Towards a political geography of hotels: Southern Rhodesia, 1958–1962

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A B S T R A C T

This article sets out the case for taking account of hotels in political geography. It argues that hotels, as key spaces of welcome, association, and entertainment between public and private, are important political sites. They provide space for the performance of political ideologies and identities, where political campaigns can be made visible, where political relations can be illuminated and translated for international audiences, and where the 'little things' (Thrift, 2000, 2004) that construct political geographies can be examined. Drawing on theoretical discussions of hospitality, as well as work in political geography, it explores the politics of multi-racial hospitality in the hotels of Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, between 1958 and 1962 in order to understand late colonial politics in Southern Africa. Considering three individual hotels, the paper elaborates their role as keys spaces in the landscape of exclusive 'European' sociability; as crucial sites in the enactment of and resistance to the colour bar; and as vantage points on Southern Rhodesian racial politics for international guests. The papers shows that far from being peripheral to the 'real' politics of diplomacy and government, hotels and the hospitable practises within them can be seen as crucial elements in the construction of local, national and international politics.

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Introduction

This paper makes the case for the consideration of hotels in political geography. It takes as its focus the hotels of Southern Rhodesia 1958–1962 and argues that, as key spaces of welcome, association, and entertainment between public and private, they provided important sites for the performance of late colonial political ideologies and identities. In these hotels, the racial boundaries of public social life were constructed and contested. The article shows that far from being peripheral to the 'real' politics of diplomacy and government, hotels and the hospitable practises within them are crucial elements in the construction of local, national and international politics. The cases discussed exemplify the value of exploring hotels as spaces for performing political identities, where political campaigns can be made visible, where political relations can be illuminated and translated for international audiences, and where the 'little things' (Thrift, 2000, 2004) that construct political geographies can be examined.

Salisbury (now Harare), the capital of Southern Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe), provides a productive focus for the paper as it was central to the representation, narration, and practise of multi-racial policies, as well as white settler identities in the late colonial period. In the paper, Salisbury's 'big three' hotels (Sunday Mail, 1961, 1), as important spaces in social and political life, provide key sites to examine contested versions of racially exclusive and multi-racial society. 1958–1962 was a key period in Southern Rhodesia when, in the context of the growing power of African Nationalism in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland and increasingly violent apartheid in South Africa, 'opinions transformed in response to a heady mix of racial, international, imperial and constitutional tensions' (Leaver, 2006, 174). In this period, ideas of multi-racialism were finally rejected. Hotel hospitality had profound effects on the wider ideology of multi-racial partnership, and thus on the political geographies of late colonialism and decolonization.

The paper begins by setting out the case for considering hotels as key sites in the making of political geographies, with a particular focus on race, performance and hospitality. There follows a brief discussion of the sources used to examine Salisbury's hotel and hospitality scene before the particular meanings of multi-racialism and multi-racial partnership in Southern Africa are explored. The paper then turns to the precise performances, meanings and spaces of multi-racial hospitality in Salisbury. Following this, the role of Salisbury's hotels in the making of Southern Rhodesian politics is elaborated: first, as keys spaces where as part of the landscape of exclusive 'European' sociability, the colour bar was enacted; second, as sites where this discrimination was resisted through direct action; and third, as vantage points on Southern Rhodesian society for international guests, as sites through which multi-racial hospitality could be known at a distance. It concludes that hotels

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and the hospitable practises within them are crucial elements in the construction of local, national and international politics.

Towards a political geography of hotel hospitality

Hotels and political geography

Although often overlooked in popular histories of hotels and tourism and hospitality studies, the architectural, cultural, and geopolitical importance of hotels is increasingly recognized (Lugosi, 2008; McNeill, 2008; Sandoval-Strausz, 1999; Wharton, 2001). However, within the discipline of political geography, hotels have not been the focus of sustained examination. This is surprising given that, as Fregonese and Dodds note, 'Hotels are primary sites of formal or dramatic events of international politics, state formation, and political violence' (2010, n.p.). For example, hotels offer insights into the projection of soft power through Cold War design competition (Wharton, 2001), and form an integral part of the popular constructions of espionage (Reijnders, 2010). Hotels are also crucial in the geopolitics of conflict, as easy targets of terrorism and militant action, and 'important components of transnational geographies of emergency, evacuation, care and hospitality during conflict and displacement' (Fregonese & Dodds, 2010, n.p.). As sites through which journalists access news stories, and from which they deliver copy to international audiences, hotels play a crucial role in the construction of war narratives (Pinkerton, in press). Hotels are therefore often vital sites caught up in, and shaping, the drama of international geopolitics.

Hotels are also important to political geographies in different registers. As 'civic showcases' (Fregonese & Dodds, 2010, n.p.) they provide space for, and symbols of, certain visions for local and national political and public life, alongside other sites in the city. Hotels occupy a unique role in the urban environment, somewhere between the domestic and personal, the private and commercial, and the public and civil. Though private property, they are generally governed by State regulation, through licencing for example, and often in the case of the colonial state, through legislation that enforced residential segregation. In the United States of America too, hotels were marked by legislative and social segregation by race (see also Sandoval-Strausz, 2007; Young Armstead, 2005). Staeheli and Mitchell (2007a) draw together questions of legislation and property to show how different sorts of public and publically accessible spaces are not only shaped by, but also crucial in the making of political life and differently constituted (and often exclusive) notions of the public. In highlighting the role of 'social norms and community membership and practises of legitimation' in shaping 'the ability – for differently situated people – to *be* in public' their insights also help us to reflect on the social relations that connect legislation, official sociability and personal interactions in the hotel and which therefore contribute to the construction of societies and their exclusions (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007a, 141–142).

McNeill has argued that in the first half of the twentieth century, the hotel lobby was 'a public arena where a particular kind of urban sociality flourished (though this public was often gendered, racially and ethnically screened, and class-conscious)' (2008, 386). The lobby, on the threshold between the public and the private, is a space for 'intensely public…sociability' (Sandoval-Strausz, 1999, 257). Thus it can be understood as an important site for 'the intentional performance of certain attitudes, behaviours and identities so they can be seen and accounted for' in the constitution of the public (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007a, 124). Sociability matters in the making of diplomacy, connections, consensus and credibility and in the construction of civic, colonial and progressive identities (Enloe, 2000; Finnegan, 2005; Laidlaw, 2005). If 'hotel space has

become a sorting mechanism for self-selecting strangers who regard their choice of space as reflective of their identity' (McNeill, 2008, 385), then we can view the hotel as a resource to construct identities based on class and aesthetic choices, but also on political allegiances.

