We posit that existing scholarship may be focusing too narrowly on various types of "displacement" as negative consequences of gentrification, and in doing so fails to identify other harms for longtime residents.

Relatedly, the displacement of racial or ethnic minorities from a neighborhood due to gentrification has largely been conceptualized as "epiphenomenal" to economic, cultural, or political changes (Fallon 2021). Attention to the racial complexities of gentrification has been growing, however. Research shows that predominately Black neighborhoods are slow to gentrify (Hwang and Sampson, 2014; Sampson and Sharkey, 2008; Wilson and Grammenos, 2005). White gentrifiers often express the desire to live in racially mixed neighborhoods (Brown-Saracino 2009; Hyra 2017), but experiments show that White respondents desire to be the majority and consistently view Black neighbors as least desirable (Charles 2000). These studies indicate that in highly segregated cities of the Rust Belt, our theories must comprehensively account for these ongoing racialized histories.

Zawadi Rucks-Ahidiana (2021) recently described gentrification as a process of racial capitalism, whereby the valuation of different neighborhoods by different racial groups explains the lack of gentrification in primarily Black neighborhoods, but also cases of middle-class Black gentrification in places like Harlem (Hwang and Sampson, 2014; Taylor 2002). However, she articulates that what hasn't yet been sufficiently explained is how gentrification stakeholders come to value commonly devalued neighborhoods—particularly Black spaces (Rucks-Ahidiana 2021). We suggest that most scholarship has yet to sufficiently articulate how racialized displacement (or erasure) can function to *promote* gentrification by shifting the racialized valuation of space, not just be an unfortunate side-effect, especially in

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cities with enduring patterns of segregation (for exceptions, see Addie and Fraser, 2019; Hightower and Fraser, 2020).

In sum, by failing to account for the history of continued decline and the unique conditions produced over the last several decades, scholarship has yet to explain how segregated, hypervacant, disinvested neighborhoods of the Rust Belt come to be viewed as culturally or economically attractive to investors or gentrifiers. Not only do property laws need to be enforced to create investment opportunities and to reliably transfer control over urban land to new residents or investors, but poor racialized residents, who are also viewed as an undesirable neighborhood attribute and signs of a risky investment landscape (Bonam et al., 2016; Hwang and Sampson, 2014; Rucks-Ahidiana 2021; Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004) must be removed (or neutralized) as well (Addie and Fraser, 2019; Hightower and Fraser, 2020).

We argue that using a binocular colonial lens helps us see the way that the racialized space of declining cities has been produced over time, is prepared for future gentrification, and how these spaces are made valuable by removing impediments to economic investment and spatial expansion. This lens connects past urban processes like White flight and urban renewal with contemporary efforts at revitalization, by showing how settler colonial logics suffuse and organize past and present efforts to control racialized populations and space, in order to promote the advancement of settler society. Racialized groups who are "in the way" of these processes are targeted by contemporary forms of erasure, such as ghettoization and spatial sequestration; extraction and exploitation; incarceration; and/or dispossession and displacement. Albeit in more muted and insidious ways over time (as legal and cultural opposition to violence inflicted by the colonial state and settler society has grown), these tools all expose domestically colonized groups to forces that threaten life.[4]

Seeing through a Binocular Colonial Lens in Detroit

In this section, we illustrate the utility of this binocular colonial lens for understanding how Detroit has changed over time, how revitalization efforts in the city are infused with settler colonial logics, and how using this lens helps us link the harms of urban changes like gentrification with other areas of concern to social scientists. We use Detroit as a case because this binocular lens emerged from our conceptual efforts to understand revitalization in the city, a task at which gentrification theories failed. Detroit's conditions are also generalizable: despite its reputation, it is not unique, but rather an illustrative case of a declining Rust Belt city (Sugrue 1996). Here, we highlight how mechanisms of erasure—including containment, exploitation, displacement, dispossession, and assimilation—have and continue to promote the advancement of settler society. Because of the spatial nature of urban scholarship and the centrality of land for settler colonization, this case study focuses on settler colonial logics, and recognizes the way these logics impact racialized groups who inherit the socio-structural position of domestically colonized.

