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White Order: Racialization of Public Space in the Netherlands

Vignettes

We start this article with a series of vignettes from recent Dutch news and government documents that illustrates the pervasiveness of racial violence. The vignettes are followed by an analysis that deals with how *White Order* organizes society. Hereby we intend to call attention to (in)security as an insidious cultural construction informing racialized spatial policy and practice in contemporary Netherlands.

Vignette 1

In 2013, a Roma family, described as a “nuisance family,” was forcibly removed from their home and relocated to what has been controversially referred to as a “scum village.”¹ The mayor of

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¹ “Amsterdam Moves ‘Neighbours from Hell’ to Container Dwelling.” *DutchNews.Nl*, September 5, 2013, http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/09/amsterdam_moves_neighbours_fro/

Amsterdam Eberhard van der Laan justified the eviction by pointing out that, “The family has been causing problems for years and has a history of vandalism, noise nuisance and threatening behavior.”² The encampment, which is on the outskirts of Amsterdam and under constant police surveillance, consists of disused shipping containers, which have been converted into “homes.” The municipality of Amsterdam plans to warehouse more “problem families” in shipping containers. Eberhard van der Laan said that “[t]he container homes will be used more often, and in different parts of the city. This is how we want to deal with the most extreme cases of problem families.”³

Vignette 2

In 2014, the arrival of 1400 asylum seekers in the village of Orange in the Dutch province Drenthe caused unrest. According to the residents, it wasn’t the arrival of the refugees that was a cause for concern. The residents objected to the increase in the population. They expressed concerns about how such an increase would affect the “liveability” and safety in the village. Moreover, according to the residents, such an increase could lead to a possible decrease in property value. They wanted only 250 of the 1400 asylum seekers.

According to a spokesperson for the municipality, the refugees weren’t meant to be housed in the village for more than two days.

They mean no harm, but because they do not know Dutch customs, this has already caused nuisance. For example, they walk to the store, and then they walk in fours on a main road. That is not safe for them and other road users find it annoying. Or twenty of them try to board a neighborhood bus that has only room for eight people. The bus is run by volunteers who are accustomed to have only a few people on board.⁴

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Anouk Eigenraam, “Gemeente Stuurt Asielzoekers Weg Uit Vakantiepark Wegens ‘overlast’.” *NRC*, October 15, 2014. This translation (from Dutch) is ours, as well as all other references to Dutch sources in this article.

The arrival of asylum seekers was characterized in a local newspaper as an ‘invasion.’⁵ Eddy Veenstra (PvdA Staten Fractie [Labour Party Parliamentary Group]) affirms in a letter that “[t]he number of asylum seekers in a village ought to be in balance with the number of inhabitants.” He asks, “What are the limits in relation to the number of inhabitants of a village? Isn’t a more evenly spread across the province desirable?”

In a recent speech in the Christian Democratic party’s Congress, Sybrand Buma (party’s leader MP) argued for “a better distribution of refugees across Europe.”⁶

Vignette 3

In 2012, the Left wing political magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer* published an article titled *How a Black Neighbourhood Became Blacker*, in which the Bijlmer, a borough of Amsterdam, is said to be “the drain of the city.”

Some quotes from the journalist Marcel van Engelen:

And besides the fact that traditional heroine junkies are literally going extinct, there are more places that offer temporary accommodation – you do not see [junkies] in the Bijlmer very often. It may sound unworthy of a human being, but the most obscure elements have been removed from the Bijlmer.

Officially, a more ethnically diverse composition was not an objective of the renovation. The Bijlmer had to become more socio-economically diverse in order to attract and persuade people with higher incomes to stay. That’s been somewhat successful. It more or less happens automatically when you partially replace social housing (all thirteen thousand old flats were rented social housing) with expensive rental homes and properties for sale.⁷

⁵ “Invasie Vluchtelingen Op Vakantiepark Oranje.” *De Krant Van Midden-Drenthe*, September 26, 2014, <http://www.dekrantvanmiddendrenthe.nl/nieuws/beilen/346943/invasie-vluchtelingen-op-vakantiepark-oranje.html>

⁶ Sybrand Buma, Speech given at CDA Partijcongres, Alkmaar, November 8, 2014, https://www.cda.nl/fileadmin/CDA/Documenten/2014/SPEECH_Sybrand_Buma_8_november_2014.pdf

⁷ Marcel van Engelen, “Hoe Een Zwarte Wijk Nog Zwarter Word.” *De Groene Amsterdammer*, March 21, 2012, <http://www.groene.nl/artikel/hoe-eeen-zwarte-wijk-nog-zwarter-werd>

Vignette 4

In May 2014, the Dutch Senate approved the amendment that broadened the scope of the Municipality Law.⁸ This law enables a zoning of the city in terms of “safety.” In order to expand stop and search, Article 151b was added to the Municipality law. Mayors are now allowed to directly designate an area a “security risk area” in case of an “emergency” – without requiring the consent of the municipal council. Once an area is designated a “security risk area” (*veiligheidsrisicogebied*) anyone within that zone can be subjected to preventive body searching. The police have now the power to stop-and-search citizens in “security risk areas” even if there is no “probable cause”; no criteria have been established.

Furthermore, police officers are now allowed to search someone *before* they are taken to the police station. The expansion of the Municipal law allows the police to perform a visual and manual “body cavity search” on people who are detained.⁹

The above-listed vignettes tell us much about safety concerns in Dutch politics, policymaking, and spatial planning, and how these concerns are dealt with. What is subsumed under the managerial language of efficiency and the moral vocabulary of (in)security are the workings of *White Order* – an order that sets apart “at risk” populations and marks them for containment and, as a last resort, imprisonment. In this article, it is our intention to explore the concept of “White Order,” or, to put it differently, the fantasy that the Netherlands is governed through a “neat” and “racially neutral” set of formal agreements.¹⁰

⁸ “Preventief Fouilleren, Artikel 151b Gemeentewet.” *Centrum Voor Criminaliteitspreventie En Veiligheid*, Centrum Voor Criminaliteitspreventie En Veiligheid, accessed October 8, 2015.