Focussing on Raffles Hotel in Singapore, Goh (2010, 181) has revealed that it was the location for, and active in, the presentation, performance and practise of colonial politics. During the day its ballrooms and verandas offered sites from which to gaze at the 'sensual manifestations' of colonial life. At night, the lights illuminated an elite colonial lifestyle for those watching outside. Thus although the hotel has commonly been understood as a site for secret political assignations, a liminal space of 'anonymity where guests can 'disappear'' (Pritchard & Morgan, 2006, 764), and where workers are often invisible (Gibson, 2006), a political geography of hotels must also be aware that they offer a site for the *visible* performances of guests (Hay, 2009).

Hospitable performances and race

The hotel, coded as hospitable space, provides the ultimate site through which to explore hospitable performances. As Bell (2007, 8) notes, 'the dramaturgical metaphor … [is] especially appropriate to the 'staging' of the hospitable encounter at the table or across the bar'. Although often understood in tourism and hospitality studies from an un-theorized managerial perspective (Lugosi, 2008), wider debates about hospitality have shown the term to be far more complex than economic transaction or pure personal kindness (Barnett, 2005; Derrida, 1999; Rosello, 2001). Working at both the national and the individual scale, hospitality is the relationship between host and guest, but the use of these terms with reference to 'immigrants' and 'native' communities, colonisers, visitors and invited workers alerts us to the complexity of these relationships and the inequalities of power implicit within them (Dikeç, 2002; Rosello, 2001). Jacques Derrida (1999, 15–16) has argued that 'to dare say welcome is perhaps to insinuate that one is at home', and the invitation of hospitality can therefore been seen as performing 'unrelinquished mastery over one's own space' (Barnett, 2005, 13). Constructing hospitality as generosity, benevolence and tolerance reproduces and reinforces uneven relationships of power and rights to belong, especially pertinent in the context of a late colonial settler society (Dikeç, 2002).

In this paper, conceptual understandings of hospitality are brought together with an empirical focus on Salisbury's top three hotels in order to examine their role as sites for contested multiracial hospitality. Although the bedrooms and backrooms of these hotels would undoubtedly reveal a fascinating set of social, economic and political relations, these spaces are beyond this paper's scope. Instead, our focus here is on the lounges, restaurants and bars, the different spaces of hotel sociability that facilitated the performance of political identities. Staged formal sundowners and an informal drink, the inhospitality of the hotel colour bar and the campaign against it, should be understood in terms of the performance of power. By focussing on high-end hotels and their guests and patrons rather than their employees, this paper discusses elites, and could be accused of rendering hotel work invisible (Gibson, 2006; McDowell, 2010; Wills, 2005). There are important stories to be told of Southern Rhodesian labour in this period, but here it is hotel guests and their practises – dining arrangements and bar etiquette for example – that are explored as important components in the making of political geographies. Complimenting the plethora of work on interactions between employees and guests (Crang, 1994; Gibson, 2006; McDowell, 2010), research into guest–guest hospitality in the hotel reveals an important set of social, cultural and political relations.

Etiquette and manners helped to make colonial relations in Africa. In Southern Rhodesia, they acted 'as markers of status, as signals of resistance, and as displays of citizenship' (Shutt, 2007, 673). Deferential body language and angry gesticulation in the African community were understood in relation to the colonial mission, racialised narratives about impudence and the creation of a civilised nation (Shutt, 2007, 673). In Uganda, Summers (2006) has shown that manners and politeness were a significant source of elite power. In this context, 'rudeness' could be harnessed to disrupt hospitality to and with the colonial regime in the fight against colonialism. White rudeness could also be utilised in critiques of colonialism (Shutt, in press). Thus in late colonial Africa, the little things (see Thrift, 2000, 2004): performances of hospitality, politeness, and good manners − as well as disruptions to them − were important to the interplay of colonial politics. A political geography of hotels reveals the spectacular and everyday performance of power relations within these spaces, and contributes important alternative scales and sites to those traditionally considered in geopolitical research (see Dittmer & Gray, 2010; Hyndman, 2004; see also Stoler, 2002).

Capturing hotel hospitality

The spaces of multi-racial hotel hospitality are reconstructed through a range of published and unpublished archival sources from Southern Rhodesia and the UK. Though written and consumed by elites, these communities were important in shaping late colonial Southern Rhodesia. It is challenging to capture historical hospitality, based on atmosphere, relationship, gesture and conversation (Crang, 1994; Philo & Laurier, 2006). However, the hospitality discussed here was often explicit, staged, knowing and contested, and therefore commonly transcribed in newspaper accounts, autobiographies and letters home, recorded as it became extraordinary (Ashmore, 2011) in the context of late colonialism.

The newspaper the *Central African Examiner* was a fortnightly (later monthly) newspaper printed in Salisbury and a 'well known source' for studying this period (King, 1996, 133). It provided major Federation news stories and light hearted accounts of Central African colonial life. Politically, the paper represented liberal and industry opinion, aimed at pushing a less than eager government into partnership. It moved from a period of friendly support of policy in 1958 towards a more radical position by 1962 (King, 1996). In the years after 1960, the paper became a strong supporter of the Citizens Against the Colour Bar Association (CACBA), one of several pressure groups pushing for greater racial equality. Individuals involved in CACBA were contributors (King, 1996) and as such, this campaign, and issues of multi-racialism more broadly, appear prominently in the *Examiner*'s pages. Other newspapers also gave prominent coverage (albeit often critical) of the campaign, and of the changing legislation governing hotels. These included the *Rhodesian Herald* and the *Evening Standard* (owned by the South African Argus group) and the *Daily Mail* and *Sunday Mail*. The *Rhodesian Bottle Store and Hotel Review* (RBSHR), a hotel trade publication provides other perspectives on the CACBA campaigns and the socio-political geographies of Southern Rhodesian hotels.

These accounts are complemented by published biographical reports, such as those by the infamous Labour MP John Stonehouse (defiantly anti-Federation and later revealed to be spying for Czechoslovakia); assessments of visits to Salisbury including that of the UK Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and the Public Affairs Officer of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Elizabeth Owen, and Doris Lessing in her non-fictional Going Home (1957). Further details of the CACBA campaign are provided by a personal diary kept by John Reed and an oral history interview with Terence Ranger, both lecturers at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and heavily

involved in the campaign. An interview with Zambian (Northern Rhodesian) journalist, Roger N'gombe, who worked for the *Evening Standard* in Salisbury between 1959 and 1964 provides additional details about the hotel colour bar in Salisbury.

