# 1. Introduction: International Terrorism Meets Global Capitalism in the Mall

Headline after recent headline has been broadcasting the increase in terrorist attacks being launched in urban areas all over the world. Many of these attacks have targeted centrally-located businesses and commercial entities in metropolitan spaces, whether the Westgate Mall in Nairobi,[1] the public transport systems of London and Madrid,[2] hotels in Mumbai, Tunis, and Ouagadougou,[3] restaurants and cafés in Kampala, Copenhagen, and Sydney,[4] or, more recently, the Charlie Hebdo offices,[5] the Hyper Cacher supermarket,[6] and the Bataclan concert hall in Paris.[7] Urban terrain and populated central city spaces comprised of shopping centers, hotels, transport hubs, concert halls, cafes, theaters, and restaurants have become, in effect, "the battlegrounds of the future. And the urban siege, with its commando-style tactics and guerrilla infiltration of a big city's ebb and flow, is increasingly the tactic of choice for a wide range of adversaries."[8]

Terrorist attacks against urban commercial enterprises have become worryingly frequent, seemingly arbitrary, and increasingly international. With widespread availability and access to information and communication technologies, these incidences have become highly publicized through corporate news media networks and personal social media platforms, affecting people with a heightened fear of public spaces. As extremists engage in open urban warfare, official responses are complementary in their combative stances with an enhancement of the security apparatus and an entrenchment of surveillance structures. With the escalation of urban atrocities, there is a concomitant and intensified infiltration of the military-industrial complex into everyday public spaces and increasing representation of violence in the media and on both sides of the ideological divide. The standoff between terrorist crime and policing

progressively imbues global cities, and places of business, with increasingly visible hallmarks of war, including a perceptible surge in weapons, patrols, barricades, and city streets filled with masked gunmen on both the terror and anti-terror fronts—to say nothing of the many reactionary policies and incremental erosions of civil liberties that heighten the sense of urban conflict, fear, and fortressing. In many urban commercial spaces, capitalism and terrorism as the most powerful discursive forces of contemporary culture—the most mainstream and the most extreme—meet in increasingly militarized urban space.

During times of political and economic unrest, shopping centers and other retail businesses are often targeted as private spaces for the public enactment of political dissent and violence, such as when the suffragettes "protested against their lack of the vote by smashing shop windows" in Newcastle,[9] or when a variety of retail businesses became the targets of the 1948 Accra riots,[10] the 2007 Kenya riots,[11] and the 2011 England riots,[12] to name but a few occurrences. Shopping centers, malls, and retail spaces are common targets for all kinds of opponents, including spontaneous civil disobedience protests as well as more extreme premeditated attacks against people and property. Terrorist attacks against shopping malls, especially, have become an increasingly common occurrence. In the period between 1998 and 2006, there were over 60 shopping mall attacks in 21 countries,[13] and there are further warnings of increased threats in which shopping malls "are likely to feature in the attack plans of terrorist organisations in the future," since these spaces "afford the potential for mass fatalities and casualties."[14] Attacks against shopping malls have been motivated by a variety of ethnic, religious, political, and economic ideologies and perpetrated by a number of disparate actors all over the world, including Basque Fatherland and Freedom (ETA) attacks in Spain, Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) attacks in Turkey, Union of Revolutionary Writer attacks in Russia, People Against Gangsterism and Drugs attacks in South Africa, Maoist rebel attacks in Nepal, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) attacks in Colombia, and al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya.[15]

Specifically, for the purposes of this study, al-Shabaab's 2013 Westgate Mall attack is used as a contextual case study that allows for an interactive reading of the relationship between capitalism, globalization, and terrorism, and how these grand narratives relate to people's lives within everyday space. Since it is difficult to examine each of these disparate disciplines exhaustively, this study examines their intersections at a particular

meeting point: the shopping mall. From this vantage point, spatial, socioeconomic, and political implications of the mall's existence can be read against the history of urban commodity forms, both local to the Kenyan context, as well as globally. Because of the complexity involved in studying a commercial venue that is subject to so many interpretive paradigms, I do not purport to examine these issues uniformly, or progressively, nor entirely within the strict confines of their disciplines. Rather, through the lens of the shopping mall, unifying theoretical threads can be highlighted within the broad methodological understandings of cultural studies as underpinning contemporary everyday experience.[16]