⁹ “Verruiming Fouilleerbevoegdheden.” *Nederlands Juristenblad*, Wolters Kluwer, last modified June 19, 2014, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://njb.nl/wetgeving/staatsbladen/verruiming-fouilleerbevoegdheden.6353.lynkx>

¹⁰ In this article we will not focus on the agency of those subjected to this hegemonic order, i.e. the ways in which racialized peoples circumvent, contest and/or appropriate the technologies designed to control their being in space. Instead we will focus on this hegemonic order, which is consistently denied and undermined in the narration of the Dutch nation.

Introduction

Before we lay out our argument, we want to sketch briefly what we mean by *White Order*. We understand *White Order* to be a structure that encompasses spatial, legal, political, and cultural dimensions in which the “deliberate blocking out or disregard of a ‘Black’ voice,”¹¹ and “Black” life is a defining and necessary feature of its operation. We believe the motto “Schoon, Heel, Veilig”¹² [Clean, Wholesome, Safe] to be indicative of *White Order*, and therefore take the motto, designed to represent the city of Rotterdam, as our object of analysis. The desire for a clean, wholesome, and controlled landscape, organizes, to cite Christopher Lane, “the meaning of racial and ethnic identities.”¹³ *White Order*/“liveable space” is produced by way of the evacuation and removal of the populations that are marked as abject, unruly, Black – a process that scripts Whiteness as *order* as it produces Blackness as *disorder*. *White Order* allows for the emergence of “liveability.” We argue that Whiteness is produced as “stable” and “safe” through the construction of “at risk” populations and areas.

Throughout the article, we will point to the ways in which the government rationalizes a politics of containment and human disposability through the promotion of “liveability” programmes. Moreover, we will focus on the role that architecture and urban planning play in facilitating the aims and goals of said programmes. Reading Mekonnen Tesfahuney’s and Richard Ek’s *Planning as War by Other*

¹¹ Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling The Coloniality Of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards The Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation - An Argument.” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3.3 (2003): 268.

¹² K. Leidelmeijer, R. Schulenberg, and H. Rombouts, “Buurtleefbaarheid Begrepen: Achtergronden En Beleidsinvloeden Bij Leefbaarheidsverbetering.” RIGO Research En Advies BV, last modified November 29, 2010, accessed October 8, 2015, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/kamerstukken/2010/11/29/leefbaarheidsontwikkeling-in-de-40-wijken-en-de-beleidsinvloeden-bij-de-gemeteten-leefbaarheidsverbetering-leefbaarheidsontwikkel/kv2010030545abuurtleefbaarheidbegrepenrigo.pdf>

¹³ Christopher Lane, “Introduction.” In *The Psychoanalysis of Race*, ed. Christopher Lane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 6.

*Means*¹⁴ alongside Paul Mutsaers' and Hans Siebers' *Low Intensity Ethnic Cleansing in the Netherlands*,¹⁵ we interpret urban planning and spatial management as forms of low-intensity violence, or as "war without bloodshed." The aim of this low intensity violence is not military conquest, but social control by way of "[cleaning] a certain territory from populations that are defined in ethnic [and utilitarian] terms."¹⁶

Correspondingly, we draw attention to the different modalities of warfare – such as cultural, economic, environmental, financial warfare – that operate on non-spectacular registers and have been rendered mundane, acceptable, and banal within modern societies. We aim to build on the concept of low intensity-violence, and analyze its everyday manifestations – the quiet racism – as well as its manifestations in seemingly 'objective' policy. What kind of 'social relations' emerge as a result of low intensity-violence or, to put it baldly, irreconcilable war of attrition?¹⁷

Anti-Blackness And Disavowed Spatial Violence¹⁸

Mutsaers and Siebers observe in *Low Intensity Ethnic Cleansing in the Netherlands* that there is an "increasing and mainstreamed

¹⁴ Mekonnen Tesfahuney and Richard Ek, "Planning as War by Other Means." In *Planning Against the Political: Democratic Deficits in European Territorial Governance* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 171-177.

¹⁵ Paul Mutsaers and Hans Siebers, "Low Intensity Ethnic Cleansing in the Netherlands." *Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies*, no. 38 (2012).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷ This article draws from different disciplinary fields. It is beyond its scope to present a comprehensive overview of each of these fields. Instead we expressly weave together arguments and texts pertaining to diverse disciplines in a way we find suitable to the explanation of the complex dynamics of race/space we intend to scrutinize. This is a risky endeavor inherent to multidisciplinary, which we may hope, gives room to creative and innovative insights.

¹⁸ Rather than theorizing Blackness as an identity category, we foreground Blackness as a structural position that is indispensable to the production of the Human and space, i.e. *White Order*.

call for ethno-territorial homogeneity of the European and national space.”¹⁹ If this diagnosis is correct – and we take it to be so – then ethno-territorial homogenization involves not only violence, but it also requires a bureaucratic apparatus that regulates the processes of exclusion and “the extent to which these are presented as acceptable or even legitimate.”²⁰ Bureaucracy and racism, as Hannah Arendt tells us, are intimately connected.²¹ However, before we turn our attention to the bureaucratic apparatus, we would like to sketch the work that purportedly race-neutral policy terms, like *Allochtoon* and *Autochtoon*, perform.

Allochtoon, a common term in Dutch social management, political discourse and colloquial language, is used to categorize a person born abroad, or a “person of whom at least one parent was born abroad.”²² The term itself refers to someone’s origins. However, in the Netherlands, origin is not only restricted to parentage or ancestry. The Central Bureau of Statistics defines origin as a “characteristic showing with which country someone *actually* is closely related given their own country of birth and that of their parents.”²³ Origin is, thus, defined in terms of a characteristic, that is a distinguishing mark, or trait that helps to identify, or describe recognizably – and more importantly *loyalty*.