From Ghettos to Suburbia

The central "urban problem" in U.S. scholarship is overwhelmingly the Black ghetto (King 2019) and so we start this re-viewing of moments in Detroit's history from this point.[5] With the second wave of the Great Migration (1941-1960) the percentage of Black residents in Detroit nearly tripled (U.S. Census 2020) during the era of domestic colonialism Charles Pinderhughes calls the "colonial ghetto" (2011, p. 252). Black residents were forced into over-crowded enclaves with poor quality housing by an array of laws, policies, and practices including restrictive covenants, federally-sanctioned mortgage discrimination, zoning laws, subprime lending, racist harassment by residents, and blockbusting by realtors

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(Hackworth 2018; Sugrue 1996). Valued as a cheap labor force, Black Detroiters were exploited and contained in the adjacent neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley on the near East Side of Downtown: Detroit's first Black ghettos.

Detroit's population decline began in the 1950s as multiple intersecting forces contributed to the growth of the suburbs, the shift of manufacturing jobs out of the city, and the movement out of White residents (and others) with capital (Sugrue 1996). Through the 1950s and 1960s, urban renewal efforts in Detroit specifically targeted Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, decimating them to build the residential development Lafayette Park and the Chrysler Expressway to lure White suburbanites to downtown (Teaford 2000). Freeway construction was "welcomed as a handy devise for razing slums," (Mowitz and Wright, 1962, p. 405). Black leaders at the time repeated James Baldwin's phrase that "urban renewal means Negro removal" (Dillard 2007, p. 260): the land was wanted for settler society and removing existing residents was justified in the name of "progress". Lacking any sort of collective rights as a community, urban renewal fractured social bonds and neighborhood ties as residents were forcibly displaced (Fullilove 2004). Many residents and businesses relocated to Virginia Park—another crowded and deteriorated Black neighborhood on Detroit's West Side.

Through the 1960s and 1970s, conditions for urban minorities in the United States continued to worsen. Ramón A. Gutiérrez (2004) argues that it was precisely these brutal environments that informed the development of and widespread attention to theories of domestic colonization during this time. Urban uprisings across the country reflected frustration and anger with these conditions. During the summer of 1967, the Detroit Rebellion began at 14th and Clairmont, in Virginia Park. This event stimulated more White exodus from the city of Detroit, and the growth of the suburbs.

Settler colonialism scholar Lorenzo Veracini (2012) argues that suburbanization reflects white settler society's impetus to conquer undeveloped territory beyond the city. With government backing, Veracini argues, White suburbanites aimed to start a new world as sovereign settlers (having localized municipal control). By settling the suburbs, White residents freed themselves from what they perceived as dangerous urban problems at that time: poor residents of color and increasingly volatile conditions post-riots. Suburbia arose in tandem with intentional disinvestment of cities like Detroit.

Depths of Decline: Creating the Vacant City

Decades later, entire cities like Detroit are racially segregated ghettos (Massey and Denton, 1993): products of organized abandonment that relegate people of color to spaces of concentrated disadvantage and subject them to forces that threaten life (Gilmore 2007). This era of the "neo-colonial ghetto" reflects sharpening Black class divides and the expanding Black underclass (Pinderhughes 2011, p. 252). Resource extraction and dispossession defined the depths of Detroit's decline, and even metro leadership viewed the city through a colonial lens. The commissioner of neighboring Oakland County, L. Brooks Patterson, told *The New Yorker* that the way to solve the city's financial problems was to "turn Detroit into an Indian reservation, where we herd all the Indians into the city, build a fence around it, and then throw in the blankets and corn" (Williams 2014).

Racialized property dispossession has stimulated further exodus from Detroit. Homeownership rates in Detroit were historically very high, but subprime mortgage lending practices targeted poor Black homeowners in cities like Detroit: a form of exploitation through predatory inclusion (Taylor 2019). The U.S. federal government indicted Detroit-area company Quicken Loans (owned by billionaire Dan Gilbert) for violating the False Claims Act, alleging the use of fraudulent actions to approve federally backed

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mortgages from 2007-2011 (Department of Justice 2015). Nationwide, property values plummeted during this time, leaving homeowners underwater on their mortgages. This crisis hit Detroit hard: it lost 25% of its population from 2000-2010 (U.S. Census 2020). More specifically, Eric Seymour and Joshua Akers (2022) find that due to subprime mortgages, high poverty and property tax rates, and rampant over-assessments, mortgage and tax foreclosures have displaced an estimated 193,900 Detroiters since 2005, which they call "decline-induced displacement" (p. 8).