Studying the shopping mall as a center of the contemporary urban experience is a truly multidisciplinary project. The concept and construct of the mall speaks to, and is spoken by, a variety of different academic disciplines, including marketing research, studies in psychology, cultural studies, media studies, architectural scholarship, and security studies, among other targeted disciplines such as demography, political geography, and urban planning. The analysis of a shopping mall is as multifaceted as the shopping mall itself, and, by turn, examines various elements related to the historical evolution of the mall, its relationship to society and consumption patterns, and its alignment with media and market research. The shopping mall, regardless of one's position on matters of consumption, is a key center of contemporary social life in many countries of the world, and has been successfully designed to attract attention—not always positive—to itself. Thus, the shopping mall locates key social and political tensions that oscillate between the quotidian and mundane and the spectacular and violent. The shopping mall, thus, becomes not only a site of cooperative consumption, but equally a site for the production of contestation.

A shopping mall's simultaneous role as an agent of global corporate capitalism, and yet as a place of everyday encounter, serves to localize many international tensions. The US Army, for example, uses al-Shabaab's Westgate Mall attack to make direct—yet global—connections to mitigate against similar hostilities should they occur in the United States, arguing that "although the Westgate Mall attack was a long way from the U.S. homeland, the methods on display during that attack provide lessons that can guide preparatory efforts and information collection to help prevent or respond to a similar event involving the Army community worldwide."[17] The concept of the shopping mall can be used as a constant reminder of

broader dynamics of global exchange, even as Westgate Mall is anchored to a specific locale. As such, this study is not solely about Westgate Mall and al-Shabaab's attack against it. The Westgate Mall story provides a conduit for examining key contemporary global concerns within a local setting, including the complex relationships between corporate capitalism, socioeconomic inequalities, and the menace of terrorism. In this sense, the shopping mall becomes a site *for* and a site *of* communication and contestation.

## Terrorism at the Mall

On September 21, 2013, a news headline read: "Gunmen Kill Dozens in Terror Attack at Kenyan Mall."[18] On what was incidentally, and ironically, the United Nations' declared International Day of Peace, four members of the Somali extremist group, Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (HSM), or al-Shabaab meaning "the youth" in Arabic, staged an armed attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi. To inflict maximum damage, and to garner worldwide publicity, the attacks took place on a Saturday at lunchtime—a day and time when the mall was guaranteed to attract thousands of visitors, including a large number of children and their families attending a cooking competition.[19] The attack has been labeled a "swarm attack" that "featured two teams of two (or more) assailants who attacked from two different points and then linked in the mall supermarket."[20]

For a variety of reasons that remain largely unexplained, the attack turned into a four-day, or 80-hour,[21] siege, ending with "65 civilians, six soldiers and police officers, and four terrorists among the dead. Hundreds more were injured and 27 people were listed as missing by the Kenyan Red Cross."[22] True to the globalization tenets of the shopping mall, the victims were citizens of Kenya, the United Kingdom, India, Canada, France, Australia, China, Ghana, the Netherlands, Peru, South Africa, South Korea, and Trinidad and Tobago.[23] Similarly, the attack exhibited international characteristics in which it was reported to have been "conceived in Somalia, planned from a United Nations refugee camp and executed from Eastleigh in Nairobi" by a group of al-Shabaab terrorists—one of whom was raised as a refugee in Norway.[24]

Westgate Mall, which opened in 2007, consisted of five levels, eighty shops, a cinema, two banks, and a casino.[25] As the al-Shabaab terrorists stalked the mall's corridors and shops for the first three and a half

hours of the attack, government forces attempted to organize themselves, with many departments, such as the Kenya Police and the Kenya Military, wrangling over who was in charge.[26] While the government departments squabbled, armed civilians, off-duty police officers, and Kenya Red Cross medics formed ad hoc tactical teams, rescuing hundreds of people from the mall.[27] Because there were so many different armed responders, plainclothes law enforcement officers, as well as armed civilians stealthily roaming the mall corridors with little communication between them, there was a great deal of confusion as to who was a terrorist, who was a victim, and who represented an authority. Witness testimonies of the attacks vary wildly, with many disagreeing on what they saw.[28]