The term *Allochtoon*, which is borrowed from geology, suggests an enlacement of race/ethnicity, territory, and allegiance. “Allochthonous rocks” Dvora Yanow and Marleen van der Haar write, “are recognizable as having been created out of specific geological components constituted out of the soil, water, air, and sun characteristic of the setting in which they originated.”²⁴ Bodies, which are always-already mediated through

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

²¹ Hannah Arendt, “Race and Bureaucracy,” in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966).

²² “*Allochtonen*,” Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2015.

<http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/dossiers/allochtonen/methoden/begrippen/default.htm?ConceptID=37>.

²³ *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

²⁴ Dvora Yanow and Marleen Van Der Haar, “‘Race’ by another Name? Categories, Counting, and the State – the Case of Netherlands Integration Policy Discourse,” (unpublished manuscript, 2010): 18-19.

race, are, then, territorialized through terms like *Allochtoon* and *Autochtoon*, and it is through geography by way of soil properties that racialized bodies are consigned to different physical and metaphorical spaces. “The symbolic charting of racial zones across the globe,” Uli Linke writes, “relies on the ontological coupling of nature, race and space, and so is crucial for our understanding of contemporary European Union population politics.”²⁵

In her article *Access to the Netherlands of Enslaved and Free Black Africans*, Dienke Hondius²⁶ delineates how the *White Order* of the metropolitan space was safeguarded through legal and social historical practices from the 16th to the 19th centuries. She shows how the Dutch States-General strictly regulated the entrance of enslaved and free Black Africans to the Dutch metropolis. Europe was imagined through the ‘free soil principle’ as a ‘space of freedom.’ Hondius cites Seymour Drescher on this matter: “Conceptually as well as legally, the operative distinction in northwestern Europe between slavery and freedom was geographical and racial, and it remained so.”²⁷ Thinking the geographic confines of the plantation alongside the ‘free soil principle’ highlights the tension that led to a ‘continental approach’ of determining the status of enslaved Africans and ultimately to enslaved Africans being warehoused. Seymour Drescher writes in *The Long Goodbye*,

The States-General decreed that Dutch slave holders could encapsulate their colonial property in the free metropolis. Black slaves brought from the colonies were thereby treated like overseas commodities. They could be legally “warehoused” for reexportation within a limited period.²⁸

²⁵ Uli Linke, “Technologies of Othering: Black Masculinities in the Carceral Zones of European Whiteness.” In *Europe in Black and White: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Immigration, Race and Identity in the ‘Old Continent’*, ed. Manuela Ribeiro Sanches et al. (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2011), 127.

²⁶ Dienke Hondius, “Access to the Netherlands of Enslaved and Free Black Africans: Exploring Legal and Social Historical Practices in the Sixteenth–Nineteenth Centuries.” *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 32, no. 3 (2011): 377-395.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 379.

²⁸ Seymour Drescher, “The Long Goodbye: Dutch Capitalism and Antislavery in Comparative Perspective.” *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 1 (1994): 65.

Both *Allochtoon* and *Autochtoon* suggest a fusion of body, soil, water, air, and sun, and this amalgam gives rise to a geomorphic body. Geology, the elements, and the body collapse into each other and produce beings, tailored specifically for (use in) a particular environment. Even though both terms refer to soil, it is only *Allochtoon* that carries the trace of dirt, or – to put it more bluntly – dirtiness. Racialized people born on putative Dutch soil are still referred to as *Allochtoon* – as being *out of place*. Dirt is matter out of place. “Dirt,” writes Mary Douglas, “is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as *ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements*.”²⁹ Dirt is, then, a matter of spatial designation. Dirt also connotes blackness. Frantz Fanon writes that: “when one is dirty one is black – whether one is thinking of physical dirtiness or of moral dirtiness.”³⁰

The geography of poverty, i.e. deprived neighborhoods, is scripted as geographically Black. Economic and educational inequalities are both understood in the Netherlands through the Black/White binary. In political language as well as in the media, deprived areas and deficient schools are categorized as “black” – irrespective of the visible presence of “black” people. The various populations in deprived areas and schools are, thus, ideologically blackened – a process that attests to the ideological currency of Blackness as abject. So, while the *Allochtoon* is marked as being outside of the national geographical imaginary, Blackness is made to function as a sign of the inherently inferior. Lewis Gordon provocatively argues that,

although the human race is normatively white, racialized human beings, in other words, a subspecies of humanity, are nonwhite. The negation is the supposedly opposite term – in a word, the black. In effect, then, in the antiblack world there is but one race, and that race is black. Thus to be racialized is to be pushed “down” toward blackness, and to be deracialized is to be pushed ‘up’ toward whiteness.³¹

²⁹ Mary Douglas, “Secular Defilement,” in *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 36, emphasis added.

³⁰ Frantz Fanon, “The Negro and Psychopathology,” in *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto, 2008), 146.

³¹ Lewis R. Gordon, *Her Majesty's Other Children: Philosophical Sketches from a Neocolonial Age* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 76.

The logic of *White Order* “may be understood as a logic of social organization that produces regimented, institutionalized, and militarized conceptions of hierarchized ‘human’ difference.”³²

Order itself is a *habit of whiteness* as outlined by Shannon Sullivan in *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege*:

As ontologically expansive, white people tend to act and think as if all spaces – whether geographical, psychical, linguistic, economic, spiritual, bodily, or otherwise – are or should be available for them to move in and out of as they wish. Ontological expansiveness is a particular co-constitutive relationship between self and environment in which the self assumes that it can and should have total mastery over its environment.³³

White ontological expansiveness was the very motor of settler colonialism that drove the violent incursion of Europeans into indigenous peoples’ territory for exploitation, and gave rise to “the frontier.” Contemporarily, in post-imperial territory, this same *habit* orders space. To elaborate, *White Order* is a political assemblage that continuously attempts to control the ensemble of conditions in which a non-White person or *thing* lives through the regulation of “quality of life,” which is constantly monitored through statistics and indices that measure compositional and patterned “diversity.” Within *White Order*, state violence – under the guise of “restoring order” – is rendered permissible, or even welcomed. State violence is transformed into “managing care” and a nondescript concern for the “quality of life.” *White Order*, as a racializing force, regulates the distribution of death, disease, and life chances among populations. Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s theorization of racism is instructive here. Gilmore defines racism as “a practice of abstraction, a death-dealing displacement of difference

³² Dylan Rodríguez, “Introduction: American Apocalypse.” In *Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the U.S. Prison Regime* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 11.