By 2010, Detroit was over 82% Black while the counties in the surrounding metro area were all at least 77% White (U.S. Census 2020). Conditions varied (and still do) across Detroit. With widespread vacancy and constrained government resources, local authorities cannot keep all the vacant land or abandoned buildings maintained or boarded up. Some entire blocks have been cleared of deteriorated structures and are known as "urban prairies," overrun by grass and weeds. In other neighborhoods, occupied and structurally intact houses are few and far between. Lack of oversight by authorities has contributed to varied informal uses of land and buildings, as poor residents squat in houses and collect scrap metal from abandoned buildings to sell for income (Herbert 2021). Longtime residents take over lots for gardening, yard space, or parking (Herbert 2021; Kinder 2016). Residents complain that police fail to respond to 911 calls and that city government is dysfunctional and corrupt (Herbert 2021).

Perceived lawlessness and vacancy contributed to Detroit's reputation as the (mid) western frontier, bolstered by media proclaiming that Detroit is "America's most dangerous" (Fisher 2015) and a "Wild City" (Tillon 2011). The appointment of an Emergency Manager in 2013 coincided with Detroit's bankruptcy. Racialized, settler colonial logics were "at work in Michigan's decisions to use its Emergency Manager law almost exclusively to displace the democratic structure of majority Black cities," (Stanley 2016, p. 26). An external governing force was needed to tame the city and bring progress to Detroit.

It is against this backdrop of perceived lawlessness, dysfunction, and vacancy that the Motor City is re-envisioned. Nate Millington (2013) finds that visual representations of Detroit's decline focused on architectural ruins and "nature" retaking the city, promoting a "wilderness ethic" that writes existing residents out of collective narratives. The settler colonial imaginary conceptually erases what is materially in the way (Barry and Agyeman, 2020)—the more than 600,000 residents who comprise community groups, church congregations, schools, businesses, restaurants, art venues, etc. Whereas Detroit was once valorized as the Arsenal of Democracy—an industrial city with a robust labor force—now "Black labor is less useful to the interests of white capital than the land that Black people occupy" (Quizar 2019, p. 128). With deindustrialization, spatially sequestered Black communities (neo-colonies) have become a "surplus population" targeted by a range of eliminatory practices similar to Native Americans (Glenn 2015; Pinderhughes 2011).

"Gentrification"

Foundational theories of gentrification identify economic and cultural stimulators, often orchestrated in part by government via public-private partnerships, tax breaks, or regulatory changes. Disinvested urban areas provide inexpensive housing with solid investment potential, and the cultural draw of diverse communities, unique architecture, and dense walkable neighborhoods (Zukin 1987). But, as Hackworth (2021) notes, declining Rust Belt cities are *too* Black for White residents' comfort, are predominately single-family homes in sprawling cities built for cars, and are so vacant that neighbors are often spread apart from each other, detracting from their density and walkability. The valuation of

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property/space is infused with racism, and so deteriorated Black neighborhoods are viewed as unsafe and risky investments (Rucks-Ahidiana 2021). With conditions like these, how then does a city shift from a space that, for decades, has been largely viewed as undesirable by investors, developers, or gentrifiers?

Encouraging revitalization and forms of investment requires creating economic and cultural draws to a city. Undesirable or risky elements must be quelled: its lawlessness, majority Black and poor residents, and practices that transgress property rights (like squatting and scrapping). Identifying settler colonial dynamics in Vancouver, BC, Nicholas K. Blomley (2004) writes:

> The poor are themselves imagined as causal agents of decline—a decayed built landscape and damaged bodies are locked together. The visual decay of the landscape—the boarded-up buildings, the disorder of the street, the pervasiveness of 'lowest and worst use'—are both cause and effect of the feral population of the 'dazed, drugged, and drunk.' Ipso facto, the removal of this population is a pre- condition for neighborhood improvement (p. 127).