The contemporary regularity of such urban terror attacks, and the ubiquity of surveillance systems in commercial settings, increases the chances that these atrocities are recorded, disseminated, and consumed through a variety of media. Through an extraordinary diversity of camera angles and feeds, the Westgate Mall siege was a made-for-television event from the beginning. What is understood to have transpired is what can be gathered from investigating the visual evidence recorded by "more than 100 security cameras inside the mall, video from television crews and modest cellphones, as well as still photographs."[29] Additionally, information about the attacks was delivered by the perpetrators themselves, with al-Shabaab live-tweeting their actions, marking Westgate as "the first major terrorist attack in history in which the group that mounted the operation used Twitter to announce to the world it was responsible."[30] Using social media, al-Shabaab "confirmed it was behind what it described as the 'Westgate spectacle,'"[31] tweeting "258 times between September 21 and September 25."[32]

Much of what we know about the Westgate Mall attack is what was reported by the media and screened on news networks, including how violently, and arbitrarily, victims were interrogated and killed, and how long and silently survivors hid in, behind, and under desks, storerooms, refrigerators, air vents, and anything that could conceivably conceal a human body. With all the elements of a reality show drama, the footage also shows how some government units "looted shops, broke open safes, and emptied tills."[33] A number of false reports emanating from government officials, witnesses, terrorists, and the media only added to the salaciousness and longevity of the "live event."

This wealth of visual evidence, however, was suddenly disrupted when "a rocket fired by the Kenyan army collapsed the back of the mall, dropping the rooftop car park into the basement,"[34] turning the area into a volatile war zone, burying the bodies of the injured and the dead, and destroying much of the forensic evidence.[35] To this day, it still cannot be definitively confirmed if the four attackers were killed, how they were killed, and, indeed, if there were only four perpetrators. At the time of writing, more than two years after the events, the Kenyan government, working in conjunction with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and British and Israeli intelligence, has yet to deliver conclusive answers on the sequence of events over the four days.[36] In the aftermath of the attacks, "President Uhuru Kenyatta announced his intention to appoint a commission of inquiry into Westgate 'lapses and how we can avoid them in the future,' but no such report had been released."[37] In the current confrontational climate, buoyed by the divisive discourse of the war on terror, the official media-infused stance appeals to the "state of exception,"[38] where no justifications are deemed necessary for how investigations are conducted, how accusations are accumulated, and how punishments for terrorists are concluded.

The formulation of the modern terror discourse necessitates the perpetuation of entrenched and oppositional ideological positions by reducing complex conflicts to simple binaries. However, despite the many ideological oppositions between the terror and the anti-terror narratives, the two discourses are surprisingly similar in their basic assumptions. In the latest incarnation of the meaning of modern terror, both the terror and anti-terror discourses are in agreement when emphasizing the religious underpinnings of the majority of contemporary attacks. The dominant media narrative frames atrocities as an exercise in militant Islam, as do the terrorists themselves whose language is saturated with religious ideology as they set about killing victims. Even though al-Shabaab announced that they had come to "save" Muslims, suggesting that Muslims were being held, against their will, in the corporate capitalist structure of the shopping mall,[39] they fired indiscriminately into the crowd. Although al-Shabaab claimed to be avenging Muslims, and at times spared mall visitors if they could correctly answer questions on Islam, the gunmen launched grenades, and shot people at random, killing many Muslims in the process.[40]

As this study shows, there is a much more complex story underlying the Westgate Mall tragedy, and conducting an analysis of the attacks requires examining more than the singularity of the religious approach. During the Westgate Mall attack, al-Shabaab used a multitude of communication platforms, especially Twitter, to deliver an extraordinary volume of online public communications in which they announced a series of other justifications for the atrocities: that they were, in turn, revenge for *political* injustices and *military* incursions into Somalia; a response to *economic* inequalities; a retaliation against Western government and corporate *exploitation* and *injustice;* as well as vengeance in the form of jihad, or *religious* holy war.[41] Many of these myriad grievances can be identified in al-Shabaab's statements claiming that the attack was "retribution against the Western states that supported the Kenyan invasion and are spilling the blood of innocent Muslims in order to pave the way for their mineral companies,"[42] and in retaliation to "the persistent theft of their land's resources which the Kenyan leaders and Western companies have conspired to plunder,"[43] and to foil "the clandestine schemes of the Zionist Jews in Kenya."[44]

The official media and government narratives, as well as those of al-Shabaab, gave precedence to the militant jihadist angle of the story, despite the many complex grievances articulated over the course of the four days. Although the modern terror discourse has been embedded in religious ideology, with a particular focus on holy war, much can be understood about extremist groups by examining the real or perceived political and economic grievances directed at powerful globalizing forces, with an emphasis on the "West." Extremist networks often take on the self-ordained duty of destroying global symbols of modernity and conspicuous consumption. With its ubiquitous products offered by powerful global capitalist distribution networks, it is in the shopping mall that Nairobi most resembles New York. An attack on one can be read as an attack on the other.