³³ Shannon Sullivan, “Introduction.” In *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 10.

into hierarchies that organize relations within and between the planet's sovereign political territories."³⁴

The ensemble of conditions in which sentient beings live trespass the border between outside and inside of the body surreptitiously, seemingly non-violently, and assign different life-spans to different (national) subjects. François Delaporte notes that:

Living conditions affect two distinct areas, one within the body, the other outside it: organic space and social space. Social space is the space within which the organism lives and labors, and the conditions of existence within that space-living conditions – determine the probability of life and death.³⁵

Empire established a link between Blackness and confinement on an ontological level. The figure of *the Black* has been marked for incarceration *a priori*. The figure of *the Black*, as dirty and unclean, is a “stimulus to anxiety,”³⁶ whose very *being* calls for “supervision” (surveillance) and eradication. And as a phobogenic object, the Black body is always already located in a field of containment. In his autobiography *My Fight Against Apartheid*, Michael Dingake observes that: “Blacks are always in one prison or another. They cannot escape imprisonment for one moment.”³⁷

Anti-Black spatial practices, which aim to constrain or discipline Black mobility, have taken different shapes since the hold of the slave ship. Léopold Lambert states in *Weaponized Architecture: The Slave Ship as Architecture* that:

The slave ship is [...] the paradigmatic example of an architecture that serves the quintessential violence unfold by the same logic that then took the names of colonialism and capitalism. [I]t is fundamental to observe that this violence could have simply be [sic] impossible without the technological apparatus that design

³⁴ Ruth Wilson Gilmore, “Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography.” *The Professional Geographer* 54, no. 1 (2002), 16.

³⁵ François Delaporte, *Disease and Civilization: The Cholera Epidemic in Paris, 1832*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 80.

³⁶ Fanon, “*The Negro and Psychopathology*,” 151.

³⁷ Michael Dingake, *My Fight Against Apartheid* (London: Kliptown Books, 1987), 123.

provides on the bodies. It would be a mistake to think of this relationship between architecture and violent ideologies only within the somehow comfortable context of history, without wondering what would be equivalents nowadays. They might not unfold their violence in the same extreme degree that the slave ship or the gas chamber historically did; however they use the same logic to control the bodies and enforce their ideological violence upon them.³⁸

Contemporary equivalents of racialized architecture are hidden behind the narrative of ‘White Order,’ i.e. pragmatism and planning. Patricia Schor theorizes in “Dutch Enclaves West – non-West/Black” that this a priori confinement of the Black body produces the *body-as-enclave*. Schor posits that,

the enclave is constituted by fencing the Black body within. As a bodily marker, the enclave is not only encountered in a fixed space, but moves along with the racialized body. *The Dutch Black* carries the boundary that separates her/him as s/he traverses public space.³⁹

Schor relies on Egbert Alejandro Martina’s account of the objectification of the Black body (as a colonial commodity) for the purpose of (White) enjoyment.⁴⁰ She argues that the Black body read as threatening sexual excess ‘calls for’ spatial control, in the form of containment. Besides, following Craig Wilkins, Western civilization constructed (national) space as White by means of coupling space to ownership (of land).⁴¹ The very definition of *slave* relied on this coupling, for she could not hold property rights, rather the *slave* was

³⁸ Léopold Lambert, “# Weaponized Architecture /// the Slave Ship is Architecture,” last modified 2014, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://thefunambulist.net/2014/03/24/weaponized-architecture-the-slave-ship-is-architecture/>

³⁹ Patricia Schor, “Dutch Enclaves West – Non-West/Black: Framing the Racism Debate.” *International Colloquium: Enclaves North and South*, University of Nottingham, March 22, 2014.

⁴⁰ Egbert Alejandro Martina, “The Delicious Pleasures of Racism.” *Processed Life*, 2013, <http://processedlives.wordpress.com/2013/10/15/the-delicious-pleasures-of-racism/>

⁴¹ Craig Wilkins, “Brothers/Others: Gonna Paint the White House Black...” In *Revealing Male Bodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 200.

property herself. This colonial construct has shaped contemporary understandings of space, in a way that (desirable) space itself has become synonymous with Whiteness.

Wilkins points to W.E.B. Du Bois' thoughts on the spatial non-belongingness of 'Negroes' to the nation, for they are forcefully diasporic subjects, "removed from their original location," and "relocated as objects."⁴² It is this trace of enslavement imprinted on the Black body – which 'betrays' its excess – that we are bringing to the fore through the figure of the Black body as enclave. Borrowing from Frantz Fanon, W.E.B. Du Bois and bell hooks, Wilkins argues that the very presence of Black bodies disrupts space, for space is shaped by the denial of access of Black bodies. For this disturbance, Black bodies face "omnipresent panoptic surveillance."⁴³ We put accent on the figure of the Black body as an enclave in order to give salience to a disavowed aspect of racialized spatial dynamics in the Netherlands – namely that surveillance of Black bodies is mainly and ostensibly exercised *prior to* (and *instead of*) actual incarceration and therefore outside of the prison walls, beyond the confines of a particular territory, 'preventively.'

