EGOS – European Group for Organizational Studies

Sub-theme 07: Doing process research: Performativity in the unfolding actions of organizing

Title: Exploring place and performativity through flânerie

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The particular focus of this paper is to foreground a subjective, embodied and experiential way of researching urban places of organizing. Taking as its focus research carried out in the City of London[1], the paper describes and analyses the spatial context of a work setting through a subjective, highly immersive walking based method. The City employs approximately four hundred thousand people, mainly in the financial services industry, with an approximate 50/50 balance of men and women employees (CityofLondon.gov.uk, 2017). It is particularly well known for its long association with financial services and the gendered cultural traditions which have been established, particularly its dominant masculine orientation (McDowell, 1997; Thrift, 1996), and this study provides an empirical update to studies such as Allen and Pryke (1994) and McDowell (1997), who discuss the highly stylized culture of the City.

The analysis highlights the interplay between two dominant forms of masculinity, emphasizing how the setting both reflects and affects this interplay. In this way the paper contributes to scholarship on organizational place and the placing of gender performativity, and extends Lefebvre's (1991) theories of space as socially produced by (re)producing the City through peripatetic practice based on the flâneur. The methodology is developed

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[1] The City of London is widely referred to simply as *the City* and is also colloquially known as the *Square Mile*, as it is 1.12 sq mi in area. Both of these terms are also often used as metonyms for the United Kingdom's trading and financial services industries, which historically have been based in the City.

alongside an exploration of the experiences of City workers. Its aim is to demonstrate how a sensory and embodied methodology based on flânerie can show how place can shape the experience of working lives, and how we can be organised beyond the four walls of individual organizations; in other words, extending the concept of organization to encompass the wider geographic setting.

It is almost twenty years since Gregson and Rose (2000: 433) claimed that spaces need to be thought of as performative, and that more needs to be made of the complexity and instability of performances and performed spaces. Drawing upon Lefebvre's (1991) writing on space as socially produced as a theoretical lens for the empirical research, I argue that an immersive method, developed from the urban tradition of the flâneur, can be an insightful spatial practice which allows for a rich understanding of how performative organizational place is re-produced, lived and experienced, extending Lefebvre's theories to encompass gendered spatial practices.

The overall aim of the paper is to better understand the performances of gender in a particular setting, namely the City of London, the financial heart of the wider city of London which surrounds this district. Only 19.5 percent of senior roles across top City employers are held by women (Financial Times, 2015); it can therefore be described as 'top heavy' in terms of its masculine orientation. The research explores the impact of gendered subjectivity in this setting; how it is imagined, constructed, perceived and, importantly, experienced in relation to a dominant masculinity, or, more precisely, to the performances of different types of masculinity. Examining what this might mean for organizational life on a wider scale than that of individual organizations, extended therefore to the scale of geographical setting, allows an exploration of what it means for those who work in this place, and how the place itself might compel particular gendered performances.

Building upon Gregson and Rose (2000) that more work needs to be done to be tease out the performative qualities of space and the gendered practices that bring these spaces into being, the underlying question that the paper seeks to answer is what role do places of organization play in compelling or constraining gender performances and related feelings of inclusion and/or exclusion? And how can these places be researched in order to develop a rich understanding of how they are experienced?

The discussion of the theoretical insights gained from Lefebvre extends his theories of the social production of space to what is often experienced as a highly performative work setting which compels and constrains particular ways of enacting and embodying gender which in turn lead to feelings of inclusion and exclusion. In other words, the City is analysed as a performative place which compels particular gendered performances.

More recently, women have been entering management posts in the UK in growing numbers, yet the most lucrative positions in banks' boardrooms and stock market trading departments are still widely seen as male preserves (McDowell, 1997). Organizational restructuring within this sector often involves gendered practices through which men's careers and employment conditions are promoted and prioritized over women's (Ozbilgin &Woodward, 2004). The majority of junior staff working in financial services are women but only 16.2 percent of City banks' managing director level posts are held by women, and only 16 percent of partner positions at the 'Big Four' accountancy firms (Financial Times, 2015). Women account for 23% of board members and just 14% of executive committee members across UK-regulated financial services companies, according to a report putting the UK's HM Treasury Women in Finance Charter[2] into context (30percentclub.org, 2016).