Removing racialized communities from urban spaces is a tactic to promote gentrification. Mirroring the eliminative logic guiding the removal of Indigenous people from their land, these are not just the outcome of "natural" market or cultural forces, but rather specific ends envisioned by government, other powerful entities, or developers (in Cincinnati, see Addie and Fraser, 2019; in Nashville, see Hightower and Fraser, 2020).

Settler colonization is a government led process: the U.S. government was responsible for removing Indigenous claims to territory via treaty and allotment, moving land into the hands of settlers via the creation and transfer of private property (see the Homestead Act (1862) and the Dawes Act (1887)). Starting with the subprime mortgage boom in Detroit, we see new government policies and programs that function to dispossess longtime, marginalized residents of their property and shift that property into the hands of new residents or investors (Herbert 2021; Seymour and Akers, 2022*)*. New laws in Detroit criminalize squatting and scrapping to reassert control over the lawlessness of the city and demonstrate government's commitments to private property (Herbert 2021). Tax reversion forces renters and homeowners out of their houses (Seymour and Akers, 2022). New ordinances expand avenues for purchasing land in the city (Herbert 2021; Safransky 2014). Narratives of productive use justify moving vacant land, buildings, and houses into the hands of new private owners (Safransky 2014), irrespective of abundant socially productive informal uses of property by longtime residents (Herbert 2018; Kinder 2016). Vulnerable Detroit residents who manage to remain struggle to access necessities: from 2014-2016 the local government shut off water to about 47% of the city's residential accounts (Kurth 2017).

Rather than being drawn to its diversity and walkability, cities like Detroit offer the cultural draw of a new vision of urban life, where newcomers feel they can embrace their pioneer roots—symbolic of what it means to be American (Glenn 2015)—by living off the land, braving the midwestern frontier, and bringing progress to the city (Herbert 2021). Media reflects and promotes this cultural draw by framing Detroit as "A new American frontier" (Renn 2011) that "We can homestead… back to recovery" (Blakeman 2016). The persistence of a settler ideology is entangled with White supremacy (Baldwin 2012), and manifests in how newcomers, aided by these policies, deny the past and present: arriving in Detroit to tame the urban frontier and carry out their vision for the future (Herbert 2021; Safransky 2014).

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More recently, there are signs of gentrification in select neighborhoods like Midtown, Corktown, or Downtown (Moehlman and Robins-Somerville, 2016). Gentrification scholarship has tended to focus on *displacement* as a potential negative outcome or consequence for longtime residents. If we view displacement through a settler colonial lens and recall the ways domestically colonized are subjected, we see that many instances link together to form patterned practices that function eliminatively. That is, displacement implies "You can't stay *here*," whereas the implication of erasure is "You can't stay. Period." (See Veracini 2015).

Contrasting gentrification scholarship, Seymour and Akers' (2022) concept of "decline-induced displacement" highlights how legal structures continue to dispossess racialized residents and sever their place-based ties and control over land. Not only are tax and mortgage foreclosures a massive wealth reduction for Black Americans achieved through property dispossession, but for poor residents in cities like Detroit, there often aren't less expensive areas to be displaced *to*. There are few other cities where very poor residents can own homes for a few hundred to a few thousand dollars: cities like Detroit tend to be rock bottom for housing prices (Murray and Schuetz, 2018). Similarly, when longtime residents and families are forced out of the homes they are squatting, there are few other places where this informal mode of sustained sheltering can take place—only other cities like Detroit with abundant vacant, devalued property and lax municipal regulation (Herbert 2018). Such residents may have nowhere else to go, rendering them without access to property. Repeating a property "truism," Jeremy Waldron (1991) writes: "Everything that is done has to be done somewhere. No one is free to perform an action unless there is somewhere he is free to perform it" (p. 296). Settler colonial erasure rests in part on this link: "Land is life—or, at least, land is necessary for life. Thus, contests for land can be—indeed, often are—contests for life," (Wolfe 2006, p. 387).