The terms used in the paper are those utilised in Southern Rhodesia in this period. European refers to the white population. Settler was used to refer to a smaller group within the white population who were longstanding residents and who most clearly defined themselves as Rhodesian (Roberts, 1978). African is used to refer to the black population but does not differentiate between different groups within this. Coloured was used to represent people of mixed descent and Asian to the relatively large population from the Indian subcontinent, the majority of whom were of Indian descent.

Southern Rhodesia, The Central African Federation and multi-racial partnership

The Central African Federation created by Britain in 1953 comprised Northern and Southern Rhodesia (later Zambia and Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (later Malawi) (Fig. 1). It drew together Southern Rhodesia, with a large and powerful minority white settler community and significant independence from Britain, and two Protectorates, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, with smaller white populations and less political independence from Britain. It was created to produce a stronger economic unit out of the three individual colonies, as well as to stall racial 'extremism' and growing calls for independence.

Multi-racial partnership was central to the rhetoric surrounding the creation of the Federation. Partnership was, according to Anthony King 'an attempt to present to a sceptical world a picture of racial partnership, of Black and White striving together to create a multi-racial state − a halfway house between apartheid and White supremacy, as practised in South Africa, and African nationalism' (1996, 135−136). Introduced in 1953, 'many people on both sides of the colour line enthusiastically embraced what seemed to be a new way of defining race relations' with the 'liberalism' of partnership seeming to provide clear water between apartheid and the Federation (King, 1996, 136), as well as a clear
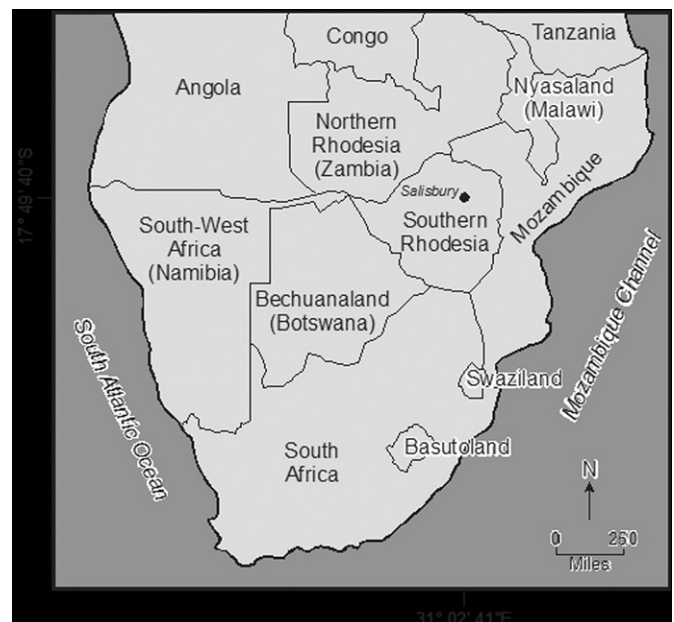

Fig. 1. Southern Africa in 1960.

path to prosperity for African elites (Leaver, 2006). Multi-racialism in 1950s Southern Rhodesia 'enjoyed legitimacy many now find incredible' (Leaver, 2006, 170), and was expressed through imagery of multi-racial cooperation in education, health, and economic development (Cohen, 2009; Kaler, 1999). It was also performed through multi-racial hospitality extended by numerous political, charitable and civil society associations in the form of tea parties and sundowners (Hancock, 1984).

However, the discourse of multi-racial partnership was not matched by the realities in the Federation, which included 'disparity of pay between African and European… and racial segregation' (Cohen, 2009, 118). In the late 1950s, there still remained a formal and informal colour bar in employment and leisure and limited access to political rights for the non-white majority. In the context of a lack of progress towards equality in Southern Rhodesia, alongside Pan-Africanism and decolonisation in other parts of Africa, multi-racial partnership became discredited. The formation of the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress in 1957, heralding the beginning of the active nationalist movement, was an important moment in the shift away from support for partnership amongst African elites. From the late 1950s, they were increasingly drawn to the Congress over continuing partnerships with white liberals (Scarnecchia, 2008; West, 2002). The bloodshed and political repression of the Central African Emergency of 1959, where normal judicial processes were suspended in all three territories was a further blow to the narrative of peaceful racial partnership (Darwin, 1994). Multi-racialism in Southern Rhodesia was finally defeated when Prime Minister Edgar Whitehead's government, supportive of limited advances in African participation in the democratic process and the creation of a multi-racial state, was defeated in the 1962 elections by the Rhodesian Front.

In 1963, the Central African Federation disintegrated as a result of increasing centrifugal tendencies in the northern and southern territories. Zambia (Northern Rhodesia) and Malawi (Nyasaland) became independent almost immediately with African majority rule. In Southern Rhodesia, Britain was unwilling to grant independence to a white minority government, and in 1965 the Rhodesian Front, under Ian Smith, led Rhodesia to a Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain, ushering in 15 more years of white rule. The period under scrutiny here is late in the Federation's short life, from 1958 when partnership in Southern Rhodesia reached its zenith, to the early 1960s when the black majority pushed for real political and economic change, and the white minority hardened their opinions moving further towards the situation in South Africa.

Hotels and multi-racial hospitality in Southern Rhodesia

Performing partnership through multi-racial hospitality

Multi-racial hospitality was important in the performance of partnership and of liberal progressive identities in Salisbury throughout the second half of the 1950s. In Southern Rhodesia, the Courtesy Campaign, the Dolphin Club, the Interracial International Restaurant, the Capricorn Africa Society, the Interracial Association, Concord, the Salisbury Christian African Group, and the Non-Racial Residential Rhodes Club each provided, in different ways, attempts to forge a multi-racial society (Hancock, 1984; Lessing, 1957; Scarnecchia, 2008; Shutt, in press; West, 2002). Each of these was based not only on campaigning for non-European rights, but also on particular forms of hospitable behaviour. As the Interracial Association's newsletter of April 1958 explained, some of their members 'cross the colour line to invite Africans and Asians into their homes, a step that is repugnant to most Europeans' (Mackay,

1958, 4). Bigger social functions in public spaces gave these groups, as they were aware, 'an opportunity to show a wide public that "interracialism" can be entertaining, and that the people who belong to the association are not just dreary, long haired intellectuals, but quite ordinary men and women who get as much of a kick out of Sonny Sondo's hot rhythms as any other jazz lover does' (ULRLS, 1958, 2).

The spaces, practises and values of multi-racial hospitality, as well as the resonance of these narratives as signifiers of broader policies can be explored though a quiz that appeared in the 1960 Christmas issue of the *Central African Examiner*. This attempted to establish, with tongue firmly in cheek, the position of the reader in Southern Rhodesian society. The question (and answers) use hospitality as shorthand for a politically motivated satirical jab at those who opposed partnership:

> Do you ever have any Africans in for: a) Tea — this is the prerogative of lady liberals only who can never be part of the establishment, no marks, b) Dinner — this is going too far, no marks, or c) Drinks — yes, one mark only as long as they are on the recommended list obtainable from the United Federal Party headquarters. If however you invite them to receptions in public places only, you get a bonus of two marks (Central African Examiner, 1960a, 13, 17).