Since the kaleidoscopic declarations given by al-Shabaab regarding the attacks cannot be studied in their entirety, it is important to concentrate on the *intersections* of many of these issues as they encountered each other in Westgate Mall, and as they became reflected through the prism of the shopping center over the four days. In this way, the shopping mall becomes contextualized as a primary signifier of global consumer culture, and as a site for the juncture of longstanding socioeconomic and political tensions. By using Westgate Mall as a contextual case study, I analyze the overlap between two of the most prominent issues defining the contempo-

rary era, namely, the relationship between the twin forces of international terrorism and global capitalism. The victims of the Westgate tragedy experienced first hand, and in a situation of extreme violence, the tensions arising from being caught in between these supposedly opposite ideologies.

The tragic story of Westgate Mall shines a light on many international concerns that, while pertinent to the Kenyan context, are symptomatic of broader global challenges related to socioeconomic and political inequalities. The shopping mall becomes exemplary of the contemporary invisible divide between what can be considered a normal and everyday urban space for those who can afford to partake in it, and an alien and discordant one for those who cannot. The shopping mall, in this formulation, represents a coalface of contemporary culture—a space where hostilities are ignited through the increased friction of local and globalizing forces. The Westgate Mall case study unearths the many competing socioeconomic and political tensions that have troubled this particular shopping center since its conception, having occupied an affluent area of the Westlands neighborhood directly bordering a sprawling Nairobi slum.[45] In a city where half of the population "lives in slums or informal settlements,"[46] Westgate Mall had been the subject of contestation long before al-Shabaab's attacks. Similarly, malls in urban spaces around the world are embedded in such socioeconomic matrices of access, prohibition, and global exchange.

Despite these many brewing hostilities, witness testimonies and news reports on the Westgate attack are unified in their expression of disbelief regarding the sudden intrusion of violence into such an everyday setting. Permeating the entire edifice is shock at the incompatibility of shopping and violence, and an incomprehension of how mass murder can occur in a mall. Terrorism is articulated as being so out of place in the typical bright, colorful, and cheerfully designed setting of a shopping center. Violence and shopping simply do not go together. Or so it seems.

## The Politics of Shopping

Shopping malls provide more than just the benign, upbeat shopping centers typically characterized in everyday narratives and popular culture—in many ways, they represent an essential extension of the military-industrial complex. There is an underlying history of militarism that permeates the concept and architecture of shopping malls as contemporary commercial bunkers. These complexes are shelters custom-built to

safeguard contemporary corporate culture, and represent the architectural epitome of globalized capitalism. Fortified by a panoptic security apparatus, malls guard against undesirable and disruptive elements of modern society in order to protect the continuous circulation of money within the mall and, ultimately, around the world in a network of global flows. As commercial powerhouses, these giants of the retail industry are of such value that "yearly sales at Wal-Mart," for example, "exceed the GNP of three-quarters of countries in the world."[47] In the United States alone, retail sales numbers for 2013 "registered nearly $2.5 trillion in sales," and "shopping center-related employment accounted for almost than 12.5 million jobs."[48] In order to protect these ideal spaces of corporate capitalist practice and the massive revenues they generate, shopping malls become subject to an intense underlying militarism in terms of how they operate as well as how they are secured against external threats.

With increased threats of terrorist activity and the concomitant intensification of security measures, enclosed urban developments, including shopping malls, are being advertised as "safe places" where "you can leave your troubles behind."[49] Especially in the urban contexts of many developing countries defined by sharp socioeconomic divides, these corporate enclosures are being built with security in mind from their conceptual stages, and are erected with visible signs of outward aggression and hostility in their design, as exemplified by the height of the walls, the thickness of the barbed wire, the sharpness of the spikes, and the programed paranoia of the all-pervasive security systems. For the foreseeable future of the security industry, fighting terrorist activity "is limited by neither time nor space nor target. From a military perspective, these sprawling and amorphous traits make the War on Terror an unwinnable proposition. But from an economic perspective, they make it an unbeatable one: not a flash-in-the-pan war that could potentially be won but a new and permanent fixture in the global economic architecture."[50]