Some gentrification scholars have focused on cultural displacement—the idea that with neighborhood change, longtime residents feel out of place and like the community isn't theirs anymore (Elliott 2018). But even here the term "displacement" is a misnomer. Even when longtime residents are able to remain (more possible in cities with high vacancy rates), a kind of "neighborhood erasure" can occur, when a community loses the agency, freedom, and security to "make place" (Stabrowski 2014; see also Barry and Agyeman, 2020). For example, tactical urbanism by White newcomers is valorized as saving Detroit, while similar practices by Black longtime residents are denigrated or ignored (Berglund 2019; Herbert 2021). Elements of local culture may be erased—often an effort to promote the dominance of White culture (Anderson 2015). Detroit's historically Black Cass Corridor was rebranded Midtown as part of revitalization efforts in the Downtown area (Elliott 2018; Herbert and Orne, 2021) and now boasts some of the highest rents in the city. Rebranding erases the history and culture that defined Cass Corridor in the past, especially as longtime residents are increasingly experiencing gentrification-induced economic displacement from this neighborhood (Mah 2021). Since 2010, Quicken Loans CEO Dan Gilbert has been buying up cheap high rises in Downtown, Corktown, and Midtown through his many companies, moved Quicken headquarters Downtown, and now owns over 100 properties (Feloni 2018). Activists charge Quicken with creating a "White island" in the majority Black city (Feloni 2018), suggesting that the creation of White spaces from which longtime residents are excluded may be a heightened problem in cities that are revitalizing post-decline.

Residents displaced via gentrification often find themselves pushed out toward less desirable areas of a city, and in many regions, this has crept into older, inner-ring suburbs (where Black residents are perceived and treated as outsiders) (Murphy 2012). But in highly segregated cities like Detroit, residents of color often face a wall of privilege and Whiteness at the border (Epps et al., 2014). Suburban residents and authorities are commonly hostile to

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Detroit and its residents (Farley et al., 2000; Kornberg 2016). For example, Grosse Pointe, a wealthy suburb on Detroit's north-eastern side, was recently under fire for creating a roadblock that impeded two-way traffic flow and signaled that Detroiters aren't welcome (Hall 2019). Finding space to live beyond the boundaries of the city may be economically impossible for many Detroiters; be difficult due to the discriminatory practices of landlords (Rosenblatt and Cossyleon, 2018); and/or put residents of color at risk of other structural forms of racism that threaten well-being and survival in the United States.

Topical Breadth

In pointing out the tendency to study gentrification as a narrow, neighborhood-level phenomenon, Japonica Brown-Saracino (2017) advocates that urban scholars establish more robust connections with other manifestations of inequality. By integrating colonial theories, we can see that the settler colonial logic that dispossesses domestically-colonized residents of their land/property is also operative in, for example, environmental (in)justices, or health disparities, or mass incarceration and policing (Steinmetz et al., 2017). For example, residents of color are increasingly targeted by police in gentrifying neighborhoods, putting them at heightened risk of a form of erasure—containment (incarceration) (Lanfear et al., 2018). In Detroit, just beyond 8 Mile Road in the suburb of Eastpointe, Blacks have a higher incidence of traffic stops resulting in arrests than Whites despite being a numerical minority (Bates and Fasenfest, 2005). Perhaps more generally, or abstractly, when Black residents enter White spaces, they are frequently targeted with strategies of erasure.

Recognition of ongoing settler colonialism increasingly informs scholarship on environmental degradation (Whyte 2018) and can help us understand why some urban communities are threatened with environmental hazards that harm health. Lead poisoning rates from Flint, Michigan's contaminated water supply are highest among residents of color (Liévanos et al., 2021), functioning as an eliminative force that is toxifying domestically colonized communities for generations. (Researchers studying Detroit found that lead exposure can cause changes to DNA that are heritable through several generations (Williams 2016)). Malini Ranganathan (2016) argues Flint's poisoning is intertwined with the racialized making and taking of property, conceivably shaping the dynamics of future redevelopment efforts in these neighborhoods.

Racialized populations in the United States (with or without legal recognition of their marginalized status as colonized people) are over-represented in measures of erasure in contemporary life: displacement (such as eviction), dispossession (foreclosure), containment (detention, incarceration, ghettoization), extraction (exploitation), or assimilation. A binocular lens brings into focus the field of racialized colonial violence operative in gentrification and urban change, which are also present in arenas such as policing, environment, or health. As Patrick Wolfe (2006) explains, "Today in the U.S., the blatant racial zoning of large cities and the penal system suggests that, once colonized people outlive their utility, settler societies can fall back on the repertoire of strategies (in this case, spatial sequestration) whereby they have also dealt with the native surplus" (p. 404).