The answers suggest dinner is too intimate to be safely multi-racial, indicative of encroaching into the domestic space of private homes. Drinks with 'respectable Africans' are acceptable however, especially if they take place at hotel receptions and sundowners. Such occasions, in public and visible, are passable and politically useful forms of partnership performance. Hotels provided safe spaces where multi-racialism could be gestured towards through an engagement with African and Asian elites, without threatening the boundaries of private European domesticity and sexuality. The space of the hotel acted as a stage for the performance of liberal multi-racial political identities.

The quiz also highlights the scripted nature of much multi-racial hospitality. Rosello (2001) argues that without risk, hospitality cannot be understood as meaningful. In her words, 'hospitality without risk usually hides a more serious violence… if the guest and the host are not willing to take that risk and do not welcome the possibility of being challenged, shaken, changed by the encounter, then there is no hospitality' (2001: 173–4). Barnett (2005, 13) argues that true hospitality refers to 'unanticipated arrival, to a *visitation* without *invitation*' rather than more carefully arranged and managed visits. In these terms, a multi-racial sundowner at a respectable hotel cannot be seen as true hospitality; rather it could be characterised as a staged and formulaic performance of Southern Rhodesian citizenship, which merely reiterated the legitimacy of European sociability.

In addition, the quiz sheds further light onto the gendered activities of the multi-racial movements active in Salisbury. White women were commonly excluded from the formal political cultures of the colony but they often spearheaded hospitality, and women's role in Southern Rhodesian society was not seen as peripheral to the building of the nation. There is a long history of elite women's work in supporting imperialism and diplomacy through hospitality (Enloe, 2000; Pickles, 2005), and as Kaler (1999, 284) notes in the context of the Southern Rhodesian Women's Homecraft Movement, 'creating and maintaining harmonious relationships with their African "sisters" was a form of citizenship work deemed appropriate for civic-minded white women.'

While the quiz answers portray extending an invitation to Africans for tea as part of a liberal agenda, this agenda could also align with a vision for the future of Southern Rhodesia in which European social and political cultures continued to dominate. Even

when hospitality was inclusive, it was conducted in European spaces and remained within the boundaries of European sociability and ideas of the nation (Kennedy, 1987). If multi-racialism could be read as indicative of 'black or white faith in African adaptation to European mores' rather than the reconstruction of a more inclusive idea of the nation (Leaver, 2006, 184; see also Dixon, 1973), then even the most sincere multi-racial hospitality could be an empty performance. As West (2002, 200) notes, by the early 1960s,

> there had been a great deal of interracial partying, socializing, and good timing, courtesy of the white liberals. But although gracious hosts, useful contacts, perhaps even genuine friends, these white liberals were ultimately powerless to remove the racist impediments to African social mobility.

Carol Summers (2006, 741) has shown that, in 1940s Uganda, 'Dinners and other forms of entertainments and hospitality were… [understood as] pernicious forms of corruption' which disempowered all but the African elite. Prominent Africans, who moved from embracing to rejecting multi-racial hospitality in Southern Rhodesia, make similar arguments in their accounts (West, 2002). Multi-racial hospitality came to be seen, by the late 1950s, as symptomatic of the wider window dressing of multi-racial partnership without real change in the colony. Doris Lessing (1957), returning to investigate conditions in the colony, found that questions about uneven economic relationships were answered with platitudes about multi-racial dining. Thus instead of signalling a steady shift towards equality, such occasions could be seen as buttressing the power of the colonial elite (Shutt, in press). Mamdani (1996) notes the continuity between the institutions of civil society pre- and post independence and notes that in late colonialism, these were deracialised but not dismantled (see also Scarnecchia, 2008). Such concerns over this continuity in neighbouring Zambia were raised by Grace Keith (1963, 10—11) in the *Central African Examiner* in the run-up to independence. In her editorial, she used key motifs of western hospitality — the cocktail party and the visitor book, noting these were central to the new African elite's social lives — to question the reality of political change in the country. In the context of late colonialism, hospitality mattered. The 'little things' (Thrift, 2000), such as invitations, drinks, and dinners contributed to the construction and critique of multi-racial partnership.

Salisbury's hotels and the colour bar

Hotels in Southern Rhodesia provided one important space for multi-racial hospitality, alongside private homes. However, they were also significant sites for the performance of settler sociability of a more exclusive kind. Salisbury's hotels were part of an urban fabric of differently accessible public spaces including civic squares, government buildings, restaurants, cinemas and other amenities such as swimming pools which were more or less open to, and inclusive and representative of, the Southern Rhodesian population.

Hotels were sites through which what Staeheli and Mitchell (2007a) call 'regimes of publicity' were constructed, governing who could be in public and part of it. Through hotels, the racial politics of exclusion, service and subservience was enacted (Goh, 2010). Thus colonial sociability and association in Salisbury's hotels enriched a colonial politics of race in the Federation, and affected its understanding in Britain and beyond. It was in these spaces that the limits of Rhodesian identity and society were felt with most clarity.

We now turn to Salisbury's top three hotels, in order to unpack the political geographies of multi-racial (in)hospitality constructed through these spaces. Rated 'three star' or 'excellent' (Norton, 1971,

529) the hotels examined here — Meikles, the Ambassador, and the Jameson — were the highest rated accommodation options in Salisbury. The three establishments are explored in relation: to one another, to other sites in the city, and to Britain. This focus on individual hotels allows the paper to examine the variegated and contested geographies of welcome working at a number of scales.

The first proper 'grand' hotel in Salisbury was Meikles, opened in 1915 on Cecil Square, the focal point of the city (Tanser, 1974) (Fig. 2). Traditional in design, the hotel lounge and dining room opened off the main entrance hall which was surmounted by a domed tower, flanked by two lions (Whyte, 1975). In 1958, Meikles gained a new East Wing, bringing the hotel up to modern international standards, although the old colonial building remained until 1974. It was described in 1959 as a traditional hotel which had moved into the 'urban expense account type', where there are 'European porters and quartets or light orchestras' and 'decoration is neo-odeon with fitted carpets' (Central African Examiner, 1958, 13). With 214 bedrooms costing from 45 shillings a night, the hotel was the largest, and amongst the most expensive, in the Colony (Blake, 1960, 112; Norton, 1971, 543).