The practice of surveillance effectuates the encapsulation of the intruder (Black) body that must not disturb the safe, wealthy, and functional White space – the actualization of the metropolitan 'space of freedom.' The bodily enclave is in accord with Fanon's argument that Black people are overdetermined by their appearance.⁴⁴ This means that the Black body is unseen as a constitutional element of space however it is, at the same time, highly noticed for its non-belongingness and the threat it poses. It should, actually, not be (t)here, it should know its *right place*. Its presence – what it carries within – must be contained.

This synthesis, on a seemingly fundamental level, of the physical properties of a specific environment and genes fosters not only a sense of sameness (*made from similar components under similar circumstances*), but it also offers a 'natural' justification for socially

⁴² *Ibid.*, 223.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁴⁴ Frantz Fanon, "The Fact of Blackness." In *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 82-108.

constructed differences, making the order of things appear as though it is inevitable. It produces, in Uli Linke's words, "a vision of human bodies branded by space and invariably marked by a geopolitical territory."⁴⁵

The racialized body is matter *out of place*, or "foreign territory" – the dangerous outsider within a supposed White homeland – whose body, following Tesfahuney and Ek, serves as the contemporary battlefield after the decline of the European exogenous colonization.⁴⁶ *Allochtoon*, which relies on tropes of blackness, functions, one could argue, as a shorthand for 'enemy territory,' or an 'enemy's territory,' that is to be colonized – joined to the nation, but in a subordinate capacity.

Spatial Planning As Coercion And The Politics of Liveability

The position that the *Allochtoon* is perceived to occupy in neighborhoods and, by extension, in domestic space, is diagnostic of her position vis-à-vis racial, legal, and liveability regulations. Spatial planning, architecture, and urban design together institute a framework for the control of space that de-politicizes the field of social interactions. However, we have here in mind not only spatial organization, but also legal architecture and social relations. The rule of law and spatial planning, which unfold over time, offer a patina of legitimacy to violence enacted through urban renewal efforts.

Urban renewal and 'liveability' – and state-initiated diversification programmes – translate more often than not as the removal of 'undesired elements' from the city and/or neighborhood. For instance, the Dutch government identifies in its 'liveability programme' 'problem families,' which "are characterized by a number of issues, such as debt, unemployment and poor parenting,"⁴⁷ as a (potential) menace to liveability. 'Problem families' are consequently subjected to intimate surveillance and expunged from the city, if not the territory, since they

⁴⁵ Linke, "Technologies of Othering," 127.

⁴⁶ Tesfahuney and Ek, "Planning as War," 171-177.

⁴⁷ "Liveability Programme." Government of the Netherlands, accessed January 5, 2015, <http://www.government.nl/issues/liveability/liveability-programme>

threaten ‘liveability.’ In neighborhoods with ‘problem families’ and a substantial *Allochtoon* population “a strategy of ‘social reconquest’” is deployed which requires “a massive commitment of all stakeholders to improve liveability.”⁴⁸ The ascribed non-belonging of the *Allochtoon* is made evident in the very ‘social type’ of ‘problem people’ (following David Goldberg).⁴⁹

Noordegraaf explains in *Meanings of Measurement* that the “Safety Index,” used by municipalities to gauge ‘liveability,’ includes an “ethnicity” variable to the effect that a neighborhood in which relatively many *Allochtoon* people live automatically gets a lower rating on the Index.⁵⁰ The sign of a neighborhood’s ‘success’ correlates with a low quantity of ‘undesirable elements,’ which *embody* risk, *unluckiness*, and as such pose a ‘threat’ to liveability. Racial violence is mediated through indices and bureaucratic metrics, which calibrate the composition of ‘unsafe’ neighborhoods.

In Rotterdam, especially, techno-managerial governance has given rise to state-led gentrification that is aimed at enhancing social order and safety in public space in general and in so-called ‘black’ neighborhoods in particular. Within this framework, gentrification and urban renewal are perceived as remedies, and used to minimize, or eliminate, racial/ethnic tensions and, in the words of Uitermark, Duyvendak and Kleinhans, “reduce concentrations that pose a problem for authorities.”⁵¹ In effect, population management is re-scripted as ‘care,’ and, as such, takes on a moral dimension.

The municipal council of Rotterdam has taken a zero-tolerance attitude toward what it considers ‘threatening populations,’ which is reflected not only in the spatial organization of the city – through hot-

⁴⁸ Godfried Engbersen, Erik Snel and Afke Weltevrede, “Woord Vooraf.” In *Sociale Heroering in Amsterdam En Rotterdam: Eén Verhaal Over Twee Wijken* (Den Haag/Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 5.

⁴⁹ David Theo Goldberg, “Racisms in Orange: Afterword.” In *Dutch Racism*, eds. Philomena Essed and Isabel Hoving (Amsterdam, New York: Editions Rodopi, 2014), 410.

⁵⁰ Mirko Noordegraaf, “Meanings of Measurement. The Real Story Behind the Rotterdam Safety Index.” *Public Management Review* 10, no. 2 (2008): 221-239.

⁵¹ Justus Uitermark, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Reinout Kleinhans, “Gentrification as a Governmental Strategy: Social Control and Social Cohesion in Hoogvliet, Rotterdam.” *Environment and Planning A* 39, no. 1 (2007): 125-141.

spot mapping – but also in the design of urban furniture. The seemingly ‘neutral’ designs of urban furniture make it impossible for someone to sleep on them. These designs have been dubbed anti-homeless sleeping designs. Michael Weinstein argues that coercion should be viewed “in terms of controlling spaces rather than in terms of controlling actions.”⁵² If coercion is mediated primarily through the design of public space, then urban regeneration is not only a means to prettify deprived areas, but also a means to control behaviour. In addition to hostile design, the municipal council has made begging illegal. The municipality aims to deter unlawful behavior not only through environmental designs, but also through designing an architecture of ordinances and legal constraints. Homeless people are, in effect, being dissuaded from being in public space without what is recognized by the State as a ‘productive aim.’