Even as these fortifications and "gated communities" are being built for security, they have other economic implications, driving up property values, and making these walled-off sections of the city the most expensive as well as the most sought after areas—for good or ill. Increasingly, the rising costs of installing and operating a private and pervasive security apparatus is transferred onto the public in the form of higher commodity prices, steeper transactions, and increased government service fees.[51] Thus, ultimately, ordinary people—whether defined as citizens

or consumers—are the ones who bear the combined brunt of terrorism and anti-terrorism measures, and become the target markets for both. As terrorists engage in open battles against shopping malls and places of leisure, the response of governments and urban developers is declared in the language of real and symbolic violence, and in the barricading, privatizing, and securitizing of urban areas in a kind of "low-intensity warfare."[52]

Especially since September 11, 2001, both terror and the war on terror have been progressively extending into everyday commercial spaces. The Mall of America has its own private counterterrorism unit made up of hundreds of security guards,[53] and Westgate Mall "had precautions similar to an airport; cars are checked with mirrors for bombs and pedestrians are frisked"[54]—although many admit that security checks were performed in a "perfunctory manner."[55] Shopping malls have become embroiled in the war on terror as an everyday extension of the military-industrial complex and advocate for merging of shopping with notions of patriotism. In the United States, for example, "the security services industry is an ideal career for transitioning military,"[56] with many war veterans working as private security guards. US companies providing security services for shopping malls regularly employ veterans as part of the "Hire our Heroes" program, cementing a circular relationship between the military, private security, terrorists, and shopping malls. Private businesses have increasingly become directly involved in anti-terrorism measures with active attempts at politicizing the act of shopping. In the aftermath of al-Qaeda's attack on the World Trade Center—a locus of global capitalist power—the Bush administration's immediate response was to tell Americans: "We cannot let the terrorists achieve the objective of frightening our nation to the point where we don't—where we don't conduct business, where people don't shop."[57] Within the war on terror narrative, stimulating the economy by spending has been framed as a patriotic duty and as a way for citizens to "stick their thumb in the eye of the terrorists"—an act of retaliatory aggression through increased commerce.[58]

Mass consumption is promoted as an engine of the economy with citizens billed as being directly responsible for the state of the nation's economic success. Within this consumption-oriented rhetoric, the citizen-consumer is located as "a critical part of a prosperity producing cycle of expanded consumer demand fueling greater production, thereby creating more well-paying jobs and in turn more affluent consumers capable of stoking the economy with their purchases."[59] When an economy is framed

as being dependent on individual spending habits, "the best measure of social consciousness is now the *Index of Consumer Sentiment*, which charts optimism about the state of the world in terms of willingness to spend."[60] Within this frame, shopping malls become a central locus around which other forms of social life orbit. This conceptualization, although part of a normalized contemporary discourse, has been in the making for some time. In the immediate aftermath of World War II, "business leaders, labor unions, government agencies, the mass media, advertisers, and many other purveyors of the postwar order conveyed the message that mass consumption was not a personal indulgence. Rather, it was a civic responsibility."[61] Conspicuous consumption has been historically tied to perceptions of patriotism and, by spending to strengthen the economy, it is imbued with a notion of altruism.

Creating a continuity between state politics and shopping malls, and forging a direct link between patriotism and consumerism is unabashedly and undisguisedly presented in the likes of the Mall of America, where the shopping mall purports to represent the interests and ideology of the nation, and is saturated in US symbolism, colors, and flags.[62] Countries all over the world have followed suit, and have directly linked politics and commerce by establishing "national" malls, including the Dubai Mall, the Mall of India, the Mall of Mauritius, the Mall of Mozambique, the Mall of Gambia, and the Mall of Zimbabwe, to name a few.[63] By being actively promoted as national symbols of patriotism, however, malls also become national targets of contestation, with one survivor of the Westgate Mall attack, Raheem Biviji, noting that it "looked like there was a war inside the mall."[64] And there was.