Meikles was 'one of the finest architectural achievements in Rhodesia, and one of which Salisbury was inordinately proud' (Tanser, 1974, 285). The hotel provided an important symbol of colonial progress and civility, even if this colonial progress excluded Africans. The hotel's current advertising states that it has since the 1920s 'been a neutral meeting place for African nationalists, British Governors, Constitutional Negotiators, Prime Ministers and Presidents seeking solutions to difficult political questions' (Meikles Hotel, 2011). However Meikles, and the other hotels in the city, were never neutral spaces for political action; rather, through their formal and informal exclusions constructed through legislation, rules, manners and customs, these hotels provided a space for, and actively constituted, a complex late colonial politics of race. Until 1961, Meikles operated a colour bar; the bars and restaurant did not serve Africans.

Alongside Meikles, the Ambassador and the Jameson were 'Salisbury's other two luxury-class hotels' in the period 1958—1962 (Central African Examiner, 1959b, 5—6). The Ambassador opened in September 1956 with 97 rooms costing from 35 shillings a night (Blake, 1960, 115; Norton, 1971, 543) and was extended substantially in 1960 when the hotel took over six floors of a new tower block, the rest of which housed government departments. It was located directly opposite the Federal Parliament (RBSHR, 1960b, 15), with other government offices and the High Court located directly north on Jameson Avenue between Second and Third Streets (see Fig. 2). The Ambassador was thus situated close to the official organs of government, including the Federal Government with its (still underrepresentative) African members, and formed part of the circuits of political sociability. It also implemented a colour bar, though slightly more flexibly than Meikles. According to Roger N'gombe, a Northern Rhodesian journalist working for the *Evening Standard*, 'if they knew you were a journalist they would allow you in, but otherwise you couldn't just enter'; 'they would like you to do a specific job…They would say, "If you want to have your meals why can't you go to the Jameson?"' (Interview with Roger N'gombe).

The Jameson opened in 1958 with 81 bedrooms and similar prices to Meikles and the Ambassador. It was part of the Ridgeway Group which also owned the premier — and first multi-racial — hotel in Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia (Central African Examiner, 1957, 11, 1959a, 29; Norton, 1971). The Jameson employed, served and accommodated all and was thus not only the most hospitable hotel to non-European populations of the three discussed here, but one of the most liberal in the whole of Southern Rhodesia. The Jameson provided an elite option for important non-European guests. Although there were a number of embarrassing diplomatic
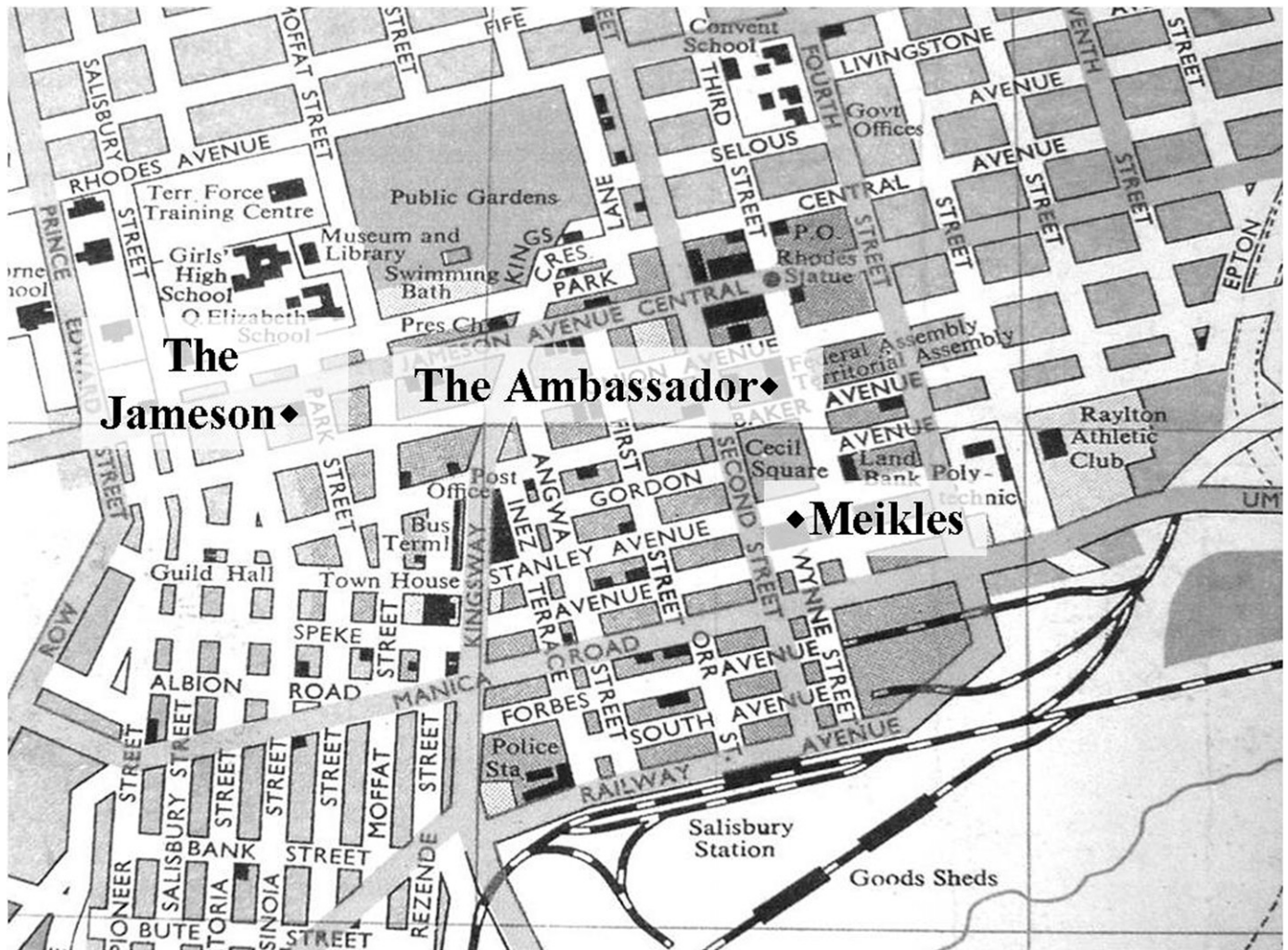
Fig. 2. Location of top hotels in Salisbury (adapted from Government of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland map of Salisbury, 1959).

incidents caused by the inability to accommodate dignitaries from other independent African countries at Meikles, the Government got around this by putting 'non-European' guests at the Jameson (Central African Examiner, 1959b, 5–6). They continued to accommodate white visitors at Meikles however (RBSHR 1960a, 17).