Discussion and Conclusion

In this article, we've proposed a binocular colonial lens which responds to recent attention to urban decline as a new master framework. The binocular colonial lens advances urban theory by allowing us to more accurately explain and represent the forces of change shaping segregated, declining Rust Belt cities—revealing the myriad of processes scholars refer to as ghettoization, urban renewal, suburbanization, or gentrification as reified moments in ongoing colonization. Without conflating racialized, longtime Detroiters with Indigenous

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Natives in the area (Anishinaabe tribes), we can identify structural congruities wherein poor, segregated communities of color in the United States—domestically colonized populations—can be subject to numerous forms of erasure at the behest of the settler state and toward the advancement of settler society. Black and Indigenous people's experiences in the United States continue to be shaped by relations of conquest (King 2019).

There are two other important takeaways that we have outlined in this article. First, while much urban scholarship—particularly focused on gentrification—has used the language and concepts of colonialism, these works stop short of fully articulating the structural logics at play. That is, the "(re)settlement" of declining cities like Detroit is linked to classically conceived gentrification but cannot be reduced to it. Shifting analytic lenses, then, reveals that displacement can be a mechanism of erasure: the removal of racialized communities from neighborhoods slated for or undergoing gentrification is not simply an unfortunate "downside" to urban upgrading but rather is a congruent strategy in a settler colonial society. Second, a binocular colonial lens allows us to connect these urban phenomena with broader patterns of inequality across multiple registers. Erasure manifests in many forms. For people of color in the United States, the risk of erasure does not end by moving out of a gentrifying neighborhood: they are disproportionately threatened with incarceration, poverty, violence, or the introduction of drugs or environmental toxins into communities.

Some urban scholars are wary of what they view as increasingly uncritical approaches to studying gentrification (Davidson 2008; Lees 2000; Slater 2006; Wacquant 2008), where researchers (often occupying the structural position of gentrifiers) have shifted focus from the harmful aspects of these urban changes to studying the gentrifiers themselves, their lifestyles and cultural practices, or unique neighborhood characteristics, for example. We suggest that uncritical views of gentrification may be in part due to the temporal and topical narrowness in certain studies, which fail to connect the way that isolated, neighborhood-level manifestations of gentrification are part of broader changes involving territorial control, racialized erasure, and forced population movement.

Even where more traditional understandings of gentrification's displacement are evident, the concept of erasure is productive for expanding our purview of how these displacements harm residents. For example, research shows that upon moving out of gentrifying neighborhoods, vulnerable residents are much more likely to end up in neighborhoods with lower incomes, more crime, and poorer quality schools (Ding et al., 2016). Displacement to high-crime/poverty neighborhoods increases residents' susceptibility to forces that undermine well-being and threaten life. Eviction (a mechanism of displacement) increases poverty and can lead to homelessness (Desmond 2016), which threatens life and increases the risk for other modes of erasure like incarceration (Gowan 2002). Displacement requires a non-eliminative space in which to move, otherwise it is more accurately described as an accumulative process of erasure: a mechanism that threatens not just the spatial location or cultural comfort of residents, but their individual and community survival. Rather than debate whether displacement precedes or follows gentrification, a binocular colonial lens brings into focus how residents may be erased (displaced, sequestered, assimilated, etc.) as a precursor to enable gentrification to happen (by removing residents who are viewed as impediments to resettlement), or after gentrification pressures have arisen in a neighborhood.