In this sense, the al-Shabaab terrorists entered Westgate Mall as though it was a mutual battlefield. Since consumption is politicized as a patriotic pastime by investors, developers, and governments all over the world, the al-Shabaab terrorists responded to this politicization by attacking it as a suitable target. Westgate Mall was an attractive target for al-Shabaab's high profile attack with its high-end stores catering to wealthy shoppers so out of sync with the rest of the poverty-stricken Kenyan—and Somali—landscapes. A tweet sent by al-Shabaab during the attacks directly addressed this: "If #Westgate was Kenya's symbol of prosperity, it is now a symbol of their vulnerability."[65] Al-Shabaab did not necessarily perceive of mall visitors as helpless victims caught in the crossfire, but as the privileged partakers of a prejudiced capitalist system, noting that

Westgate "was frequented by 'the one percent of the one percent'. Most victims indeed came from Kenya's business and political elite, as well as the expatriate and diplomatic community."[66]

The "reopening" ceremony of Westgate Mall on July 18, 2015,[67] just shy of two years since the attacks, was attended by President Kenyatta Uhuru, along with a large number of high-ranking government officials and business elites, as well as a mob of local and international media networks.[68] The terror attacks were used to promote and publicize the reconstruction of a "new and improved" Westgate Mall, highlighting how "the disruption to business, although not insignificant, is temporary."[69] Although Westgate Mall was destroyed, both physically and as a symbol of a safe space to enact a modern lifestyle, the new Westgate is now billed as bigger, better, and safer than before. A number of US brands including KFC, Subway, Domino's, Cold Stone Creamery, and Converse, that could not be persuaded to set up shop in the old Westgate are now being introduced to the Kenyan market with great fanfare.[70] There is a strategic ideological alignment drawn between these US brands and how international capitalism can play a role in conquering international terror. That the mall has been rebuilt to exceed its former self is evidence that the corporate capitalist paradigm considers itself ultimately victorious.[71] The reopening ceremony was used as an opportunity to encourage more people in Kenya, and elsewhere, to think of shopping as a civic duty, thereby constructing consumerism as the direct opposite of terrorism, even though one is in a binary interdependence with the other.

Ironically, even as al-Shabaab claimed it was attacking the mall as a symbol of consumerism, the terrorist group was attracted by, and responded to, the "call of the mall,"[72] as any other "consumer." Even though terrorism and consumerism are conceived as antithetical practices in their respective literatures, Westgate Mall provided a ground zero for these supposedly oppositional ends of the spectrum to meet on common ground—a space where daily consumption is increasingly militarized and where terrorism and security are increasingly commercialized. Within the space of the contemporary shopping mall, capitalism and terrorism are both products imported through the same networks of global exchange, and are engaged in an act of brutal reciprocity. Thus, terrorists attack symbols of consumerism as a political act and the anti-terror discourse similarly highlights shopping as an act of political resistance against terrorism. Politicized shopping has been consistent for both capitalists as well as those

who most vehemently oppose them. The discourse of consumption and the discourse of terror have been in synthesis for some time, with one relying on the other for increased publicity on both sides of the ideological divide.

## The Ideological Complexities of Terrorism and Capitalism

In an inescapable twist, in order to compete against a predominantly Western capitalist system, al-Shabaab militants must first appeal to it, and engage with the very ideology they are supposedly opposing. Despite anti-capitalist pronouncements on the part of al-Shabaab and other terrorist networks, they must necessarily operate within an enveloping capitalist and neoliberal framework. As one of the most voracious global forces, the corporate capitalist model is adept at infiltrating economic systems and subverting many forms of resistance, turning opposition into begrudging collaboration. The contemporary model of neoliberalism has "become hegemonic as a mode of discourse and has pervasive effects on ways of thought and political-economic practices to the point where it has become incorporated into the commonsense way we interpret, live in, and understand the world."[73] Terror groups like al-Shabaab have been vehemently anti-capitalist in their public pronouncements and in the targets of their attacks, even as they themselves engage in capitalist enterprise, and as they utilize the latest digital communication technologies as integral to their operations.[74]

Despite widespread opposition to the corporate model, many incarnations of modern international terrorism, in the form of loosely affiliated, ideological networks, are stealthily following the trails blazed by networks of international commerce. Al-Shabaab "has shifted from one illegal business to another, drawing money from East Africa's underworld to finance attacks like the recent deadly siege at a Nairobi shopping mall."[75] In order to fund its activities, al-Shabaab has engaged in a number of profit-making business ventures, including illicit international trade in ivory and charcoal.[76] Thus, the neoliberal model, despite its formal discursive distancing from illegal activities, has been of direct benefit to the formation of international crime syndicates and terrorist networks. The differences between markets and black markets, and terrorists and entrepreneurs, are not always easy to define and often become subject to prevailing discourses.