The colour bar was therefore implemented in different ways in Salisbury's three top hotels. In the *Central African Examiner*'s quiz, there is evidence of the coding of different hotel spaces within a hierarchy of multi-racialism and respectability. In answer to the question 'Do you do your drinking mainly at: a) The Ambassador, b) The Palace Bar, or c) The Jameson' no marks are given '*for drinking anywhere except the Salisbury Club [at that time still European only], for which you get three. On second thoughts you can have one mark if you use the Jameson, but only if you have an inescapable appointment with a non-European*' (Central African Examiner, 1960a, 13, 17). Tellingly the Jameson wins a point as it offers the only polite public space in which to fulfil any '*inescapable appointment[s] with a non-European*' (Central African Examiner, 1960a, 17). A politics of hospitality choices for the patron emerges, but this is a complex geography of partial and contingent welcome. The Jameson, offering a safe space to meet with non-Europeans, allows for these − unfortunately 'inescapable' − meetings to take place, but to take place separately. The Jameson forestalled criticism of the Federation by providing a site for the performance of the multi-racial part-nership as evidence for progress in the colony.

Moreover, although the welcome offered at the Jameson was multi-racial, it remained exclusive. The manager was 'proud of the fact that no person of any race will be turned away from any of his hotels provided that they are decently dressed, behave in a civilized manner, and can pay the bill' (Central African Examiner, 1959a, 13). By 1961, *The Rhodesian Bottle Store and Hotel Review* agreed that most hoteliers would be prepared to take in 'persons of all races decently dressed, well behaved and able to pay their bill' (1961, 21). Here exclusive notions of an acceptable public are constituted through arguments not just about colour, but also 'culture' and 'civilization', code for class and education. The Jameson was only welcoming if you were a part of the small African elite. Taking account of hotels within our political geographies means also being aware of the complexities of these hospitable spaces.

Hotels, though private property, were publicly accessible and thus regulated through local and national legislation. They were therefore in part constituted through public action in the form of licencing and Land Apportionment laws. Until 1959, it was illegal to accommodate Africans in hotels that were located in European areas (and vice versa) without special dispensation from the Secretary of Native Affairs, though restaurant service was down to the proprietor's discretion. This meant that although the Jameson accommodated all, the manager had to telephone the authorities every time an African wanted to stay, as the hotel was in a desig-nated 'white area' (Central African Examiner, 1959a, 13). Bar service

was subject to a series of liquor licencing rules based on African ability to consume alcohol in an 'educated' manner (Lowry, 2010).

In 1959, the Land Apportionment Amendment Act (known as the Multi-racial Hotels Act) passed into Federation law (Wood, 2005). Such acts, 'though seemingly insignificant, appeared to many settlers symbolically to threaten the cultural basis of white supremacy' (Lowry, 2010, n.p.) as they withdrew legislative barriers to racial separation that had previously existed. The *Rhodesian Herald* (1959, 1) reported that the bill was seen as 'tampering with an Act which was the "cornerstone" of life here'. The changing legislation devolved regulation of hotels to managers through a 'right of admission refused' that remained with them. Thus from 1959 the colour bar in hotel accommodation was no longer a legal reality but through this mechanism of exclusion it continued to be a social reality; the colour bar was in accordance with social norms and therefore seen as legitimate (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007a). Between public and private, hotels provided sites through which colonial society (and its boundaries) were imagined, and through which it is possible to explore shifting legislative and social practises of exclusion.

In the months following the legislation which allowed hotels over a certain value to apply for multi-racial hotel licences, no businesses had registered, with Meikles indicating that it would not. An editorial in the *Rhodesian Bottle Store and Hotel Review* (November 1959, 9) left its readers in no doubt, 'if any hotel of any particular standard goes multi-racial today, it must be obvious that it will suffer economically'. The Jameson saw a significant falling off of its European trade once it declared that it would apply (Central African Examiner, 1959b, 5) but went ahead and became the first establishment to be granted a licence in January 1960. The *Examiner* ran an editorial asking 'all good liberals to come to the aid of' the Jameson through patronising it in the following weeks (Central African Examiner, 1960b, 5).

The campaign against the colour bar

Against a backdrop of growing nationalist and anti-colonial demonstrations, and in the absence of any great move in the attitudes of other hoteliers or guests, the summer of 1961 saw a series of sit in — and eat in — protests against the continuing colour bar in Salisbury. The Citizens Against the Colour Bar Association (CACBA) were the largest of these groups, comprising around 200 well organised, professional business men and women led by Terence Ranger, a British lecturer at the University of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Several members of the group were also members of the growing African Nationalist movement in Southern Rhodesia and their campaign was thus seen as more radical and extreme that that of the 'more respectable multi-racialists' involved in multi-racial hospitality in the 1950s (Diary of John Reed, 24th June 1961 n.p.). CACBA made an economic assault on the colour bar in hotels and restaurants by booking large scale meals and receptions (complete with lobsters and champagne) and arriving in mixed groups to drink and dine, before abandoning these bookings without paying if service was withheld (Central African Examiner, 1961, 7). According to Ranger, it was 'a kind of light hearted guerrilla tactic' through which racial discrimination was made visible in the heart of the city: 'the press photographer would photograph this marvellous banquet which was now going to go to waste [and] literally you could see the result of segregation.' This was the performance of politics, as Ranger reflects: 'I thought I was engaged in politics but it was dramaturgy really' (Interview with Terence Ranger).

An editorial in the *Rhodesian Bottle Store and Hotel Review* felt that it was 'unfortunate for the hotel and catering industry that their premises should be chosen for the battleground for a political-social campaign' (RBSHR, 1959, 7, 13). In this account, hoteliers and their premises were merely unlucky to be caught up in the politics of partnership in the Federation, held to ransom by radical campaigners and hung out to dry by a government which had devolved responsibility for racial policy to the level of the hotel. However hotels were not just a backdrop for the CACBA campaign; they were active in the construction of inclusive and exclusive notions of the public through their formal and informal practises of segregation.

Meikles, the Ambassador and the Jameson each played a different role within the CACBA movement. Meikles, as the standard bearer for European settler sociability and pioneer spirit, was the campaign's most prominent target. An excerpt from the diary of CACBA member John Reed provides an evocative account of the first demonstration.

> The party enters the vestibule, crosses it and climbs the stairs. A hush falls. I notice as we climb, down below groups of African waiters gazing up at us with great interest. As we reach the dining room the party is met by a European head waiter of great personal ugliness. Westbury asks him for our table; [he] replies "it is not the policy of this hotel to serve non-Europeans", mechanically, as if he had said it as a matter of form thousands of times before and yet at the same time with profound disdainful feeling… Drive round to the Jameson. The party and journalists fill the upstairs lounge, talking in groups, sitting and drinking beer. I am tired and exhilarated. We sit down to our dinner — some fifty of us — in a part of the room partitioned off (9 June 1961, n.p.).

