



The power of space: The biopolitics of custody and care at the Lloyd Hotel, Amsterdam

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between space and violence through a biopolitical enquiry of custody and care at Amsterdam's Lloyd Hotel. The Lloyd Hotel began as a corporate established transshipment hotel serving transatlantic voyages. It was subsequently transformed into an emergency refugee camp and an improvised prison and juvenile detention centre. An iconic building which had functioned in both specific and broader networks of violence, the building is today a sophisticated heritage accommodation. We trace and analyse the ways in which the spatial arrangements of the historic hotel have facilitated, often concurrently, conditions of custody and care, and protection and control in its key historical moments. We address questions regarding the putative 'agency' of specific spatial designs and architectures in 're-taining' the socio-spatial elements of violence perpetrated in the past. Specifically, we suggest that the original and adapted spatialities of the hotel were often the source of unintended violence, abuse and transgression, signalling the 'power of space' in terms of agency over the subjected 'guests'. In analysing a single micro-site and its broader spatialities, we seek to contribute to a relational conceptualization of violence sensitive and attuned to the complex histories and geographical scales that have bound and still bind this unique Amsterdam place of hospitality and custody.

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Introduction

The Lloyd Hotel, in Amsterdam, is a unique site of culture and state-of-the-art hospitality. Located along the city's waterfront, it hosts a 'cultural centre' and features rooms ranked from one-to-five-stars. Common spaces open to the outside public are used to facilitate access and social interaction. The hotel is of particular interest for its complicated histories of being a space for migrant transit, a refugee camp, a prison, a youth detention centre, and, finally, an international hub for cosmopolitan tourists. We investigate the Lloyd Hotel as a 'camp' – that is, as a modern institution and as a spatial biopolitical technology, a spatial formation for the 'management of bodies' that incorporates functions of custody and care, protection (for/from the inmates/tourists) and control, and that characterizes many authoritarian regimes and contemporary democracies. (see Minca, 2015: 1) Accordingly, we examine the relationship between space and violence, focussing on the contributions made by the Hotel's spatial arrangements to the

often-simultaneous production of conditions of custody *and* care, as well as of protection *and* control.

Geographers have recently analysed violence by looking in particular at its links to space and place (Springer, 2009, 2012; Tyner, 2009; Tyner, Alvarez, & Colucci, 2012), but also to questions of scale (Springer, 2014) and to biopolitics in totalitarian regimes (see Tyner, 2012; also Giaccaria & Minca 2011a; 2011b; Minca, 2007). Colonial culture (cf. Mbembe, 2003) and neoliberal accumulation of (bio)capital (Springer, 2012 but also Hardt & Negri, 2000; Harvey, 2007) have also been studied to illustrate the workings of violence, conceptualized as a social and political category not limited to its physical manifestations. Tyner and Inwood's (2014: 11) inquiry into the difficulties in categorizing violence and their critique of the distinction between structural and direct violence are of particular use here, especially their claim that we must "acknowledge that sociospatial relations transform . . . and if we acknowledge that 'violence' is relational, it follows that 'violence' will likewise transform over time and space". Geographers have also shown how violence should be understood not as a thing, event, or aftermath, but rather as an unfolding process, entangled within existing social conditions and spatial structures (Springer, 2011, 2012; Tyner & Inwood, 2014). If violence is to be understood as being necessarily relational and embedded within power relations, this implies a

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geographical understanding. Violence is always place-based, always implicated within space, a geography that crucially determines how it affects those subjected to violence. It is important then to recognize that some spaces may actually be more apt at producing and allowing for explicit forms of violence, sometimes even being planned to facilitate the enactment of violence.