Even as terrorist acts disrupt businesses locally and internationally, delay operations, and cause financial losses, especially for enterprises related to tourism, aviation, and hospitality, these disturbances are reflective of only one side of the story. Conversely, there are many legitimate businesses that find their genesis in terrorist activity. Especially since September 11, 2001, governments and private enterprises all over the world increased spending on security industries and emergency responses in their funding of the "war on terror."[77] The security industry has grown exponentially in operation and profits, and has had a great impact on the strengthening of the military-industrial complex in order to both secure and stimulate the economy. The war on terror quickly became a "for-profit venture, a booming new industry that has breathed new life into the faltering U.S. economy,"[78] with many traditional government functions regarding the safety and security of citizens outsourced to private companies.

In modern metropolitan settings such as Westgate Mall, corporate capitalism, terrorism, and the military-industrial complex meet head on. Despite it being under siege and paralyzed by the attack, the mall still played a part in the global circulation of capital and performed its market role, albeit under a different guise. While the activity of shopping was halted during, and in the aftermath of, al-Shabaab's attacks, the wider capitalist apparatus was still in motion, and the circulation of capital was transposed to other areas of operation, including the corporate media frenzy that surrounded the Westgate Mall attacks, and that prolonged their salience, and the immediate investment in a more robust security apparatus. Even as the cash registers ceased their ringing in the mall, they worked overtime in the surrounding security industries and media networks.

The pervasiveness of mobile technology, social media connectivity, and corporate media network competition means that most of these tragic events are inevitably turned into global media spectacles that happen for home audiences in real time to the twin delight of extremists, whose message is reverberated internationally, and the media, which is provided audience share and advertising revenues.[79] The mainstream of capitalism and the extreme of terrorism do not always inhibit each other, but often align symbiotically to produce new markets and new networks. Westgate Mall became an archetypal site for the production, consumption, and commodification of terror, where corporate news media, terrorist networks, and government authorities all took part in the events, and competed for control of the emerging narrative.

Even as the al-Shabaab terrorists entered Westgate to wreak havoc on the corruption of an unjust capitalist system, and to battle against the ideals of consumerism, their oppositional actions became as commodified as many of the other items on sale in the mall. The Westgate attacks have now passed through the hands of many corporate systems, and the violence of these events have been packaged, circulated, sold, and consumed as news stories, documentaries, DVDs, books, internet content, and social media materials supported by online advertisements.[80] Continuities between terrorism and capitalism are most visible in the immediate commodification of terrorist acts, and the rush to condemn (or support) the ideology by producing and distributing a multitude of symbolic products, turning the tragedy into a further spectacle to be consumed. Immediately after the Charlie Hebdo atrocities, for example, the "Je suis Charlie" slogan was mass produced, distributed, and consumed through "Je Suis Charlie items retailing on Etsy (seven pages of products, from bracelets to pendants), Amazon, Spreadshirt (34 different T-shirts, sweats and mugs) and Zazzle."[81] Importantly, both the agents of terror and anti-terror played roles in the production and consumption of these products. As more aspects of daily life become increasingly subjected to market forces, increased commodification practices serve to complicate matters to the point where it is not entirely clear where terrorism ends and where the market begins.

Terrorism and the war on terrorism have become staples of daily discourse—at once alarming, and yet increasingly normalized. The study of terrorism is usually event-driven and policy-driven,"[82] and, unsurprisingly, peaks at specific periods of time and especially in the wake of political unrest and spectacular attacks. To date, the sheer volume of research published in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, is indicative and unprecedented.[83] The literature is inundated with research dedicated to decoding, describing, defining, and deconstructing terrorism as a phenomenon, with many academic studies working in tandem with government departments to support, enhance, or steer government policies towards a more stringent characterization of terrorism.

Other studies, such as this one, take a less deterministic approach by arguing that terrorism remains the product of discursive forces and can be considered as much a creation of the anti-terror discourse as it is of particular attacks and atrocities. This approach provides a necessary complication of often simple and artificial binaries by engaging in a more critical read-

ing of terrorism "both as a social relation and as embedded within a wider set of social relations."[84] Complex contemporary concerns require critical social research from perspectives other than those espoused by the politically powerful and economically dominant institutions. In this way, critical investigations yield narratives that challenge those relayed by corporate media networks and other official or government-influenced sources that attempt to frame terrorism as the antithesis of capitalism and neoliberal practice. This is despite neoliberalism's many inherent contradictions, its enactment of institutional and industrial violence as an inexorable part of production and expansion processes, and its deliberate or inadvertent appeal to symbolic violence, especially through the media.[85] Still, neoliberalism is portrayed as the symbol of an idealized Western notion of individual freedom, while terrorism is portrayed as its opposite, even though both, in many cases, lead to displacement, disarticulation, and death all around the world.[86] An analysis of the characteristics of corporate capitalism and terrorist activity in the current globalized economic environment shows how they are not only similar, but indeed often working in tandem.