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[2] The Women in Finance Charter commits financial services firms to link the remuneration packages of their executive teams to gender diversity targets. It also commits firms to set targets for gender diversity within their senior management structure, publish progress reports

Simpson and Lewis (2007), in their study of the (in)visibility of women in the workplace, discuss how women are often largely excluded from the dominant group culture in the workplace, which tends towards the masculine, and how discourses of masculinity often silence competing meanings. Knights and Kerfoot (2004) also discuss the dominance of masculinity in organizational life and its association with hierarchy, whilst others emphasise the non-binary nature of gender identity and focus on the fluidity as well as the multiplicity of gender identities (Pullen and Knights, 2007, Linstead and Brewis, 2004 inter alia). Pullen and Thanem (2010) explore the intersection of research interests in sexuality with spatiality, and the way in which the sexuality of space affects organizations. Reading the City as a historically and a contemporary masculine professional space means paying attention to the performances of masculinity within it and how these are sensed and experienced by both genders. With regard to the financial services sector, Knights and Tullberg (2012) problematize concepts of organizational masculinity with regard to the most recent global financial crisis. They argue that in contemporary working life, remuneration and hierarchy are important visible yet also symbolic elements of the social construction of masculinity. They identify a number of performative elements which produce, reproduce and sustain masculinity in organizations. The criteria associated with being a successful senior manager in the City include conquest, competition and control; all performative elements of masculinity (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993), although, as Knights and Tullberg point out, 'the spoils of conquest can readily be lost in a highly competitive environment' (2012: 390), meaning that masculine and managerial identities can be extremely fragile.

McDowell (1997) explores the multiple ways in which masculinities and femininities are constructed in the City, leading to a tradition of inclusion and exclusion based primarily on

against these targets, and appoint a senior executive responsible for gender diversity and inclusion(www.gov.uk, 2016)

gender. She discusses several types of male workers in the City, for example the 'old school' patriarchs in the boardrooms of investment banks, and the younger, macho traders on the dealing room floors. They are clearly different in their 'uniforms', their behaviours and their embodied actions. They do, however, share similar performative attributes which constitute their masculine identities, and which include control and high levels of competitive behaviour.

In order to explore the relationship between place and performativity, I turn to the theories of Henri Lefebvre as a conceptual lens through which to view the social and organizational production of urban space. In order to examine space/place as a social product, it cannot be understood or imagined as an independent material reality. Lefebvre (1991), using the concept of space as socially produced, posits a theory that understands space as fundamentally bound up with social reality and with our lived experience of the world. Space cannot therefore exist in itself but is produced by human actors. Although not specifically concerned with organizations, he focuses on the importance of the subjective experience of place, and it is this focus on subjectivity which will be explored in this paper in relation to how to research organizational place. In order to develop this focus on both subjectivity and sensory, embodied methodologies for empirical research, Lefebvre's work provides a foundation to this paper, through his interest in the urban, and through his commitment to subjective, embodied experience as a form of epistemic knowledge. Few studies, however, have connected Lefebvre's theorisation with gendered space. Wasserman and Frenkel (2015) is an exception; applying Lefebvre's spatial theory to an analysis of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they argue that gender and class largely define the emotional reactions that employees develop towards organisational space.

Feminist geographers (e.g. Rose 1993, Valentine 1989, Listerborn 2002) have explored the insecurity often felt by women in public spaces and their perception and use of such spaces,

concluding that women's public inhibitions are often expressed spatially. Turning to gender performativity and its spatial representations, Gregson and Rose (2000: 441) use a performance metaphor to help illustrate the relational understanding between the spatial and the temporal:

> Performances do not take place in already–existing locations: the City, the bank, the franchise restaurant, the straight street. These 'stages' do not pre-exist their performances …rather, specific performances bring these spaces into being'.

Tyler and Cohen (2010) apply a critical analysis of the production of space to the performance of gender within work, concluding that organizations workspaces matter to the myriad ways in which people perform, practise and negotiate gender at work. They describe the relative neglect within organization studies of the ways in which space is gendered as a theoretical lacuna, and argue that gender materialization constitutes an important theoretical lens through which to understand the gendering of organizational space.

The particular focus with regard to the City for this aspect of the research project was to observe how the bodies moved within the space, how this movement was experienced and sensed in terms of gender, and how participants experienced daily life in the City. I wished to understand how the place was sensed and made sense of, and so I now turn to discussions regarding how to undertake aesthetic research in organizations.