In contributing to the burgeoning literature that interrogates the 'dialectics' (Tyner & Inwood, 2014) between the underlying conditions of violence and the actual process of violence, rather than simply the aftermath of violence (Springer, 2011), we tap into two geographic fields of enquiry. The first focuses on *the camp as a spatial political technology* (see Diken & Laustsen, 2004; Gregory 2006; Ek, 2006; Netz, 2004; also Gilroy, 2004, 2007; Minca, 2005, 2015), where violence operates according to specific topographical coordinates often associated with custody and care. The second is the recent work on *carceral geographies*, which theorises the spatial regimes operating in detention centres (see in particular Moran, 2012, 2013, 2015; Moran, Piacentini, & Pallot, 2012; also Philo, 2012). As part of a broader project focused on the 'carceral geographies of leisure' and the 'spatialities of the camp' that we have developed (Felder et al., 2014; Ong et al., 2014a), the discussion on the Lloyd Hotel presented here thus intends to address some general questions about the putative 'agency' of certain material (camp) geographies in 'retaining' the socio-spatial qualities (and difficult memories) of past violence perpetrated within and, at times, thanks to their spatial arrangements. In particular, we are interested in the workings and reinterpretations of the material geographies that allow former spaces of leisure to become spaces of imprisonment. Specifically, we examine how carceral spaces often become converted into sites of leisure and tourism (for an analysis of the 'dark tourism' characterizing some of these sites see Lennon & Foley, 2000; MacDonald, 2006; Malm, 2013; Strange & Kempa, 2003).¹ Collectively, these two fields of enquiry provide insights into how spatial technologies and violent disciplinary practices are mutually constitutive. This paper thus seeks to unpack the underlying conditions and constitutive processes of violence, which have heretofore been understudied (Fig. 1).

Recent studies have looked at historical buildings converted into hotels, where the focus has been on the production of heritage by the hospitality industry (Chang, 1997; Chang & Teo, 2009; Chhabra, 2010; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005; Rogerson, 2010). We analyse this transformation in relation to the Lloyd Hotel elsewhere (Ong et al., 2014b). Here we aim to speak to carceral geography in particular examining the (inherent) carceral qualities of some spatialities and

how these may indeed become attractive sites for leisure activities (Swensen, 2012) (See Fig. 2). We also indirectly engage with the emerging corpus of work on the specific links between tourist hospitality and incarceration (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Ugelvik, 2012), hospitality and refuge (Darling, 2010; Fregonese, 2012; Gibson, 2006; Mountz, 2011; Ramadan, 2008; van der Horst, 2004) and more broadly on critical hospitality studies which interrogate the relationship between hospitality, power and control (Craggs, 2012; Goh, 2010; Lynch, German Molz, McIntosh, Lugosi, & Lashley, 2011; McNeill, 2008; Ong et al., 2014a, 2014b; Felder et al., 2014). We suggest that conversions of places designed for tourist hospitality into carceral sites and vice versa – of which the Lloyd Hotel is one revealing example – have a more general significance for anyone interested in the explicit and implicit links between violence and space.

We thus start by asking whether some spatialities – in their material sense, and in terms of their related capacity of regulating mobility – have agency in promoting or at least facilitating violence and control. If so, how does one explain the current and frequent transition of some of these spatial arrangements from carceral to leisure functions and back? What kind of agency can be assigned or recognized to 'the spatial' in prisons and hotels – these two modern institutions? Since both institutions (detention/camps and leisure/hotels) are concerned with operations of 'custody' and 'care' (sometimes in the form of hospitality, other times in expressions of control, and often both at the same time), are custody and care inherently the source of potentially violent spatialities (see Craggs, 2012; Lynch et al., 2011)? Custody and care have been and often remain driving forces of the concentration camp and of deportation, but they are also part of more subtle strategies of social engineering and control (in geography, see Minca, 2015; also, Carter-White, 2013). These features may also be the driving force of some tourist experiences (Minca, 2009), and indeed of the welfare state more generally (Da Roit & Sabatinelli, 2013; Pavolini & Ranci, 2008). Tourist 'camps' and former prison 'camps' are thus sites where we wish to investigate the following question: is there a deeper and unexamined relationship between camp spatialities of tourism and imprisonment that make them easily convertible for either use?

Inspired by the above-mentioned debates, we use the case of the Lloyd Hotel to reflect on such presumed connections between violence and space, custody and care, protection and bodily segregation, tourism and imprisonment. Despite (or perhaps because of) the multiple shifts of function from hotel to prison to hotel again, we argue that the spatial arrangements of the Lloyd Hotel may have



Fig. 1. Main entrance of the Lloyd Hotel and Cultural Embassy.



Fig. 2. The hotel and 'cultural embassy' as gastronomical and leisure space.

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