The opposition between modern global capitalism and modern global terrorism is reinforced in discursive constructions of difference that do not necessarily exist in practice. By denying any wrongdoing, the "genuine anxieties brought about by an unstable economic system whose victims are almost invariably the most vulnerable in society are thereby displaced onto a host of threats disconnected (or apparently disconnected) from the chronic instabilities of post-industrial capitalism."[87] It is only by deflecting or projecting internal contradictions and rogue elements upon others, whether the subcontractor or the terrorist, that the monist institutions of corporate capitalism are able to represent themselves as lucid, coherent, and functional entities.

Such complexity and incoherence, multiplicity of discourse, and supplementarity of logic are subject to a particular type of epistemological violence in that they must be excised in order to fit into a singular meta-narrative that defines corporate capitalism as a positive norm, and any attack upon it as a necessarily negative disruption.[88] It is only by subscribing to a binary logic that it becomes possible to mark clear delineations between the borders of the supposedly holistic ideologies of capitalism and those of terrorism.

The ensuing analyses in this study, including how neoliberal capitalist practices, and by implication shopping malls, assist in the propagation of

unequal power relations, should be read as adding nuance to a subject that has become increasingly bound by oppositional and binary discourses. Understandably, as authorities attempt to appease a frightened citizenry, and as publics attempt to grapple with the brutality of terrorist violence encroaching into everyday urban spaces, they shape the discourse of the "war on terror" according to sharp binaries. This allows for a necessary intellectual-abridgement in which terrorism falls outside of the realm of comprehension. Many news articles and reports on the Westgate Mall attacks, for example, do not count the four terrorists in the casualty list of deaths at the mall. In many ways, the politically-charged anti-terror discourse means that the debate remains truncated, making further investigation into the many surrounding stories, histories, and discourses not only necessary, but critical.

This study presents readers with an opportunity to engage in a more critical examination of the events that were the focus of limited media attention, and that passed without a more thorough examination of the underlying complexities regarding the relationship between capitalist and terrorist practice in metropolitan settings. While this study cannot fully explain the many atrocities and acts of violence perpetrated by extremists in urban settings, it does attempt to provide a contextual framework for these contemporary contestations. The various critiques of capitalist structures and landscapes of consumption articulated in this study are an important part of the history of shopping malls in general, and Westgate Mall in particular, and should not be read as a distraction from, but rather an elaboration on, the atrocious circumstances in which many people lost their lives.

With the reopening of Westgate Mall in 2015, there was no mention of the tragedy in any of the mall's public pronouncements, website, or social media sites. Westgate Mall's Facebook page shows a two-year gap between the last abrupt post on September 20, 2013—the day before the attacks—inviting people to "come and enjoy the Westgate Get-away fair," and the new celebratory post about the commencement of the mall's activities on July 1, 2015.[89] There is no explanation for why there was such an extended gap in communication, and why the mall was closed for so long. Westgate Mall's silence on the attacks is a strategic public relations elision of the events, and, with it, a deliberate forgetting. While the Kenyan public and government encourage annual memorials, the mall itself displays no official commemoration of the victims in its communication efforts. Since recalling a tragic event will, undoubtedly, interfere with sales, "the mall

suffers an amnesia without which the smooth advancement of its business would be impossible."[90]

The specter of al-Shabaab's Westgate Mall attack is woven throughout this study, serving as a local conduit for the play of global forces. These analytical passages from Westgate to the world, and back, integrate particular socioeconomic contestations into a wider reading of the shopping mall in twenty-first century transnational society. The next chapter addresses the rise of the shopping mall in the context of emerging economies in tandem with these nations' attempts at prompting neoliberal development. It emphasizes how the shopping mall has become a symbol of national pride as well as a supposed testament to successful national economic development. In charting the rise of the prestige mall, the chapter draws attention to the simultaneous development of a new urban underclass. Defined antithetically by the shining steel and gleaming glass of a new imported modernity, many inhabitants of this new social paradigm react to it with a not altogether unexpected social violence. The chapter provides an overview of the history and development of the shopping mall both as a site of commerce and consumption as well as a site of encroaching security concerns, such that it remains a prime indicator of ideological contestation.