The Law is the primary weapon in the arsenal of the state; it is deployed, at its discretion, to enact violence that is deemed not harmful. The municipality safeguards ‘liveability’ through ‘lawfare.’ Lawfare is “the strategy of using – or misusing – law as a substitute for traditional military means to achieve an operational objective.”⁵³ The 2005 “Umbrella and Exception Law,” also known as the “Rotterdam Law,” allows not only for the spatial management, but also the “physical displacement” of urban populations. The Rotterdam Law is deployed as a temporary measure in some neighborhoods to ‘diversify’ the population composition. We have argued in *The Alien Body in Contemporary Netherlands* that the invisibilization of those relegated to the zone of the nonbeing (after Fanon)⁵⁴ is a fundamental aspect to incarceration. For the maintenance of *White Order* and the national myth of a human and humane society, the Netherlands must keep the nonbeing out of sight.⁵⁵

⁵² Michael Weinstein, “Coercion, Space, and the Modes of Human Domination.” In *Coercion* (Chicago: Aldine·Atherton, 1972), 66.

⁵³ Charles J. Jr Dunlap, “Lawfare Today: A Perspective.” *Yale Journal of International Affairs* (Winter 2008): 146-154.

⁵⁴ Fanon, “*The Negro and Psychopathology*”, 109-162.

⁵⁵ Patricia Schor and Egbert Alejandro Martina, “The Alien Body in Contemporary Netherlands: Incarceration and Force-feeding of Asylum Seekers.” In *Critical Legal Thinking*, October 14, 2013, <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/10/14/alien-body-contemporary-netherlands-incarceration-force-feeding-asylum-seekers/>

Care As Surveillance and Containment

A cause for great concern is a form of proactive care-giving, which has been conceptualized as a public-private partnership, that stretches by way of a “Behind the Front Door approach” (*Achter de Voordeur Aanpak*) into the hitherto ‘private’ life of ‘anti-social’ citizens.⁵⁶ The institutionalization of “Intervention Teams,” which consist of officials of the (immigration) police, the Social Affairs and Employment services, the municipality, and housing associations that make “house calls” together, is an object lesson in the way ‘care,’ surveillance, and the criminal industrial complex converge in policy practice.⁵⁷ In *Protocol Home Visits Urban and Municipal Intervention Rotterdam*, a document issued by the municipality of Rotterdam, the writers explain that the mission of intervention teams is to “intervene in the vital worlds of citizens: physical world, living space, world of work, financial, social and emotional world.”⁵⁸ The aim of municipal intervention teams is twofold: enforcement and preventive care.

Intervention connotes forcible strategic interference with a political, or medical, objective in the state/affairs of another with the aim to improve, restore, or prevent; it is strongly associated with both the military and the medical industry. Given the connotation of ‘intervention,’ it is unsurprising that the care-giving activity of intervention teams has overtones of a military operation on all fronts. This military connotation is enhanced by the use of metaphorical language that is strongly associated with combat. Intervention Teams are explicitly deployed to *take back, reclaim, and reconquer* “security risk areas.” Intervention teams are not only tasked with bringing order in the streets, which falls under the purview of the police, but also in ‘anti-social’ homes.

Day-to-day control of public space is slowly being moved out of the hands of the police. An examination of the government document

⁵⁶ Gemeente Rotterdam, *Protocol Huisbezoeken Stedelijke En Deelgemeentelijke Interventieteams Rotterdam* (Rotterdam: Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Gemeente Rotterdam, *Protocol Huisbezoeken Stedelijke En Deelgemeentelijke Interventieteams Rotterdam*, 5.

Monitoring and Maintaining Order in Public Spaces Strengthened by Special Investigating Officers shows that currently civilians, some in supervisorial capacities, are increasingly being tasked with spatial control:

Besides the special investigating officers, many municipalities also deploy street wardens, street coaches and other supervisors, who hold no authority, and yet they represent a low-threshold method of keeping ‘eyes and ears’ open in public spaces. Many valuable citizens’ initiatives have been started up over the last few years relating to supervision, according to the Minister [of Security and Justice], such as projects with neighbourhood fathers and neighbourhood watch, as well as collaborative projects between the police and businesses (including the Business Security Warranty). He is currently looking into the best possible way in which citizens can be involved in the supervision of public spaces, whilst fulfilling their desire to make an actual contribution. It was also set out in the coalition agreement that citizens would become more involved in the security policy for neighbourhoods.⁵⁹

In a converse move, police work itself has shifted toward social care work. A lot of contemporary police work centres on “‘the most vulnerable members’ of society, such as single-parent families, multi-problem families, people with disabilities and/or low income, addicts, the homeless and mentally ill.”⁶⁰ According to the Dutch police, “[p]olice and healthcare complement each other,” which leads the police to assert that “safety and health care are closely linked.” The police posit that there is “a large overlap of the target groups of police and (health)care.” Militarism and policing have come together under the sign of public health – particularly Public Mental Health Care (OGGZ). “In cases where there is a display of antisocial behaviour, offenses or crimes,”

⁵⁹ “Monitoring and Maintaining Order in Public Spaces Strengthened by Special Investigating Officers.” Government of the Netherlands, accessed March 20, 2015, <http://www.government.nl/news/2013/07/02/monitoring-and-maintaining-order-in-public-spaces-strengthened-by-special-investigating-officers.html>

⁶⁰ Auke J. Van Dijk, Frank Hoogewoning and Sandra Ter Woerds, “Op Het Snijsvlak Van Veiligheid En Zorg: Samenwerking in Uitvoering.” *Het Tijdschrift Voor De Politie* 76, no. 9 (2014): 6.

van Dijk, Hoogewoening, and Woerds note, “the police may make use of pressure and coercion, including in extreme cases deprivation of liberty.”⁶¹

Municipal efforts to get involved in the private world of citizens with the aim to re-socialize “anti-social” or “deviant” people through a careful distribution of “care” expose the fantasy about a fixed line between the private and the public. The symbiosis of outside and inside, public and private, space and body, precedes and informs liveability programmes to a considerable extent. In urban areas where liveability is considered substantially restrained, the “city and house [become] indistinguishable.”⁶² The fading distinction between the neighborhood and domestic space reveals the invasive power of *White Order*. The *care* offered by both the police and intervention teams within so-called “hot zones” is in service of the biopolitical imperative of *White Order*. What passes for “care” is, in fact, covert surveillance, at best, and eugenics, at worst.⁶³ Within the “care” network of the intervention team, “deviant” populations are perceived as redeemable, or recuperable, only inasmuch as they display a desire for normality by ‘cooperating.’⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Giorgio Agamben, “The Camp as Biopolitical Paradigm of the Modern.” In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 188.