However, we don't suggest that all instances of gentrification-induced displacement reflect eliminatory colonial logics: an economically stable person who is evicted so the apartment owner can renovate units and increase rents may be able to move to a nearby stable neighborhood, suffering only the costs and headache of moving and perhaps a smaller apartment and longer commute. At the same time, even an example like this suggests that discussions of "displacement" need to be contextualized in broader historical

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and socio-spatial dynamics to understand the impacts. And, it may be productive for scholarship to foreground that the political-economic priorities of the liberal-capitalist-settler state/society are operative—the drive to extract as much value as possible from land and to legitimize destabilizing residents toward that end (Bhandar 2018; Blomley 2004). We hope other scholars will pick up this lens and further investigate the extent to which colonial theories have descriptive and explanatory traction in other contexts, like in dense, high-cost cities like San Francisco, small revitalizing towns along New York's Hudson River, or neighborhoods where class and/or culture are more central axes of differentiation than race (see endnote 2).

Finally, what ideas we *use* to think ideas *with* matters (Haraway 2016): calling colonialism by its name is not simply a neutral descriptive claim but also a prescriptive argument for decolonial practice across the spectrum of eliminative policies and practices. Thus, we contend that recognizing the United States as a settler society provides more explanatory traction when mucking through the ongoing and evolving dynamics of race, displacement, and property. This traction can in turn increase collaborative resistance and emergent decolonial efforts, insofar as we satisfy the need for better and more just epistemically inclusive and agency-supporting practices (Dotson 2008). Without subsuming various struggles for survival and space in settler societies, we recognize that settler colonial processes operate across a multiplicity of racial mechanics and not only continue to threaten Indigenous people but also Black, Latinx, or any other social groups subjected to racialization and erasure. Thinking more broadly, this binocular colonial lens can advance scholarship aiming to move beyond the Black-White dyad often foregrounded in U.S. research (especially urban-focused), and acknowledge contemporary dynamics as inextricable from the legacy of settler colonization and the racialization of Indigenous people. By recognizing underlying similarities in colonial practices, researchers and organizers can build coalitions across heterogeneous struggles "on the way to decolonization" (Dotson 2018), without equating Indigenous struggles for sovereign recognition with other racial/ethnic struggles for inclusion in the liberal order (Steinman 2019). On the policy side, when we get to discussing "revitalization" we can then create coalitions organized around strategies to promote the survival and flourishing of communities threatened with erasure.

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Notes

[1] For important critiques of "gentrification is the new colonialism" discourse, see Quizar 2019 who interrogates settler colonialism in Detroit despite her initial unease with the idea.

[2] Bhandar (2018) examines the entangled valuation of people and land in seventeenth-century colonial England. While modern biological racism hadn't yet emerged, she explains that Irish and Jewish people's relationships to land were central to their dehumanization. Specifically, both groups failed to produce value through land: the Irish relied on subsistence agriculture and Jews were viewed as "wandering" and lacking geographical fixity. The history of dehumanization based on land relations for groups that are now categorized as "White" might inform scholarship investigating colonial dynamics of gentrification in contexts where class, religion, or culture are central axes of differentiation rather than phenotypic characteristics.

[3] Omi and Winant (2015) critique this legacy as one grounded in "nation-based" views of race, but don't address the conditions or experiences domestic colonization represents. Smith (2012) argues Omi and Winant fail to sufficiently engage with U.S. settler colonialism as anything but history, whereas recent scholarship aims to unsettle disconnected narratives of settler colonization-Indigenous erasure and capitalism-Black slavery (e.g., Kelley 2017). We point skeptics to Pinderhughes (2011) who formulates a theory of "neo" internal colonialism, grounded in Robert Allen's *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (1969) and his reflections (2005), that responds to some critiques of the domestic colonial tradition.

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[4] Other scholarship uses the term "erasure" (or "elimination") to discuss impacts of urban change and displacement, see for example Addie and Fraser, 2019; Blomley 2004; Dotson 2018; Safransky 2014; Stabrowski 2014.

[5] In contrast, King (2019) notes that Canadian scholarship primarily focuses on the problems Indigenous people face in cities. A more comprehensive analysis of Detroit's colonial history would consider both, perhaps starting with the arrival of French settlers in 1701 or the 1807 Treaty of Detroit that removed Anishinaabe tribes' claims to the land, in part to promote extractive timber and copper industries. It would also consider the federal Urban Indian Relocation program (1954) which encouraged Indigenous people to move to cities to promote assimilation, complexifying the dynamics of urban segregation and ghettoization, and ultimately subjecting Indigenous people to many similar obstacles as Black Detroiters.

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