Linstead and Höpfl (2000) highlight particular methodological problems associated with empirical investigations of the aesthetic. It is almost ten years since Warren (2008) described the development of a sensuous methodology for undertaking aesthetic research in organizations, pointing out that whilst the theoretical significance of an aesthetic understanding of organization has been acknowledged, suggestions of how to actually 'do'

empirical research were notable by their absence. Acknowledging many excellent contributions of aesthetic ethnographic work, she explains:

> 'The methodological issues …seem to shift from 'how do we (as researchers) take an aesthetic perspective on organizational life' to 'how do we evoke and represent others' aesthetic perspectives on organizational life?' (Warren, 2008: 8).

This study aims to contribute to the dilemma of how to 'evoke and represent others' aesthetic perspectives' by explaining the development of a methodology which can be employed to research the aesthetic perspectives of place.

Whilst not focusing specifically on sensory or aesthetic methodologies, Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) explain how the contribution of creative, mystery-led empirical material can inspire new lines of research. They conclude that this approach:

> Gives considerable space to the researcher's subjectivity – their preunderstanding, imagination, feeling for what is interesting – at the expense of plans, procedures and techniques … researcher subjectivity needs to be cultivated and disciplined (2011: 121).

Since attention was mainly focused on the visual and the observations of gender inclusivity and exclusivity in the setting, I wished to develop a method which took me out onto the streets and allowed me to both observe and participate in the street life. For this I turned to the tradition of flânerie, as I wished to experience how the space was produced (drawing on Lefebvre) and how it might be constantly reproduced via walking, so using Lefebvre as a theoretical lens through which the City can be re-inscribed via the bodily practice of walking.

The flâneur in the City

Urban consciousness in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had been developed by the 'flâneurs' (strollers, loiterers) of mid-nineteenth century Paris. In the wake of industrialisation, these male flâneurs had created a new aesthetic of the urban, perceiving an intensity and beauty in the extremes of city life which, to them, constituted its seduction. The flâneur is regarded as a representative of early modernity who developed visual and spatial practices and methodologies of movement and observation which interpreted the city. The act of being a flâneur is essentially active in that you are engaged in the physicality of walking and directly experiencing that which is all around (Elkin, 2016). As a research methodology, flânerie is an active and physical form of observation; as a researcher, becoming a flâneur is a valuable way of merging aspects of social theory which use the human body as a metaphor with the physicality of a lived set of material practices and discourses.

Baudelaire is credited with the first description of the flâneur in in his 1863 essay *The Painter of Modern Life* (1964, first published 1863). In the wake of industrialisation, these flâneurs (strollers, loiterers) usually male, from the middle and upper classes, walked through the city yet remained essentially detached from the teeming life around them. In doing so, and in writing retrospectively about their walks, they had created a new aesthetic of the urban, perceiving an intensity and beauty in the extremes of city life. For Benjamin (1999), in his critical examinations of Baudelaire's work, the flâneur heralded modernity – aware of the bustle of the city, seduced by the urban, but also representing the alienation of modernity and capitalism, reflecting Lefebvre's concerns about the alienation and capitalist intensification of the urban.

As a research method, flânerie is an active and physical form of observation, engaged in the physicality of walking and directly experiencing that which is all around (Elkin, 2016). For Boutin (2012: 124), the flâneur 'epitomizes the ascendancy of the visual.' Given that I wished to note and record visual scenes and to observe the socio-material interaction around

me as I walked, incorporating the tradition of the flâneur added a visual dimension to my walks. The aim was to take photographs during my City walks, rather than using extant images of the City, as this would provide data to convey real time scenes and examples of how actors navigated the material structures of the City.

The walking part of the fieldwork took place over a period of five months. I carried out a total of ten walks around the City, taking a different route each time, watching, observing, listening and sensing the flow of men and women around me.

This first part of the fieldwork was carried out mainly over a period of five months during 2015 and represents ten full days of observations in the City. I used the historic boundaries as a guide for the walks. Most of the field days took place during the week, at different times of day. I spent two late evenings in the City, and one Sunday. I started in the winter, and ended in high summer. My times in the City was opportunistic to an extent, as I was balancing the fieldwork with professional and familial duties, however I wished to see the City in a variety of times and seasons in order to see what patterns emerged and how the rhythms may differ or stay constant. The limitations of this approach are discussed in the concluding thoughts below.

Walking

The routes were 'semi structured' in that I had an approximate idea of where I would be walking, based on my master map of the City and the area that I thought I could reasonably traverse in the time available, but I allowed myself to take unexpected deviations, and as they emerged, rather than being too prescriptive.