⁶³ For instance, in 2006 the then alderwoman in Rotterdam Marianne van den Anker proposed to send pregnant women, whose children would be at risk of becoming victims of neglect, violence, and abuse, to an abortion clinic. She argued that forced abortion should apply especially for Antillean teenage mothers, that is, Black women, sex workers, drug addicts, and the mentally disabled.

⁶⁴ We believe that this trend, which couples care with surveillance, is specific to the current stage of neo-liberal privatization and rolling out the welfare state in other European countries with a previously strong welfare system. See a very similar trend in Sweden, representing what Randi Gressgård coins “the securitization of welfare” through a “safety-security nexus” in the author’s paper: Randi Gressgård, “Plural Policing and the Safety–security Nexus in Urban Governance: The Expanded cohesion Agenda in Malmö.” *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, no. 1 (forthcoming 2016).

The Racial Calculus: Price Tagging Black Life

‘Deviance’ as a threat to quality of life and liveability functions as a conceit for a person’s relationship to structures of capital and ‘White Order.’ The commitment of the state to *White Order* and the maximization of prosperity, as a strategy to secure the life of the nation, has rendered all life calculable. The belief that life is calculable in terms of the parameters of *White Order* is symptomatic of the intersections between political economy and biopolitics in which certain expressions and forms of life are formally institutionalized: the disciplined and productive life is formally, though not explicitly, presented as the example to follow. By this we mean that the lives of middle-class, heteronormative, able-bodied, neurotypical White persons are taken as the norm against which all other forms of life are judged. As such, the *good, proper* life full of possibility is a life that is already coded as *White*.

Discussions of ‘deviance’ center not only on its threat to liveability, but also on its costs to society. In 2010, for instance, the PVV (the Freedom Party, the extreme Right party of Geert Wilders) attempted to calculate ‘how much an *Allochtoon* costs.’ Surveys into the costs and benefits of racialized lives are not only reserved to the PVV; they can be found across the political spectrum.⁶⁵ Investigations into the costs of racialized groups and social sorting technologies such as risk assessments and the “Safety Index,” which use racially biased statistical predictors in order to secure liveability, turn people into data.

⁶⁵ More recently, as we write, midst what has been narrated in Europe, *De Volkskrant*, known as the national newspaper that represents the voice of the Dutch Left, published an article titled ‘How much asylum seekers actually cost.’ This is illustrative of the pervasiveness of anti-alien narratives, the increasing normalization of xenophobic rhetoric, but also of the slippage between anti-foreign categories into blackness. Yvonne Hofs, “Wat Kosten Asielzoekers Nou?”, *de Volkskrant*, October 26, 2015, http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/wat-kosten-asielzoekers-nou~a4149990/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_content=free&utm_campaign=shared+content&hash=e6d2846de1c52be0136524f46289a1ac0edbe010

Social processes that turn populations into probability data sets allow for the exercise of control over all aspects of life through a process of devaluation and valuation. *Race* – meaning Blackness – functions as a sign of danger, risk, and liability. The co-articulation of prosperity and safety has given rise to contemporary strategies intended to keep Blackness out of the Netherlands.⁶⁶ One such strategy is a bill proposed by incumbent MP André Bosman. The ‘Bosman-bill’ intends to regulate immigration from Aruba, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten to the Netherlands. Bosman argues that,

Many of these people are disadvantaged [*kansarm*] by Dutch standards. People leaving their homeland for a country where they have few opportunities does nobody any good. They often have no diploma, don’t speak the language well, and end up relatively frequently in criminality. Between 2006 and 2010 one in five Antilleans came into contact with the police, compared with 1 in 20 natives. In addition, in 2010 11.3% of Antilleans in the Netherlands were at home, unemployed. These are alarming figures. It cannot be that we have to bear the burden for problems that start on the other side of the ocean. The faucet really needs to be turned off.⁶⁷

Bosman avails himself of the rhetoric of chance and probability – evidenced by terms such as “relatively frequently” and his reliance on crime and unemployment statistics – in order to rationalize anti-Black affect, and ‘justify’ the management of Blackness: according to Bosman, the statistics are not in favor of disadvantaged Antilleans. Historically, the Dutch Caribbean, and by extension the Antillean, which is a shorthand for Black and

⁶⁶ Deira, Shari. “Veel Kritiek Op VVD-plan Om Kansarme Antillianen Te Weren,” Elsevier. Reed Business Bv, last modified March 12, 2014, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.elsevier.nl/Politiek/nieuws/2014/3/Veel-kritiek-op-VVD-plan-om-kansarme-Antillianen-te-weren-1479783W/>

⁶⁷ “Strikte Regulering Verblijf En Vestiging Kansarme Antillianen.” *VVD*, Volkspartij Voor Vrijheid En Democratie, last modified March 11, 2014, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.vvd.nl/nieuws/300/strikte-regulering-verblijf-en-vestiging-kansarme-antillianen>.

criminal, have consistently been scripted as “useless,”⁶⁸ and as a financial drain on the Netherlands.⁶⁹

The rhetoric of chance and probability hides the constitutive violence that produces racial hierarchy and skewed life chances. The attribution of differential life-value and life chances (based on probability) to groups of people is an extension of the constitutive practice in which the legitimacy of life is grounded upon the valuation of the human above the non-human. Inequality is more than “simply” the result of *bad luck* – rather than it is the outcome of a deliberate racial calculus. Lisa Tessman argues that certain forms of luck are “systemic rather than natural or accidental luck.”⁷⁰ “Kansarm,” which is used to classify those “most in need,” is illustrative of the erasure of racial violence. “Kansarm” translates as *disadvantaged*, or *underprivileged*, but it means literally “poor in chances.” To designate someone as *kansarm* is to assign them a statistical and perceived risk, which delimits their possibilities and constrains their life. To be *kansarm* is, in other words, to have a life that is statistically curtailed.