The campaigners at Meikles provided a show for others in the dining room, both European guests and African waiters. When refused service, they retired to the Jameson which provided a safe space for multi-racial dining. However, even here, they were screened off, out of sight. Hospitality consists of not only physical accessibility but also 'feelings of receptivity, of welcome, of comfort' (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007a, 116) and although the Jameson served all, even here, multi-racial dining *as activism* was not unproblematically welcomed.

The Ambassador too, was a target for the CACBA activities, and a month into the campaign declared itself multi-racial, with a front page headline in the *Sunday Mail* (18 June, 1961, 1). The manager denied this was a result of the campaign, stating that he had spent the previous year securing support for the move from important companies and individuals (particularly Rhodesian mining groups) in the Federation, Britain, Europe and the USA, all of whom had 'responded favourably' (Sunday Mail, 1961). By January 1962, even Meikles had opened up some of its bars to multi-racial drinking, though 'the corner bars would remain for Europeans only'. The manager explained: '"we exclude women from the corner bars as well, it is the custom"' (Evening Standard, 1962, 1).

Held in key spaces of white commerce and sociability, the sit in, and indeed walk out, CACBA protests provided a clear challenge to laws and customs of segregation. Thus hospitality could be a radical gesture. Enforcing multi-racial dining in conventionally white spaces could upset the norms of colonial relations. Bringing into practise the overt withholding of polite hospitality could make explicit the contradictions and superficiality of multi-racial partnership and shake this performance, and so the legitimacy of the Federation itself. Unlike the segregated African suburbs, where anti-colonial and anti-colour bar demonstrations (as well as their suppression) took place unobserved by European elites, this campaign, in well-known and busy city spaces, was visible. It was also widely (and supportively) reported in the *Central African Examiner* and other Salisbury based newspapers, which were indifferent or actively hostile. Hospitality, and hotel spaces in which it was offered and withheld, were then, central to many of the most high profile battles over race relations in Southern Rhodesia in this

period. Often located in the heart of the city, hotels provide important spaces in which political campaigns can be made visible.

Colour bar protests were part of a larger political battle. Although segregation in hotels was an issue in its own right, according to Ranger, the campaign's real importance was

> to call the bluff of the Federal Government, its importance was to seek to undercut segregation but for tactical reasons. Sir Edgar Whitehead and Sir Roy Welensky were committed to partnership [but]… they hated being shown up for not really trying hard to get rid of segregation. It was an acutely embarrassing issue. (Interview with Terence Ranger)

CACBA highlighted the superficial nature of the movement towards partnership in the Federation at a time when its future was under scrutiny in Britain. The campaign was also oriented, at least in part, to audiences overseas. To this end, because Meikles hosted most international guests, it was the most vulnerable to, and valuable for, anti-colour bar campaigns. It was always full of visiting politicians and journalists and the CACBA demonstrations 'were manifesting all the time that there was segregation at the heart of the city' (Interview with Terence Ranger). It is to international dimensions of the multiracial (in) hospitality that we now turn.

Staging multi-racial (in)hospitality for an international audience

The *Central African Examiner* (1959b, 5) noted that hotel colour bars were 'the form of discrimination that makes most impact on visitors' and for this reason 'the importance and urgency of breaking the hotel colour bar is hard to exaggerate…' Hotels, as visible sites for the performance of (in)hospitality provided a vehicle for the construction of narratives of Southern Rhodesian society by those visiting and via travellers' tales and newspaper articles at a distance.

Of the guests from beyond Africa received by Southern Rhodesia in 1960, the British dominated, making up 6902 of the 12,991 departing visitors stating their country of origin (RBSHR 1960c, 25). The British were also of particular interest because the Federation was deeply concerned about unfavourable British press coverage it received (Cohen, 2009). A report on Federal public relations of January 1961 illustrates this: 'At present the picture of the white Rhodesian in Britain is still largely compounded of Sanders of the River, hard drinking and easy living' (cited in Cohen, 2009, 113). In this rendering, the British visitor was likely to hold more cosmopolitan views than the settler who had 'gone native' by forgoing loyalty to a putatively liberal version of Britishness. In comparison, British visitors were able to present themselves as well-informed and rational (see also Lambert & Lester, 2004). Hotels provided tangible sites through which conditions could be easily communicated to those in Britain, and examples of the ethical distance between Salisbury and London. As sites for hospitality, they neatly highlighted the distance travelled by Europeans of the colony from polite Britishness to impolite 'savages' (Lawson, 2000).

One woman's visit to Salisbury in 1962 illustrates the role of hotels in performing, understanding and translating multi-racial partnership. Elizabeth Owen, Public Relations Officer of the Royal Commonwealth Society, a London-based learned society and social club, checked into Meikles in 1962 whilst on a fact-finding mission to East and Central Africa. Whilst in Salisbury Owen attended several drinks parties at Meikles and elsewhere, occasions which allowed the city to welcome her and to perform certain visions of Southern Rhodesian society. One such sundowner was organised by the public relations group employed by the Federation, Voice and Vision (see Cohen, 2009), at the Ambassador (RCS, 1962) which, by 1962, provided a less rigidly defined space for multi-racial gatherings than Meikles. Here it was possible to perform

a hospitable and inclusive version of Rhodesian identity based on the ideal of multi-racial partnership. However Owen noted that the newly conceived multi-racial club at the hotel thought up by 'Chad Chipunza with a few European business men and the Greek manager' was not thriving, 'for where there is now willingness to mix on the part of the Europeans there is a reluctance (except for a few) to do so by Africans. This particularly applies to African politicians who feel they are justified in waiting as their day is at hand' (Owen, 1962). By 1962, multi-racial partnership was out of favour with African elites. Owen's visit to Meikles provides specific examples of the role of hotels in shaping the visitor experience of multi-racial partnership, and its politics, in Southern Rhodesia.

Hotels could also be used to stage *in*hospitality explicitly for an international audience. On the occasion of the visit of Harold Macmillan to Salisbury in 1960, 'two or three prominent Africans publicly chose to refuse invitations to functions held in honour of the Prime Minister rather than risk giving him or anyone else the impression that they were normally admitted to the buildings in which those functions were being held (Meikles Hotel and the Rhodes cinema)' (NA, 1960, 126–127). Such visible performance of inhospitality could also be staged by visitors themselves, with an eye to the audience overseas. In a period when British politicians were divided along party lines over the Federation's future (with the Conservative government continuing to support it and with many in the Labour opposition now bitterly opposed), Salisbury's hotels offered too good an opportunity to miss. In 1958, the British Labour MP Barbara Castle caused a rumpus by inviting an African member of the Federal Parliament to dine with her at Meikles (Time, 1959), meriting discussion not only in the international press but also in the UK House of Commons (Hansard, 1958). Newspaper accounts recall that 'Mrs Castle has been accused of "staging" this incident' (Central African Examiner, 1959a, 6).