Observing

The observational framework was structured around the external environment, noting both the physical characteristics of the setting and the human use of the space, as well as the time of day, the season, the weather and their relation to the setting. I also listened to background noise, and observed the gender, age, clothing and behaviour of people around me. Internal responses were also noted, including sensory perceptions, for example temperature, my bodily (dis)comfort, as well as feelings and emotions, reflections and interpretations.

Noting and reflecting

I took extensive field notes during the walks, allowing myself time and space for critical reflection while I was in situ, and using the notes as a foundation for my data analysis, as well as providing me with an aide-mémoire to re-create the walks for me when I retrospectively wrote about them. Composing the field notes involved several different stages. Often these were just very quick jottings of a few words, since it was sometimes difficult to write much whilst on the move, and I would take frequent coffee breaks when I would write more detailed notes. The aim was to record observations, thoughts, feelings and memories and to be as reflexive as possible in my accounts, so that a rich and detailed account of the walks could be analysed. The distinction between data collection and analysis was therefore fluid during this stage.

Seeing and sensing

I took photographs whilst walking, taking over four hundred over the course of the ten days.. I paid little attention to the style or framing of the photos, since these were taken literally on the move, and very quickly to avoid either getting in the way of the flow of human traffic. I took photographs to be used as illustrations, to help as aides mémoire and to recreate the walks and the experience as I thought about them, wrote about them and analysed them retrospectively, and to record examples of the materiality of the setting, the ways in which

people moved around the space, and, often as symbols of my own emotions and feelings about the space – in summary, anything which caught my eye as being particularly representative of the themes that I was uncovering. I also showed relevant photographs I had taken to interview participants, as we touched on particular themes. In this way the photographs acted as a source of photo-elicitation and encouraged a more in depth discussion than might otherwise have been generated, recalling Warren's observation that 'it became apparent as soon as I began talking to my research respondents about the organizational environment that words were not enough to answer my questions' (Warren, 2002: 230).

In terms of ethical considerations, I did feel uncomfortable at times photographing street scenes which involved people. Given that I had no idea as to the identity of anyone I photographed, and they are very unlikely to be identified as I would pixelate faces in any published research, this unease could be considered to be relatively unproblematic.

Mapping

I mapped each walk onto a master map of the City. The purpose of this was to create a visual memory of the walks, help me to plan future walks by evaluating areas of the setting which I hadn't explored enough or needed to explore in more detail.

Participant Interviews

The second phase of the fieldwork focused on the lived experience of people who regularly work in the City within the financial services sector, using face to face semi structured interviews to investigate and analyse their perceptions of the setting and sector in which they work. I wanted to better understand how the place is perceived and sensed by those who work there, and how shared meanings accumulate, so adding to my subjective experience of streetwalking by including the perceptions of others. Eighteen research participants were

recruited via a snowball sample. The study was limited to people working within the dominant financial services sector, since these were people who I had ready access to, given my personal history of working within this sector, and it did not include people who work in supporting services, for example retail workers, caters, security guards. Participants represented a range of age groups and work roles, from directors to personal assistants, and all were of white British ethnicity, with the exception of one white Australian woman. Some of the participants work in the City every day, others for the majority of their working time, combining three or four days per week in the City with flexible working at home or in other locations. Ten men and eight women participated, with ages ranging from early twenties to late sixties, and representing a spread of occupations and varying degrees of time spent working in the setting. Pseudonyms were chosen by the participants themselves and were used in order to anonymise participants.

Interviews were conducted in a variety of locations; in participant's offices, coffee shops close to their offices, or in private houses. On one occasion I walked through the City streets while interviewing; this created a connection between the walking and interviewing stages of the fieldwork. Whilst I would have been enthusiastic about the opportunity of conducting more 'walking interviews', and did suggest it to several participants, the barrier was the available time, and most participants who met me in the setting preferred to meet either in their offices of somewhere nearby so that they could limit the time away from their desks. Kusenbach (2003), whilst discussing lived experiences of place, argues that sedentary interviews discourage context sensitive reactions of the interviewer and interviewee, and separate participants from their routine experiences and practices. Evans and Jones (2011) argue that walking interviews generate richer data because participants are prompted by meanings and connections to the surrounding environment, and claim that it is intuitively sensible for researchers to ask interviewees to talk about the places that they are interested in

while they are in that place. This is a method of interviewing that I would continue to suggest to participants in future research, albeit mindful of their time limitations and their preferences.