In a *post-political* fashion, *kansarm* takes the place of structural analysis of social injustice, whereby the status quo is reinforced: “at risk” and disadvantaged groups *simply* lack possibilities due to the ‘luck’ of the draw. Tesfahuney and Ek assert that the term post-politics does not “denote the end of politics, or an era after/beyond politics.”⁷¹ Rather, post-politics refers specifically to “the conduct of politics by other means,” which reassembles political issues “as economic, managerial (administrative/technocratic) and moral concerns.” In the framework of post-politics, political struggles and antagonisms are ratcheted down to operational problems that can be resolved through

⁶⁸ Nanette de Jong, “Introduction / Introductorio: Get Ready! / Poné Bo kla!” In *Tambú: Curaçao’s African-Caribbean Ritual and the Politics of Memory* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012), 7.

⁶⁹ “Meerderheid Nederlanders Wil Af Van Antillen.” AD.nl., De Persgroep Digital, last modified October 7, 2015, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.ad.nl/ad/nl/1013/Buitenland/article/detail/4157957/2015/10/07/Meerderheid-Nederlanders-wil-af-van-Antillen.dhtml>

⁷⁰ Lisa Tessman, “Regretting the Self One Is.” In *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 30.

⁷¹ Tesfahuney and Ek, “Planning as War,” 171-177.

“consensual ‘good’ techno-managerial governance.”⁷² Politics, then, becomes “institutionalized social management, whereby all problems are dealt with through administrative-organizational technical means and questioning of things as such disappears.” Consensual politics and democracy become the prevailing ideologies and ideal means of achieving the “common good by an enlightened government of elites.”⁷³ Politics, in other words, becomes a matter of management through metrics and risk indices – of increasing ‘chances’ and possibilities.

Conclusion

On the surface, the desire for order assumes an air of reasonableness, or pragmatism, which renders racial issues into non-issues through rational dialogue and accommodation. Any sign of “unreasonableness,” any contamination *by* and *of* the senses, is exorcized.

“Fair-mindedness” resonates with the logic of formal contracts, written procedures, and quality systems that lies at the heart of formal interactions in the Netherlands: “a deal is a deal,” and “rules are rules.” This logic does not only govern the realm of formal interactions, but the sphere of sociability as well as. The overarching narrative is that all one needs to do in order to “function properly” and be accepted is to abide by “the rules.” The realm of supposedly shared meanings shape policies via a “consensus” that positions certain populations as always-already at odds with the status quo – they are always-already seen as failing to follow the “rules of engagement.” Unlike spectacular forms of violence, coercion may operate under the cover of voluntarism, or reasonableness, or even urban planning. Bureaucracy, urban design, and proper planning are expected to create order in the chaos of society. Structural violence is given legitimacy for it is an unspoken requirement in the building of civil society itself.

However, rules alone do not explain the workings of society. Moreover, rules do not “make *it* work”: ‘rules’ are not racially neutral.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Rules and reasonableness, which gesture toward a supposed shared positionality, equal opportunity, and a shared aspiration to make society run smoothly, is predicated, as we argue, on a economy of containment and removal. The removal of *the Black* from purview is the founding act of civil society, and civil society enacts this originary violence continuously as it simultaneously repudiates the use of extreme force. There is a “collective disavowal of the violence subtending the production of blackness. This collective disavowal exists despite or because of the centrality of anti-blackness for the production of the world’s sociality.”⁷⁴ Moreover, “Blackness,” as Tommy J. Curry notes, “denies racialized people the ability to claim a right to life.”⁷⁵ The figure of *the Black* emerges as a core object in the narrative of Humanity: she confirms the White man’s burden and must, therefore, be present in order to make the narrative of the Human cohere both metaphorically and materially in space. What separates the Human from nonbeings is their “humanitarian” efforts, the “empathetic” or “humane” relationship with those in the zone of nonbeing.

How Black people are seen and narrated, as well as the spaces they inhabit, contribute greatly to the construction of a nationalist, gendered, classed, sexualized, socio-spatial framework of “White Order.” In the fusion of state territoriality and White supremacy, the state surveils Black and non-white bodies already within, and disciplines and delimits their mobility inside the national territory. Coercion through spatial control manifests itself by way of designing out Blackness. The legal system and urban planning become means to secure the Whiteness and well-being of the nation.

Violent practices that target Black people have been systematically normalized and are not recognized as such but as post-political and therefore non-racialized. We must consistently pull into view the colonial genealogy of the categorization of Blackness associated with (in)security and threat and its afterlife in contemporary rhetoric and

⁷⁴ Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, “Waking Nightmares.” *GLQ: Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 17, no. 2-3 (2011): 358.

⁷⁵ Tommy J. Curry, “Pessimistic Themes in Kanye West’s Negrophobic Aesthetic: Moving Beyond Subjects of Perfection to Understand the New Slave as a Paradigm of Anti-Black Violence.” *The Pluralist* 9, no. 3 (2014): 27.

policy *ordering* public space. It is fundamental to force the gaze of both racialized subjects at the receiving end of spatial control and those at the hegemonic side of its production towards spatial violence – the limitation of mobility through containment – acted upon Black people in the Dutch national narrative and its corresponding territory.

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