In 1959 another Labour MP, John Stonehouse, also an outspoken critic of Federation visited Salisbury and utilised a similar strategy to underline the state of race relations in the city.

> I wanted to give my friends a meal before I left Salisbury in appreciation of their hospitality and I booked a table at La Fontaine restaurant at the Meikles Hotel…established in the pioneer days; it is one of the citadels of white supremacy. When I arrived with my three African guests I was told that no table had been booked… some of the waiters… were highly delighted that some Africans had dared to enter the restaurant…[there were] European customers staring at us in anger…. (Stonehouse, 1960, 167–168).

In this account, Stonehouse's own open-mindedness was set against the views and values of colonial society. The trope of the uncivilised colonial versus enlightened metropolitan was put to work and restaurant service represented the race-relations in the capital to the readership in Britain. But the *Rhodesian Bottle Store and Hotel Review* was in no doubt 'such incidents are being deliberately staged' (1959, 13). Stonehouse highlighted the colour bar through dramatising inhospitality. Thus hotel spaces were utilised in the construction of narratives of segregation by British Labour politicians to undermine Conservative arguments about progress towards partnership. Hotels were sites where multi-racial partnership could be known at a distance, and the geopolitics of hospitality could be staged.

Conclusion: accomodating hotels in political geography

Through its focus on hospitality in three hotels in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, this paper has made the case for a political geography of hotels. There are five good reasons for extending our engagement with these spaces. First, hotels provide important sites in the performance of political life. They are often sites of official and

dramatic politics, such as when they are the target of terrorism (Fregonese, 2009) or the location for summitry, and for the construction of these events for international audiences through journalist practises. However they are also important to the making of political geographies which are less spectacular, but nonetheless crucial. Hotels facilitate the everyday hum of sociability within elite communities, and thus are important to the functioning of civil society. Hotels in colonial Southern Rhodesia offered the space for the construction and legitimation of a settler public and its own particular exclusive relations of power (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007a). In Salisbury, hotels were particularly meaningful sites in which the politics of multi-racial partnership could be performed and contested. Their role as privately owned but publically accessible and licenced spaces illustrates the interaction between the legislative, political and personal practises of multi-racialism. Hotels have not received as much academic attention as other 'public' spaces in the city; they should in future. Hotels make an important contribution to the construction of the (exclusive) political geographies of the city and state.

Second, exploring hotels and hospitality highlights the 'little things' (Thrift, 2000, 2004) that enact, contest and convey political geographies. The precise workings of everyday sociability examined in this paper illustrate the variety of ways in which multi-racialism was put to work to challenge and conserve the boundaries of colonial relations. Hotels were marked by the legal, political and social exclusions that pervaded Southern Rhodesia but the implementation of the colour bar was uneven. Guests could therefore utilise differently coded spaces to perform their own more or less liberal multi-racial identities through patronising particular spaces of hospitality, although always within the boundaries of a polite society defined in European terms. A political geography of hotels which is sensitive to the little (but important) differences between and within establishments, can illuminate the making of complex political identities.

Third, the particular visibility that hotels provide to guests is deserving of further reflection in political geography (c.f. Pritchard & Morgan, 2006). Hotel sociability, in bars, restaurants and lobbies at any rate, was public; it was in part a performance conducted to see and be seen (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007a, 2007b). In this paper, hotels provided a useful space through which multi-racial hospitality could be publically offered and the colour-bar contested. In the context of late colonial life, such performances of socio-cultural relations were intimately bound up with explicitly political visions for the future Southern Rhodesia. In hosting international visitors (or, in the case of some African statesmen, turning them away), hotels provided a locale from which the politics of discrimination could be experienced close up and the limits of Southern Rhodesian hospitality clearly exposed.

Fourth, hotels as meaningful and visible spaces travel, offering tangible and easily translatable scenarios that can be relayed to other places and people, at a distance. Salisbury's hotel scene rendered multi-racial (in)hospitality visible beyond the borders of the Federation making it knowable to observers in Britain. This mobility tied the politics of race in Southern Rhodesia into broader circuits of debate in Africa, Britain, and the wider world. Hotels were crucial to the imaginative geographies of colonial life at a distance. Represented in confidential political accounts, government papers, press reports and letters home, the cultural freight of the hotel and the settler sociality it represented, provided a powerful trope for both positive and negative accounts about colonial life. As 'immutable mobiles' (Latour, 1987) such textual accounts dropped onto doormats and into meetings, articulating the everyday politics of Southern Rhodesian race relations at a distance. Hotels therefore make an important contribution to political geography as sites through which the politics of places are made mobile and therefore knowable beyond national borders.

Finally, hotels, as much as border crossings and private homes, provide important sites through which to explore the geographies of hospitality. As Bell (2007) notes, specific concrete examples of hospitable spaces and practises provide detail through which to explore the tensions of hospitable practise, as well as offering alternative genealogies for current theoretical engagements (Barnett, 2005; Derrida, 1999). Southern Rhodesia's hotels and the multi-racial hospitality they offered highlight the elite, superficial and staged nature of many of these events, as well as the constrained opportunities hotels provided for others seeking more radical alternatives. In the era of late colonialism and decolonisation, multi-racial hospitality was a key trope in the politics of Southern Africa. Much recent writing has addressed modern Europe and its relations with the postcolonial other (Derrida, 1999; Freise, 2009; Rosello, 2001) but has not often considered the period of decolonisation itself, or questions of hospitality within the Global South (though see Shryock, 2009). These material geographies of hospitality have much to add to our theoretical understandings of the ethics and politics of hospitality within political geography.

Checking in to hotels can therefore be an academically rewarding pursuit. Hotels provided a key site for the everyday practise of political life, for the performance of liberal identities in Southern Rhodesia, and for the contestation of the colour bar. Salisbury's hotels rendered visible the boundaries of multi-racial hospitality and allowed these exclusions to travel beyond the borders, inflecting and affecting the broader geopolitics of the region and its relationship with Britain. As sites for multi-racial hospitality they connected colonial policy with personal practise. Accommodating hotels will facilitate more compelling accounts of our political geographies — past, present and future.

Acknowledgements

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