Data Analysis

The streetwalking phase of the data collection resulted in fifty two pages of field notes. The notes were written up as soon as possible after the walks and when writing up the findings, I used the photographs along with the notes to recreate the sense of the setting. I coded the notes according to themes which emerged from both my subjective experiences (from the notes and the photographs), and from participant interviews. When writing up the analysis, I visited the setting again and sat writing in coffee shops to bring myself back into the setting. As soon as the interviews were transcribed, initial analysis was carried out, copying relevant quotes with comments attached into a master document which was arranged thematically. This meant that emergent themes could be quickly identified and sub themes were also created. Interim findings were presented at seminars and conferences, leading to feedback and contributions from others to supplement my own interpretations. The data was therefore analysed through the course of several readings until I began to reach thematic saturation point. Again, when writing up the findings I returned to the setting to immerse myself in the sights and sounds of the City.

Writing up the research relied upon the use of richly descriptive and evocative language, in order to convey the impact of such an embodied, subjective methodology. The use of photographs and visual data such as maps was helpful in various ways; as illustrations, as aide-memoires, and to help develop a richer understanding of the setting and to capture data that illustrate the environment in a way that written accounts cannot do in isolation.

Findings

In sum, three main themes recurred from my own observational walks as a flâneur, and were extended and elaborated upon by City workers. Firstly, the relative invisibility of women ion the streets compared to men, and how they use and treat the space differently. Secondly, the materiality of the City was perceived to co-create and sustain a masculine dominance; I identified two distinct but competing versions of masculinity which are represented in material form, here termed the hypo and the hyper masculine and fully explained in the analysis. Thirdly, anything deviating from the masculine norm(s) is positioned as Other.

My interpretation of flânerie in the City was to walk and to gaze, to attempt to recreate the familiar as new and unfamiliar by the depth of observation, reflecting on what I saw and how I perceived it. If I was too much of an insider, then my observations might be less rich and less critical. In this sense, my 'outsider' status was helpful in that when I felt awkward due to my lack of formal business clothing and what I perceived as my lack of purpose in such a purposeful setting, I could pay attention instead to what I observed around me, and my 'purpose' became documenting and photographing that which I saw. Paying attention to detail is intrinsic to flânerie. Pausing in the heart of City meant observing far more of the rich detail which gives the place its character, in particular the pervasive sense of history. My experience as a flâneur was dominated by observations of who, and what, could be 'in place' in the City and who is out of place. Unlike in shopping crowds in the West End of London, where groups of women are common, the women I observed were always walking singly. Men, by contrast, spread out over the space, often walking four or five abreast across the pavements. On the streets and outside pubs, groups of men spill onto the pavements, with very few women to be seen, as portrayed in the photographic data and as recognised by several of the participants who conceded that you simply don't see women in the way you do men. Men and women use the space differently. Men seemed to use the space as one large office, meetings are held in the middle of the road, men call out to one another, and people

move between office buildings carrying files and laptops and often stopping to talk en route. This highlights the concept of the City functioning as an organization beyond the boundaries of individual institutions or workplaces, but shows it to have a gendered aspect, in that it is mainly men who use the space in this way and who demonstrate the spatial confidence that is characteristic of what it means to be a 'City insider'. When the issue of gender visibility was raised in the interviews, most participants immediately said that there was no issue anymore, since there are as many women as men working in the City. When this was discussed in greater detail, however, and participants were asked to describe their experiences of walking on the City streets, most confessed that although they hadn't consciously realised it before, there was a noticeable lack of women. As Tom said 'I mean, you just look out of the window and it's just males in suits'. His colleague Matt said 'When you walk home you see a lot of people outside and guess what, they're all men. They're always, always men.' McDowell (1997) tells us that the everyday language and social practices of City organizations represent an exaggerated version of masculinity. This method shows that this dominant masculine orientations does not only take place inside City organizations and institutions, but are also played out on the streets of the setting, crossing the spatial boundaries between the inside and outside of organizations to encompass the wider setting.

As a stroller in the City, you are often forced to look up, since the pavements are so crowded, and the streets often narrow. The symbolic representation of a priapic masculinity is probably the most visibly obvious and attested example of the materiality of the City reinforcing and sustaining the socio-cultural City. I took many photographs of and notes on the soaring glass and steel towers which dominate the skyline and sightlines on each corner. This form of masculine symbolic imagery is both highly visible and dominant in the City. Skyscrapers draw the eye down every street, and more and more are being erected. In the presence of these huge buildings which dominate the skyline, I noticed walking faster and

more purposefully. I felt more self-conscious about taking photographs in these spaces. There is, however, a contrast of architectural styles in the City. As well as the examples of Lefebvre's 'phallic verticality'(1991: 36), in the heart of the City, especially in the area around the Bank of England, there is an abundance of imperial architecture in the classical style, mainly eighteenth and early nineteenth century, with some later Victorian buildings. This is the heart of the 'traditional' City, the historic setting of men in bowler hats and furled umbrellas, of Gentleman's clubs and sober respectability. In this part of the City I had the sense of being safe and contained when surrounded by the imperial and classical, in contrast to the noisy, frenetic side streets.

For Neil, both the old and the new architectural styles are rooted in the symbolism of power and money:

> I guess the older buildings are about being dominant in an earlier sort of fashion. That screamed power to people then, these tall buildings scream it now.

The materiality of the City was considered by many to strongly reflect, sustain and often create the performative culture. For Anna, her reaction to the contemporary soaring towers of the City is that they are:

> Big black monsters …. some of them are really monstrous, in your face huge edifices, just showing off really! All to accommodate those 'big swinging dicks' I suppose!

Many mentioned the stress of walking around such a dense and compact space; as Ian says, 'You just need to know where to go. You have to be able to find your way around,' stressing the need to be an 'insider' to be able to confidently navigate the setting, and evoking memories for me of walking the streets and feeling like an outsider because of my repeated

failures to navigate the streets. How the data gathered shows that 'insider' status often excludes women will be summarised below.

The 'otherness' of City women

> But you never really feel like it's a place for you…you always have that sort of sense of being here on sufferance (Anna, Communications Director for an Investment Bank).

Philip, an Actuary in his sixties who has always worked in the City, emphasises the need for men to be 'clubbable' in the City if they want to succeed. Yet for Sasha, a young woman working as a business development consultant in the City, it is precisely this 'clubbability' that means that she feels excluded. She describes having a feeling that 'there is a club of City men that women are just not part of', and gives an example of how this male bonding directly affects women:

> I love our Vice President, and I get along with him very well. But, you can see that his buddies are the men. You can see that. They all go out together, there's a sort of shorthand that they all use, you know, male banter.

Her own subject position changes from that of an ambitious, professional woman in a mixed gender team, to being that of an outsider, directly because of this male need to stick together. As she says, with some degree of frustration, 'It boils down to the fact that in the City there is a back door discussion that's going on that we're not part of.'

All participants conflated 'gender' with 'women.' When asked about gender in the City, whilst most female participants discussed the lack of career progression available to women, the male participants mostly associated it with childcare and families. Maria (an HR Director for an Investment Bank) felt that gender wasn't an issue, and was proud that her company

was actually in the press the day I interviewed her, for having one of the highest male to female ratios for investment, with 28% female. Nigel, however, whilst overall feeling that the opportunities and the rewards were the same for anyone, irrespective of gender, he did say that 'It (the City) isn't a particularly family friendly place', although the question had been about whether he perceives the City as a male or female space, not specifically about working parents. Rob, again, feels that gender is no barrier but conflates it with women and children: 'It depends on your qualifications, how well you do at your job, not your gender, in other words, whether or not you've had a baby.'

Both Anna and Jennifer now viewed the City as inherently hostile to anything that was seen as feminine; as Anna says, 'you just feel that the whole place is created by men for men, sort of thing', and that she felt that she was only there on sufferance, 'like you'd walked into a boy's school and you might have to leave when they tell you to.' Claire, who left the City before she had children, could not understand why anyone would want to still work in a place that she claims is all about work, and the need to be seen to be performing work, and is deliberately designed to exclude, as she puts it, 'normal life', which for her is represented by 'schools, hospitals, children, parks'; the sphere of the feminine and maternal, in other words.

Discussion

This paper builds upon Gregson and Rose's (2000: 434) analysis that 'space too needs to be thought of as brought into being through performances'. In this paper, 'brought into being' signifies shared association of meanings and communal performance, and draws on both Lefebvre's critical approach resulting from his Marxist orientation, and his phenomenological concern about the relationship between meaning and materiality, illustrated through the way in which the City comes into being by the meanings attributed to it. The study adds to Halford and Leonard (2006), who foreground the importance of the spatial for the process of

identity construction, and shows that 'walking' the City has helped extend the focus of organisation studies towards the external spatial environment.

The data considered above suggests the presence of two different, but competing masculinities; different in their architectural expression, and their cultural behaviours, and competing for dominance. The findings also indicate the ways in which both the architecture and the social practices create, reflect and sustain these dominant masculinities. I have termed these competing masculinities 'hypo' and 'hyper' masculinity; dictionary definitions for the former tell us that it is from the ancient Greek for under, i.e. something restrained or controlled, in this context, and for the latter we read overexcited, overstimulated. The built environment of the City reflects both, with the solid, imperial stone buildings representing the hypo-masculine, the protective paternalism (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993) that produces feelings of containment and control that, as noted above, were almost tangible as I walked through the space. The hyper-masculine is represented by the dominating towers of the newer City, as well as by the movement of bodies and the cultural behaviour in this space; frantic, hurried, noisy and intensely competitive in its gendered culture. This categorisation is helpful in considering how the body can change the space, as well as describing the effect of the space on the body. Lefebvre suggests that the body is a useful way to locate and understand how space is socially produced; if people are subject to spatial production, however, I have illustrated through this study that the experience of the material space is affected by the embodied culture of place.

McDowell's (1997) discussion of what she terms the shift from the 'old' to the 'new' City (ibid: 43) describes the radical changes in employment practices, culture and the physical environment that occurred from the late 1980s onwards. Entry to City jobs after this point was increasingly based on merit and credentials rather than on personal networks and

recommendations, and the prevalent architectural style became more and more focused on vertical towers; or, in other words, a shift from a hypo to a hyper masculine dominance was taking place. McDowell claims that this dualistic narrative has become dominant since the 1980s, but I show how these exist side by side, not shifting from one to the other but performing as materially and culturally symbiotic.

I have drawn upon Lefebvre's critique to show the City as a performance oriented space, His concern with how the everyday is structured and organised in a spatial sense, and the use of a walking methodology to explore such a distilled and intense space of capital, has highlighted the accumulation imperative of the City and its functionalist orientation, resulting in patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

Analysing how gendered performativities are enacted in the City has allowed me to extend Lefebvre's theorisation of space by applying it directly to the performances of gender. Wasserman and Frenkel (2015: 17) claim that 'while Lefebvre's theory is deployed by scholars to understand power relations regarding class, his theory has not been used to research gender relations in organizations'. One of the aims of the paper is to add to their research both by applying a Lefebvrian reading to organizational settings, and by applying his theory to the performances of gender in wider organizational space and setting. In this way the study builds upon Tyler and Cohen (2010) and their argument that organizational space is a gendered matter, describing the materialization of gender in and through the performance of spaces that matter.

The epistemological contribution of the paper is to position streetwalking as form of subjective participant observation, connected with aesthetic ways of knowing (Linstead & Höpfl, 2000, Strati, 1999). It blends and alternates patterns of observation and sensory

immersion, and brings a particularly spatial dimension, based on organizational setting, to the ethnographic tradition of the interplay between immersion and detachment.

One of the difficulties, however, in representing this methodological contribution, is how to convey subjective experience in writing. 'I' becomes dominant when writing the methods section for papers. Whilst this can be offset by the very necessary inclusion of participant interviews, which prevent the study from being endlessly self-referential, as well as providing methodological validity and triangulation, the inclusion of photographs was also helpful. Just as photo-elicitation can be useful in participant interviews, so the use of photographs when writing research papers can break up the text and help move the reader away from the constant narrative presence of the researcher.

Concluding thoughts

The study does suggest some limitations. I visited the City at different times of the day and on different days of the week, however the majority of walks took place during the nine to five working day. Changes in the composition of people on the streets were not fully observed, for example at midnight or at 5 am the 'invisible' workers of the City (security guards, office cleaners, immigrant workers) may have been more visible on the streets and may have altered perceptions and experiences of City life.

'Walking' the City has helped extend the focus of organisation studies towards the external spatial environment. This paper foregrounds a method for understanding the lived experience of working in this place, at this time, but can also be replicated and extended to other settings in order to widen our understanding of how we are, literally, placed in relation to our work. At the time of writing, the methodological foundations of this study are being used for a comparative research in Wall Street, New York, another place where setting, sector, and distinctive materiality all collide.

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